

THE SITUATION

Educational Services and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas (ESSDACK) is a non-profit educational center for a group of primarily rural school districts that is recognized as its own school district by the Kansas State Department of Education. They seek to open a talent pipeline needed for business and industry while also helping participating students see more relevance in their core math, science, and computer science learning in the classroom. Prior to the fall of 2016, Kansas had four elementary and middle school VEX IQ Challenge robotics teams and 41 VEX Robotics Competition robotics teams. The VEX IQ Challenge failed to secure the minimum number of teams needed for a qualifying event and VEX Robotics Competition struggled to take root.

THE REC FOUNDATION APPROACH

The REC Foundation strives to make its programs affordable, accessible, and sustainable. Working with a wide variety of community partners including school districts, military installations, and nontraditional schools, the REC Foundation targets the use of VEX Robotics Competition programming to increase support to underserved populations.

THE SOLUTION

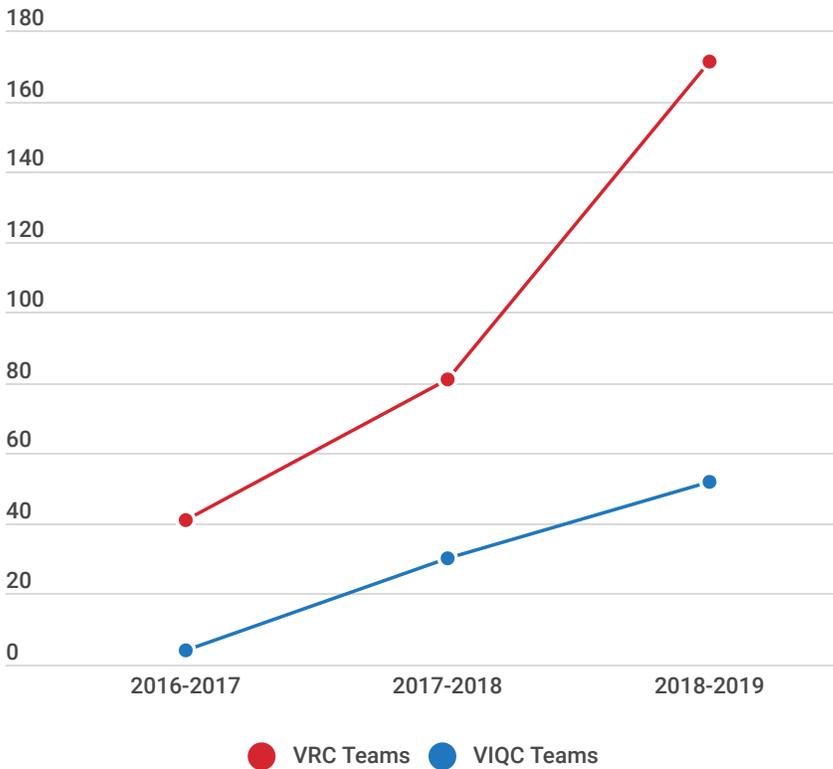
In the Spring of 2017, the REC Foundation entered into a regional grant with ESSDACK to bring an immediately sustainable robotics program to the area. The grant was a success, and was continued into the 2018-2019 season. The grant included:

- VEX IQ Challenge Grant Kits
- VEX Robotics Competition Grant Kits
- Sponsored Event Bundles for both programs
- Competition Fields and Materials for both programs
- Professional Development and Training

THE RESULTS

The grant has greatly expanded the number of elementary and secondary schools in Kansas participating in competitive robotics, serving at least 59 member school districts that request various school district support services. ESSDACK has become a support platform for schools in the state, loaning materials and fields to those who need them. Their support allows more schools to host tournaments, as well as allow schools that would otherwise not be able to host tournaments the opportunity to do so.

ESSDACK has seen more students leaving high school and entering higher education programs within STEM fields. Because of this project, ESSDACK has been able to grow robotics usage in schools and grow connections to industry after graduation.



“As a result of the District Grant, at least three more school districts would like to join competitive robotics for 2019-2020 through our project, and we expect that our workforce talent pipeline will continue to expand. At least two of our project’s competition students from the last two years have now gone on to WSU Tech in Wichita to pursue the robotics technician post secondary program with the goal to have a career in the industry as a certified robotics technician!”

- Clelia McCrory
ESSDACK

“Robotics has been an excellent opportunity for students in our district to demonstrate a multitude of skills. To be successful in robotics, students must complete the engineering process as they are faced with a problem and create a solution. This continues through the robot build as students test their solution, evaluate results and make modifications. Student also complete a similar process while coding. As students successfully build their robots, they also improve their team-building skills, working together to produce the best results possible. Within their teams, students specialize in particular aspects of the activity they enjoy most, and gain appreciation for diversity of ideas.”

- Jeff Jones
Superintendent
Western Plains School District
Ransom, KS



Robotics Education & Competition Foundation
Inspiring students, one robot at a time.
(903) 401-8088 RoboticsEducation.org

