



# News

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** March 03, 2023

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## **Six Baldwin Park STEM Academy Robotics Teams Showcase Skills and Teamwork**

**BALDWIN PARK** – Six robotics teams from Baldwin Park Unified School District’s BP STEM Academy have qualified for the VEX Robotics State Championships in early March, showcasing the students’ critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities and teamwork.

The two elementary teams will compete Saturday, March 4 at the Maywood Center for Enrichment, and the secondary teams will compete Sunday, March 5 at Damien High School.

Four of the teams advancing are comprised of secondary-level students, including two seventh-grade teams who earned spots in the state championships as a result of their performance at a tournament earlier in the year where they earned Tournament Finalist awards. Another team qualified for the State Championships after being named Robotic Skills Champions at the Río Hondo League finals on Jan. 21.

“I’m extremely proud of our teams for making it this far,” said Tom Lau, STEM teacher and head coach for BP STEM Academy’s robotics teams. “I expected nothing less from these young teams, as BPUSD is a VEX competitive hub in the San Gabriel Valley.”

The elementary teams’ advancement to the state championships exemplifies the strength of the Academy’s robotics program, which was offered at the elementary level for the first time this year.

“I am very pleased with the progress of these two teams, especially considering most of them have not had any experience on a team, programming, or building anything resembling what they are currently doing,” Assistant Coach Andrew Lawson said. “They have had to be resourceful problem solvers throughout the season and have learned a lot.”

Both the elementary and middle school teams are preparing for the upcoming competition by updating and redesigning their programming, as well as practicing driving and directing the robots every day after school.

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The VIQC game at the elementary level consists of the teams' robots collecting as many discs as they can in 60 seconds from five different dispensers and moving them under a bar to another location. The VRC game at the secondary level involves the teams' robots picking up five-inch foam discs and shooting them into small baskets on the opposite side of the field to earn points. Robots can earn more points by manipulating rollers to reflect the color of their team.

Teams who advance in the State Championships will compete in the World Championships in Dallas later in the year.

"BP STEM Academy is thrilled to be represented by so many of our robotics teams in the upcoming state championships," BP STEM Academy Principal Mike Rust said. "We are confident that our students will achieve success in their competition, and can't wait to see what they do next."

**PHOTO:**

**BPUSD\_ BP STEM Robotics:** Six BP STEM Academy robotics teams are advancing to the state championships in early March to show off their programming and driving skills. Four of the teams consist of secondary-level students, and the other two of elementary-level students, showcasing the great range of talent in the District.

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