



For Immediate Release
Contact Larry Fisher, Interim CEO
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Grand Rapids, MI – May 20, 2019: West Michigan Aviation Academy (WMAA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Nicole Gasper as Chief Executive Officer effective July 1, 2019.

“We are thrilled to welcome Nicole to this important leadership position,” says Larry Fisher, Interim CEO of WMAA. “She is a highly qualified administrator and educator with excellent credentials in science, math and career preparation. We are delighted that she has chosen to leverage those talents for WMAA and our students.”

WMAA’s vision is to provide an innovative, professional and welcoming environment that inspires growth and ignites a passion for lifelong learning. That aligns perfectly with Ms. Gasper’s personal and professional beliefs. “I am passionate about creating high-quality experiences for students,” she says. “I’m driven to leverage the talents and resources around me to offer new programs for students. I am excited about advancing WMAA’s mission through the skills and relationships I have developed.”

Ms. Gasper holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, and a Master of Arts in Educational Administration and Supervision. She has worked in the Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) since 2007, most recently serving as the Chief Instructional Officer. Her experiences include career tech development, successful grant writing, college preparatory programs, STEM programming, and program development. She also serves on several statewide educational boards and committees.

“We were seeking a CEO with deep knowledge about today’s career environment and the ability to serve a diverse student body,” says Dick DeVos, WMAA founder and board president. “Nicole has demonstrated the ability to lead and mentor students, but also to be an effective agent for change and innovation. Her international experience will also serve us well, since our school continues to attract ambitious students from many ethnic backgrounds. We are excited about beginning our second decade of quality education under her leadership.”

West Michigan Aviation Academy opened in 2010 under the leadership of then-CEO Patrick J. Cwayna, Sr. Mr. Cwayna built the school from an opening enrollment of 80 students in 2010 to 600 for the 2016/17 school year, the maximum allowed by charter. He helped instill a culture of respect, excellence and professionalism that is now indoctrinated into the school’s DNA. He served as CEO until 2018, and then transitioned into a leadership role with the West Michigan Aviation Academy Foundation. He played a pivotal role in developing a thriving aviation, STEM and robotics-focused curriculum, and in building significant community partnerships that expose students to career opportunities.

(more)



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AVIATION ACADEMY

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Ms. Gasper will assume the position of CEO effective July 1, 2019.

About West Michigan Aviation Academy: WMAA is a tuition-free public charter high school located on the campus of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. WMAA is the only high school in the nation where a student can earn a private pilot license as part of the high school curriculum. With a curriculum rich in aviation, STEM (science, technology, engineering, math), and robotics, WMAA provides a unique educational opportunity for students to focus specifically on high-growth employment fields during their high school education. This better equips them to pursue higher education or technical degrees, and find employment in their chosen fields. Learn more at www.westmichiganaviation.org.

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