



## Hawai'i Space Grant Consortium

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### More than 30 Hawai'i VEX® Robotics teams qualify for World event

HONOLULU (March 29, 2022) – Sponsored by Hawaiian Electric, the Hawai'i VEX Robotics State Championships held in February and March qualified 32 out of 77 Hawai'i VEX robotics teams to advance to the 2022 VEX Robotics World Championship in Dallas, May 3-12.

Hawai'i elementary, middle and high school robotics teams will showcase their game strategy, design and teamwork skills for an opportunity to be crowned champions at the world-class global event. For the first time since the pandemic, the event will be held in-person with a live spectator audience. Portions of the event will be done digitally and remotely.

Advancing from O'ahu are Hāle'iwa Elementary School (2 teams), Highlands Intermediate School (2 teams), Island Robotics from Waipahu (2 teams), Ka'ōhāo Public Charter School (2 teams), Kapolei Middle School (2 teams), Mānoa Elementary School (4 teams), Mililani Mauka Elementary School, Mililani Mechs Robotics, Musubi Robotics (Wai'anae), Nānākuli Intermediate School, Pearl City High School (3 teams), Sacred Hearts Academy, Saint Louis School (3 teams), Wai'anae High & Intermediate School (3 teams), and Wai'anae Intermediate School.

A team from Wai'anae Intermediate School on Hawai'i Island and two teams from Pukalani STEM Imagineers Robotics in Kula, Maui also qualified to participate in the VEX Worlds.

For a complete list of team standings at the Hawai'i VEX Robotics State Championships, visit:

- VEX IQ Middle: <https://www.robotevents.com/robot-competitions/vex-iq-challenge/RE-VIQC-21-6362.html#awards>
- VEX IQ Elementary: <https://www.robotevents.com/robot-competitions/vex-iq-challenge/RE-VIQC-22-6333.html#awards>
- VRC: <https://www.robotevents.com/robot-competitions/vex-robotics-competition/RE-VRC-21-5163.html#awards>

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At the state championships, Hawaiian Electric, Kamehameha Schools – Kapālama, Saint Louis School, University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, Gayle Kamei and Jon Kitagawa of Waiakea Intermediate School, Matt Eftink of St. Joseph High School, and Master Chief Richard Enright of Nānākuli High & Intermediate School were named “Partners of the Year” for their long-standing support and partnership with Hawai‘i VEX Robotics.

Teacher of the Year honor was awarded to Joan Okai of Highlands Intermediate School. Okai, who retired in December 2021, continues to mentor the Highlands robotics team.

VEX Robotics is an educational robotics program that inspires students to excel in STEM principles while encouraging creativity, teamwork, leadership and problem solving among groups.

Robotics competitions foster these skills and prepare students to become future innovators as well as increase their interest in pursuing STEM careers. Tournaments are held year-round at the regional, state and national levels, and culminate in the VEX Robotics World Championship. There are approximately 20,000 teams from 45 countries participating in VEX tournaments.

Locally, the Hawai‘i Space Grant Consortium (HSGC) oversees the Hawai‘i VEX Robotics Competitions with funding through the University of Hawai‘i Foundation. Expanded opportunities for space education through the efforts of the Hawai‘i Space Grant Consortium have been focused on the public, particularly teachers and students in grades kindergarten through twelve. In August 2021, HSGC hired a fulltime robotics engineering education specialist, Adria Fung. Adria is a product of the K-12 robotics pipeline, having been part of the robotics team at Sacred Hearts Academy for four years. During her months at HSGC thus far, she has conducted various remote and in-person trainings and workshops for coaches, teachers, and students, developing a robotics curriculum for STEM/robotics classes, and mentored teachers and students in rookie robotics programs.

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Note to media: Team photos from the three Hawai‘i VEX Robotics State Championships available. Please email [afung@higp.hawaii.edu](mailto:afung@higp.hawaii.edu) for Google Drive link.