



**News release**  
**Dec. 19, 2017**

## **47 robotics teams compete locally; six advance to January semifinals**

*Elementary and middle school teams were winners in December tourney*

In December, 47 Everett Public Schools elementary and middle school robotics teams tested their coding skills and creativity against a cadre of other regional districts – vying for a chance to compete in the January semifinals at the Seattle Amazon Doppler building.

After two weekends of qualifying rounds, six of the 47 earned semi-final slots. In addition to securing a trip to one of the region's most iconic Seattle facilities and notable high-tech businesses, five of the six semifinalists earned other impressive awards in the December tournaments:

- The *Cedar Wood Robotics* group is proud of its *Robot Design and Innovation* award it will carry forward into the January competition.
- Cedar Wood's second team, *Cedar Wood Cyborgs*, is a new team off to a great start with its *Rising Star Award*.
- North Middle School's *Salty NERDS' saBOTage* won the *Robot Mechanical Design* award, and that school's student team snagged the judges' *Innovative Solution Award*.
- The *Aquasparks* of Gateway Middle School head into Seattle bearing the regional award for *Robot Design and Programming*.
- Heatherwood Middle School's team *Robohawks* earned the coveted *Core Values Award for Gracious Professionalism* and will carry it proudly in the tournament.
- Mill Creek's *Space Tacos* are elated with their solid semifinal status at regionals and determined to earn other awards while at Amazon.



*Gateway Middle School Aquasparks team intensely watches their machine perform. Their robot earned a special award in December tournaments for its design and programming. This team and five others compete at robotics semifinals in Seattle in January.*

Including the high school teams, Everett Public Schools has 50 robotics teams in its 26 schools. Four years ago, there were only a few robotics teams in Everett Public Schools.

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## What's behind the robotics surge, and why are robotics teams a good thing for students?

In November 2013, the Boeing Company, city of Everett, Frontier Communications, Providence Health and Services and Everett Public Schools Foundation pooled [\\$90,000 to launch](#) the district's K-12 STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) trajectory.

The initial \$90,000 partnership hired a half time STEM Director and established STEM curriculum in every school at every grade level. Many school districts put STEM classes only at certain grade levels or in so-called *magnet schools*.

"Our community, in a series of symposia sessions in 2011, [2012](#) and 2013, told us equitable access is a high priority here, so rather than make access to STEM learning exclusive, we made it absolutely inclusive," explains Superintendent Gary Cohn.

Part of that inclusiveness is evident in the district's support of robotics teams wherever students, parents and volunteers come together to build and code machines and take on the tournament challenges.

Robotics teams prepare for competitions by tackling a real-world problem. That might be an issue of energy or chemical contamination. It might be a challenge to improve recycling or keep food or water safe. They design a solution for the problem, build and program a robot to use in the solution and then compete against other teams' solutions on a table-top robotics field.

STEM skills are vital for today's students as they get ready to enter the global workforce. In robotics, students apply STEM skills, and they learn to code. Equally as important, they practice leadership, community engagement and communication person-to-person, in groups and across different technology platforms. They find and explore their passions and develop team skills.

These experiences and lessons position them to be productive and successful in school and beyond their school years.

Feb. 13, 2018, voters will weigh in on a [Capital Bond](#) that includes funding to remodel sections of existing high schools to include vocational training centers in which students will learn and apply STEM skills in preparation for high-tech, high-demand and high-paying careers.

- Cascade High – Aerospace & Advanced Manufacturing
- Everett High – Medical & Health
- Jackson High – Information & Communications Technology
- High School #4 – Energy & Sustainability

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