

The logo for the UIL Robotics event. It features the letters 'UIL' in a dark blue, bold, sans-serif font. The letter 'U' contains a white silhouette of the state of Texas. A red five-pointed star is positioned above the 'I'. To the right of 'UIL', the word 'Robotics' is written in a light blue, sans-serif font.

# UIL Robotics

Student Activities Conferences 2018

David Trussell, Director of STEM Activities

# Pilot No More!

Robotics is now an officially sanctioned UIL contest

Follows 2 ½ years as a very successful pilot program

So what does this mean...?

and

What is UIL Robotics  
all about anyway...?

# Today We'll Cover

- ▶ A bit of background
- ▶ Ramifications of official status
- ▶ Program structure and rules
- ▶ Competition specifics
  - ▶ Including this year's official FTC kickoff!
- ▶ How to participate
- ▶ So first a little background...

# The How - Development Timeline

- ▶ In the beginning...
- ▶ Pilot authorization October 2014
- ▶ Program launch about a year later
- ▶ 2 ½ years as a pilot
- ▶ Approval for official adoption in October 2017, effective for the 2018-2019 school year

# The Why

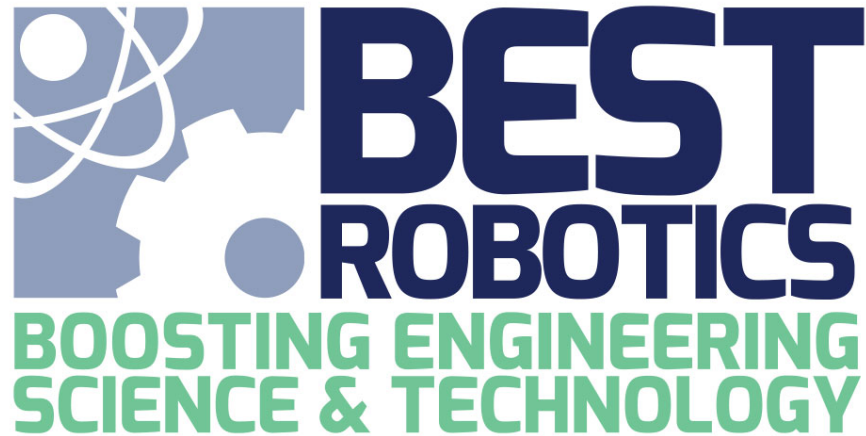
- ▶ New directions for UIL Academics - a perfect fit!
- ▶ Different types of contests to open UIL participation to more students
  - ▶ Followed successful launch of Film and Congressional Debate
- ▶ Project-based, creative, collaborative
- ▶ Growth for UIL STEM activities

# Considerations

- ▶ Robotics already well-established in Texas
- ▶ Multiple organizations, many UIL schools already participating
- ▶ Where would UIL fit? How could we add value?
- ▶ Do we build a new contest ourselves, or do we work within the existing landscape?
- ▶ After much deliberation, we chose the latter option

# Program Structure

- ▶ UIL Robotics is a collaboration
- ▶ Working with two partner organizations  
(throughout the pilot and continuing this year)





# Participating in UIL Robotics means...

- ▶ Registering a team and participating with BEST or *FIRST*
- ▶ Or both - your school can compete in both divisions
- ▶ UIL Robotics - *FIRST* Division includes two distinct contests-FRC and FTC (more on that later)
- ▶ Other Robotics programs
  - ▶ While not part of UIL Robotics, competitions such as VEX or TCEA robotics are also options your school can consider
- ▶ Some schools include multiple competition platforms in their robotics programs

# Program Structure

- ▶ No UIL district or regional contests for Robotics
- ▶ Qualification to the UIL Robotics State Championships is based on your team's scores in the *FIRST* or BEST qualifier meets you participate in
- ▶ The UIL State Championships are invitational
- ▶ Invitations are based on performance in those qualifier meets plus consideration of the number of competing teams in a given location
- ▶ The number of slots available is based on what the venue and schedule will allow
  - ▶ Waiting lists are maintained

# Competition Season - BEST

- ▶ Runs entirely in the fall
- ▶ Kickoff events in early September
- ▶ Six-week build season
- ▶ Practice days and qualifier meets in October through early November
- ▶ UIL State Championships (and Texas BEST Regional) in late November/early December
- ▶ This year: Nov. 29 - Dec. 1, 2018

