

Starting a Robotics Club or Team

To assist schools and systems in expanding quality STEM experiences for students, the LDOE has developed tools and resources to support the implementation of STEM programming. This guide, along with other resources, can be found on the [STEM Initiative web page](#) and should be used to support educators who would like to start a robotics club or team.

1. Find a Mentor or Coach

Seek out a knowledgeable and willing mentor or coach to lead students and start a robotics program at your school. This could be a teacher, an employee from an industry partner, or a parent with a STEM-related profession such as a carpenter, engineer, or computer programmer. Identify other adults who can assist, as more than one adult is necessary for success.

2. Research and Gather Information

- Contact your regional [LASTEM](#) center to explore robotics clubs and programs utilized in your region.
- Consider what is needed to establish and sustain the club: time to build, costs for supplies and [competitions](#), funding sources, club sponsors, and targeted student population. Some materials can be reused each year, but some costs, such as competition fees, will recur yearly.
- Review available programs such as [VEX](#), [FIRST](#), and [SeaPerch](#) to determine which one best fits the needs of your audience.

3. Obtain Administrator Approval

- Explain the benefits of a robotics club on campus.
 - Robotics builds real-world and career-based skills in engineering and computer programming and offers the opportunity for application of the “Four Cs”: Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity.
- Present an outline plan for the club or team.
- Determine if your robotics club will participate in competitions. Consider the cost to register clubs or teams for a competition season or individual competitions. Understand the time commitments involved in competitions that typically span a full day and may occur on weekends.

4. Secure Funding

- Seek funding through local businesses and industry partners, parent-teacher associations, or grants specific to STEM education or the competition program.
- Expenses may include team registration fees, equipment, materials, competition fees, and travel.

Grant Opportunities			
FIRST Robotics Team	VEX Robotics Team	NASA FIRST Robotics	DOW FIRST Robotics

5. Form a Club or Team

- Host an interest meeting that describes the robotics program, time commitment, and benefits.
- Once students decide to join, assign team roles such as team captain, programmer, designer, builder, strategist, and any other roles you may foresee.