



# Los Alamos Public Schools

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## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### Project VeX Robotics Team places 3<sup>rd</sup>

The Mountain Elementary School Robotics Team, Project VeX, traveled to Arizona Dec. 1-3 to compete in the Northern Arizona VeX IQ Challenge. Out of 40 teams, they finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the skills portion of the competition, an impressive feat for a brand new team. Not only was this the first competition for the young team, they were also the only team from New Mexico.

Mountain's PE teacher, Tony Hinojosa, lead the budding team of nine 6<sup>th</sup> grade students (including his son) who met after school every Monday for two hours to work on designing, building, and programming a competition robot. Project VeX, named after the building platform they use, had about seven weeks to prepare before traveling to Arizona to compete against 40 other teams.

This year, the challenge game was "Ringmaster" and the object of the game was to attain the highest score by successfully placing colored rings on a 4'x8' rectangular field with posts. There were two main categories in the competition: the Teamwork Challenge and the Robot Skills Challenge. Project VeX placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Skills Challenge, which consisted of a driver controlled round and an autonomous round.

Although getting ready for the competition had its stressors, Hinojosa said, "The students overall had a really good experience," and were pleased with the results. Considering it was their first contest ever, the team finished really well and worked together to get through the struggles.

While this team may be new, they mean serious business. The students had no prior experience with the VeX platform, but committed to learning it, building the robot, and traveling to Arizona as part of being accepted onto the team.

Even with their outstanding success at the competition, the 6<sup>th</sup> graders were highly motivated to improve, especially after seeing other teams' robots. So after the competition, the students totally dismantled the contest robot, divided into teams, and plan to build new robots for friendly competitions between each other.

Hinojosa hopes to keep his core group of team members but plans to open it up to other 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders at Mountain, and hopefully, the students will continue this hobby into middle school.

Hinojosa would like give a special thanks to the Mountain School PTA and Northern NM ASME, both of whom provided grants to purchase the equipment.

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