# Competition Season - *FIRST*

- ▶ FTC (*FIRST* Tech Challenge) kicks off in early September
- ▶ Open build season
- ▶ Qualifier meets December-February
- ▶ FRC (*FIRST* Robotics Competition) kickoff in early January
- ▶ Six week build season (then bag and tag)
- ▶ Qualifier meets late February-March
- ▶ UIL State Championships in early April
  - ▶ This year April 4-6, 2019
- ▶ *FIRST* World Championships in mid-April (in Houston)

# Robotics and UIL Rules

- ▶ BEST and *FIRST* are independent organizations that have their own rules and guidelines
- ▶ UIL rules determine team eligibility to compete for UIL Championships and specify championship criteria
- ▶ *FIRST* and BEST rules will determine how the contests are run - contest structure, judging, scoring, etc.

# Robotics and UIL Rules

- ▶ Both *FIRST* and BEST allow participation by teams that are not eligible for UIL competition (private schools, club teams, etc.)
- ▶ Those teams will continue to participate but only UIL-eligible teams will be ranked to qualify for and win UIL State Championships
  - ▶ Two-track scoring

# Team Composition and Student Eligibility

- ▶ To be eligible for UIL honors, teams must be:
  - ▶ High school-based
  - ▶ Have a majority of students in grades 9-12
- ▶ UIL rules do not allow for the awarding of middle school state championships

# Team Composition

- ▶ Pilot status allowed for some flexibility in team structures
- ▶ **Continues with official status:** High school-based teams that include some middle school students (composite teams) are eligible for UIL state championships
- ▶ **New this year with official status:** Teams that include students from multiple high school campuses (combined teams) are NOT eligible for UIL state championships
  - ▶ Primarily affects FRC



# Team Composition

- ▶ Q: Why the change on combined teams?
- ▶ A: Students representing the campus they attend is a core principle of UIL rules
- ▶ Equitable competition
- ▶ Maximize participation opportunities

# Team Composition

- ▶ Teams that do not meet the criteria for UIL eligibility can continue to participate with *FIRST* or BEST
- ▶ Non-UIL teams (home school teams, club-based teams, etc.) are not eligible to receive UIL awards or championships, but can receive awards from *FIRST* or BEST and advance in those organizational structures
- ▶ Also applies for middle school based teams
- ▶ Under official status, also applies for combined teams

# Robotics and UIL Classifications

- ▶ Robotics is not split into conferences 1A-6A
- ▶ BEST Division and FTC in the FIRST Division:
  - ▶ Two competition groups and two state champions: small school (1A-4A) and large school (5A-6A)
- ▶ FRC uses a single competition group
- ▶ Further divisional splits will be evaluated and phased in based on participation

# Important Changes with Official Status

- ▶ Robotics will now receive points toward overall Academics State Championships
- ▶ No district or regional points
  - ▶ Awarded at the state level only

# Important Changes with Official Status

- ▶ Some State Robotics participants will now earn TILF scholarship eligibility
- ▶ Must be on a team that finishes ranked in the top 10 for their competition group at State
  - ▶ Additional details soon on the UIL website
- ▶ More about TILF...

# Important Changes with Official Status

- ▶ Lone Star Cup points!
- ▶ Specifications are being finalized
- ▶ Adjusted criteria will be posted on the UIL website

# Local policies

- ▶ These items are governed by your school district, not UIL rules:
- ▶ Policies for which students receive letters or letter jackets
- ▶ Policies concerning teacher compensation (stipends paid to coaches, etc.)
- ▶ Policies on use of facilities, transportation, etc.

# How to Participate

- ▶ Begin planning at least one school year BEFORE you want to start your program
- ▶ Register a team
- ▶ Get connected with local competition groups
- ▶ Build your robot
- ▶ Compete in *FIRST* or BEST qualifier meets
- ▶ Invites to UIL State Championships based on qualifier meet performance



# Resources

- ▶ Teacher training workshops
  - ▶ UIL Capital Conference
  - ▶ Competition-specific workshops
- ▶ Robotics organizations
  - ▶ BEST of Texas
  - ▶ FIRST in Texas
- ▶ Networking and mentors

# Competition Events

- ▶ Events are free to attend
- ▶ See BEST and *FIRST* websites for qualifier meets in your area
- ▶ UIL Robotics State Championships for 2018-2019:
- ▶ BEST Division - Nov. 29 - Dec.1, 2018 - Dr Pepper Arena in Frisco
- ▶ FIRST Division - April 4-6, 2019 - Palmer Events Center in Austin