

2022 National ACE School Awardee:
Bluff Park Elementary School (Grades K-5)
Hoover, AL Principal, Mrs. Ami Weems
ACE School Coordinator and STEAM Teacher who is also the
2022 National ACE Sustained Excellence Awardee:
Mrs. Geri Evans

Bluff Park Elementary School has soared in the ACE program for 11 years! Under the leadership of a very enthusiastic Science Lab teacher and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) specialist, *Mrs. Geri Evans*, the school's students have been the benefactors of all the ACE program has to offer. The principal, *Mrs. Ami Weems*, has empowered Mrs. Evans to conduct above and beyond STEM lessons that have allowed the students in kindergarten through fifth grade to learn about aviation principles, a variety of associated career opportunities, and a whole lot more! As Mrs. Evans is being recognized for her sustained years of exemplary ACE participation, her school is being named the ACE School of the Year. Bluff Park Elementary School will host the 2022-2023 National ACE Lift-off event.

Mrs. Evans has been an ACE teacher for the past 11 years, learning about CAP and its many teacher programs when she attended Space Camp for Educators in Huntsville, Alabama. She started teaching the ACE program with her fourth grade students, but, six years ago she became the STEAM teacher and started teaching the lessons to all the students in the school – about 600 students per year! Several other teachers at her school have also become ACE teachers over the years and have received grants to help the school with their STEAM programs. Mrs. Evans works with the school counselor and P.E. teacher to implement the ACE lessons. She also works with parents and the community to join in creating an aviation-rich environment for the students.

When Mrs. Evans became the STEAM teacher, she started a “Take Flight Day” as a culmination of the ACE program lessons each year. Students are engaged in activities related to flight throughout the day and are given presentations by pilots, engineers, and others connected to the ACE lessons.

The event has expanded over the years and has included a variety of visitors and special grade level events, such as:

- third grade Egg Drop contest;
- fourth grade kite building and flying;
- a CAP hovercraft demonstration and CAP members sharing lessons on flight with the students;
- a WWII veteran pilot speaking to the children;
- the Southern Museum of Flight staff completing lessons and parking an experimental plane from the museum in the school's parking lot to share with students;
- AMSTI (Alabama Math and Science Initiative) sharing lessons related to flight;
- Jefferson County helicopter landing on the school's field with the pilots speaking to the students about how they use the helicopter to survey accidents and even catch criminals;
- the local media covering the day's events while the TV station's meteorologist shares his career with the students;

- a drone pilot demonstrating the drone and taking aerial photos of the school and students out on the field; and,
- all students using their ACE manipulatives at some point during the day in a planned activity coordinated by Mrs. Evans.

A unique program during the Take Flight Day is for classroom buddies across grade levels to work together on flight activities. Additionally, the physical education teacher has implemented many of the lessons and parents participate, including a Southwest Airlines pilot who comes to speak to the students and share his knowledge of flight. The students can even role play being in a Southwest airplane set up in a classroom.

During the first year of COVID, the school was not able to have their usual Take Flight Day, but Mrs. Evans arranged for students to pick up their ACE manipulatives over the course of a week. The last day of school many students gathered on the field while a fly over by the Jefferson County helicopter made that final day an exciting one, bringing eager anticipation about the year to come. Although COVID has dampened the extent of Take Flight Days, the students are still excited and learn so very much from all the community members who share their careers and their love of aviation with the students.

CAP sincerely applauds this soaring school and STEAM teacher, and appreciates their work with CAP's ACE program! Bluff Park Elementary School will host the 2022-2023 National ACE Lift-off event in October!

***CONGRATULATIONS, BLUFF PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!
See a sampling of past Take Flight Day photos, below!***





Community museum airplanes and helicopter landings bring aviation excitement to the students. Learning about robotic technology and meteorology expands students' career awareness as they plan for the future.

Hoover Police share their bomb robot and discuss the technology involved.



Southern Museum of Flight launches rockets with fifth grade.





CAP members teach classes, demonstrate a hovercraft, and speak to the students about aviation and being a cadet.



Older students teach younger students about aviation through the Classroom Buddies program.





Learning about flight with parachutes



FIFTH GRADE TAKE FLIGHT



BALSA PLANE TUTORIAL

FORCES OF FLIGHT NASA

Four Forces of Flight NASA

NASA Space Place

Parts of an airplane



Brainpop: Forces of Flight

Username: bluffpark

Password: learn



Mystery Science-
Why Can't Airplanes go to space?

Aerodynamics of flight

Sample grade level Take Flight Day lessons and guest.



WWII Pilot
Herman
Stubblefield
spoke to fifth
grade about flying
in the war.



Thanks to Mrs. Geri Evans for all her years of teaching the ACE program to Bluff Park Elementary students. As sustained excellence award winner, we appreciate Mrs. Evans teaching students about aviation -- and about being good citizens, a key component of the ACE program!