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Midland Independent School District

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MISD ROBOTICS TEAMS CONTINUE TO EXCEL

Contact: Jeff Horner, Midland High School Principal, 689-1100, Stephanie Howard, Lee High School Principal, 689-1600, and Curt Cowdrey, Robotics Coordinator, 689-1350.

Students in Midland ISD have more opportunities than ever to be involved in robotics programs. This is the first year for robotics program classes at Alamo and Abell junior high schools, Pease Communication & Technology Academy, and Carver Center. These schools join Midland and Lee high schools, San Jacinto and Goddard junior high schools, and Washington Math & Science Institute in offering robotics classes and teams.

The teams continue to excel. On February 4, the Midland High School and Lee High School First Tech Challenge Robotics Teams competed in the Panhandle Plains Regional Qualifier in Lubbock. From MHS, **Junkyard Dogs Team 4906** received the *Inspire Award*, and members were *Overall Game Winners*, and **Bodacious Dawgs Team 4897** received the *Think Award*, and members were *Alliance Winners*. From LHS, **GearHeads Team 4885** and **Robo Junkies Team 4886** made it to the Alliance Elimination Playoff Rounds. The two **MHS teams** and the **LHS GearHeads** will advance to the Panhandle Championships on March 3. During the competition, teams use Lego Tetrax and Mindstorm NXT kits to design, build, program and run robots. Students design robots for specific functions that they execute to gain points. Teams also give interviews in order to demonstrate design process, thinking ability, sponsorship and community involvement. Curt Cowdrey, MISD robotics coordinator for junior high schools, and consultant for elementary and high school students, said “We are excited to have a chance to move on to the Worlds FTC competition in St. Louis on April 25 if they do well in March.”

The robotics program has grown throughout the district after Washington MSI began offering robotics in an after-school program five years ago. The popularity of robotics has grown, as has the success of MISD students in competition. Several MISD teams have advanced to state robotics competition and placed in the top ten. Cowdrey said part of the success of the program is in increasing students’ exposure and knowledge of technical education courses. “The younger students have new avenues for learning, and the older students now have an opportunity to expand their career options as they look into college.”

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Our future is even brighter!