



“FIRST is more than robots. The robots are a vehicle for students to learn important life skills. Kids often come in not knowing what to expect – of the program nor of themselves. They leave, even after the first season, with a vision, with confidence, and with a sense that they can create their own future”

DEAN KAMEN

(<http://www.firstinspires.org/about/vision-and-mission>)

Dear Middle School North Families,

The beacon of our school district is our mission: *To inspire all students to be passionate, continuous learners and to prepare them with the skills to achieve their goals and flourish as responsible, caring citizens in a global community.* In his quote above, Dean Kamen—founder of *FIRST* (the “leading, not-for-profit STEM engagement program for kids worldwide”¹)—echoes our district’s mission. *FIRST* learning experiences are in line with our mission, are enriching and meaningful, and are enjoyed by students around the world. We are thrilled to inform you that *FIRST* LEGO League (FLL)—one in a progression of K-12 *FIRST* programs—is now available to MSN students via a pilot season. Learning from this pilot will inform the expansion of FLL across District 95 next year. This pilot is made possible in part by a generous grant from the School District 95 Educational Foundation. We ask that you please consider your child’s participation in MSN’s FLL team.

FLL teams “research a real-world problem such as food safety, recycling, energy, etc., and are challenged to develop a solution. They also must design, build, [and] program a robot using LEGO MINDSTORMS[®], then compete on a table-top playing field. It all adds up to tons of fun while they learn to apply science, technology, engineering, and math concepts (STEM), plus a big dose of imagination, to solve a problem. Along their journey, they develop critical thinking and team-building skills, basic STEM applications, and even presentation skills, as they must present their solutions with a dash of creativity to judges. They also practice the Program’s Core Values, which emphasize discovery, teamwork and good sportsmanship.”² The Core Values support the students in acquiring the traits of the District 95 mission.

Please note the following important information about MSN’s FLL team:

- All students are welcome; a variety of skill levels, interests, and backgrounds is an asset.
- The team has a cap of 10 students.
- Students will be selected to participate on this team through a lottery system.
- **Registration for the lottery will take place via the following form: goo.gl/D3xBvM**
 - **Please register for the lottery by Friday, February 10 at 5:00 p.m.**
- Team meetings will run after school (2:20-4:00 p.m.) in Mr. Heisler’s classroom (MSN B206).
- Students on the team should commit to attend the entirety of all team meetings:
 - Friday, February 24
 - Friday, March 3
 - Friday, March 10
 - Friday, March 17
 - Friday, March 24
 - Friday, April 7
 - **Thursday**, April 13
 - Friday, April 21

- Friday, April 28
 - Friday, May 5
 - Friday, May 12
 - **Tuesday**, May 16
 - **Thursday**, May 25
 - Friday, June 2
- The team's coach is Mr. Billy Heisler (MSN 6th grade science teacher).
 - The participation fee is \$25, which is consistent with the fees of other District 95 middle school activities.
 - This school year, the FLL team will not take part in FLL competitions. In future school years, though, the team may compete.
 - Participation on the team this pilot season does not guarantee participation on the team in future years.
 - For more information about FLL, please visit the FLL website:
<http://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/fl>

We hope that you share in our excitement for MSN's FLL team, and that you will consider your child's participation in it. We cannot wait to work with, learn from, and be inspired by your child.

Sincerely,

-Mr. Todd Jakowitsch and Mr. Billy Heisler

¹ <http://www.firstinspires.org/about/vision-and-mission>

² <http://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/fl>