



Eastern Suffolk BOCES provides educational services that transform lives...

- **Jonathan Hoyos, ESBOCES Professional Pilot Training graduate of the Suffolk Aviation program**



"The Eastern Suffolk BOCES Aviation program was a great foundation for me. I have love and passion for my career choice."

When Jonathan was a child, all he ever thought about was flying planes. In 1995, he emigrated from Colombia, South America with his mother. He remembers traveling to the United States on a Boeing 767 and asking his mother if he could see the pilot and visit the cockpit. His mother asked the flight attendant if this was possible and his wish was granted! Jonathan recalls just wanting to push all those buttons on the console! This was a dream come true!

In 2003, Jonathan became a United States citizen and had to overcome a language barrier as well as social and cultural differences. "The American lifestyle is different from what I knew in Columbia," he said. "It's more laid back over there – here, there are many rules and everything is time-sensitive." Being the only man in the household, Jonathan has had to be responsible and self-motivated from a young age. Unable to take on even a part-time job, Jonathan shared, "I am needed at home most of the time. I do chores and baby sit my nine-year-old niece for income."

Jonathan and his family moved out to Shirley, Long Island from Queens, in 2006. In his sophomore year at the William Floyd UFSD, he visited his guidance counselor, inquiring about technical education opportunities specifically in the auto field, though he shared his real passion for aviation. Having this information, the guidance counselor was able to direct Jonathan to the ESBOCES Aviation program where she knew his dreams could take flight. This program would provide opportunities to operate actual aircraft and become a licensed professional pilot before graduating from high school.

During his first year in the Aviation program, Jonathan was undecided about what career path he should take. "My first year instructor, Mr. Louis Ballester, was my mentor and my motivation. He set me in the right direction." Jonathan attributes his success to his experience at ESBOCES. Because he attained his pilot's license before his classmates, he was able to help them with various aspects of the Aviation program. Jonathan said, "I helped my peers with things like cross country planning, systems on the airplane, and

weight and balance.” Jonathan in turn said, “I’m very grateful to every teacher and secretary. They did their job to the max.”

Jonathan demonstrated ability and the desire to accelerate into the second year ESBOCES Aviation / Professional Pilot Training program. Only those students who have met the requirements, which include passing a medical examination, passing the FAA written examination, and who are in good standing with the instructors and administration are offered this opportunity. Jonathan said, “A private pilot’s license authorizes you to fly an aircraft for pleasure and/or for private business purposes, but not commercially for hire or reward. It allows ordinary people an extraordinary freedom – like visiting friends in another state for the day!”

Monday through Friday, if meteorological conditions are right, twelve noon can’t come soon enough for Jonathan. Depending on the wind, pressure, and visibility he can look forward to his flight group being called to fly.