

2015 IndianaFIRST Mentor Meeting
9/10/15
Katz, Sapper, & Miller, 800 E 96th St, Indianapolis, IN 46240

Audience Questions:

Why are so many of the district events Saturday-Sunday?

A lot of this had to do with venue availability. The Competition Committee is working to release the bid package for hosting a 2017 District Event earlier to allow locations more time to identify available weeks and give the Competition Committee more options.

Two District Events are Saturday-Sunday. One District Event is Friday-Saturday. The State Championship is Friday-Saturday.

Can the District Events start later in the day on Saturday (first day of competition)?

This is something the Competition Committee will look into.

Does the BOD know anything about neighboring states going District in 2017? The rumor is that both Illinois and Ohio will be District sites in 2017.

The BOD doesn't know any specifics. Representatives from Ohio will be at the CAGE Match to discuss Districts with the IndianaFIRST leadership. Illinois is on a similar path. We have heard from FIRST HQ that the expansion of the new, small, single-state Districts in 2016 is based largely on the success of Indiana Districts in 2015. Georgia and North Carolina are similar situations to Indiana.

There is a rumor that Michigan is closing its District Events to inter-District play, locking out teams who aren't in Michigan. Has the BOD heard anything about this?

The BOD hasn't heard anything firm. FIRST did move up Inter-District event registration based on feedback from Districts. [Here is a recent blog post about it.](#) The primary objective for any District is to make sure that teams in that area have access to two events before outside teams come in. Because of this and the large number of rookie teams Michigan has (70 in 2015), they are cautious to open district slots. As any more detail comes available, the BOD will let teams know. This question can also be posted directly to FIRST by commenting on Frank's Blog post or by emailing frcteams@usfirst.org.

The slides mentioned wanting to expand the Executive Advisory Board (EAB) to eight members by 2018. What is a suggested profile for potential EAB members?

The ideal candidate comes from a strong sponsor of teams and/or events. They can be from small or large companies. The goal is to help leverage their knowledge to help build the STEM community. Ideally they are in a position to hire FIRST alums. It is not required that they have direct FIRST experience.

Will the State Championship be a 2-day event or a 3-day event?

This will be a decision made soon by the Competition Committee and the local planning committee with input from teams. An advantage to the 2-day event is the extra Un-bag time that teams get. If the event were a "traditional" schedule (3-day event), teams would not receive that time.

How can we better engage PLTW to help increase school support? Lack of school support was a consistent reason we are losing teams.

This is a common concern among many teams, not just in Indiana. FIRST HQ has released some

standards to help align FIRST programs with the classroom. Historically, FIRST has made a strategic decision to not be an education organization, instead focusing on being an after-school program. This may be changing. FIRST is working on an FTC-based curriculum. View the: [USFIRST Analysis of Relevant Educational Standards Report](#). Please note that you will need to fill out a form to receive a copy of the report.

Additionally, Steve Florence is working on a governmental task force to better align FIRST programs to Indiana education standards. That bill was killed in committee in the last legislative session. They are trying again.

Teams 829 and 135 have made good strides at integrating FIRST into their school curriculum. Team 135 will be doing a presentation on their success at the Indiana FIRST Forums.

FTC has now also made VEX components explicitly legal, with the exception of the control system. So, if your school wants to use VEX in the classroom, it's possible to reuse a lot of those same components (including motors) for an FTC team.

IndianaFIRST seems to be very focused on FRC right now. What are we doing to support the other programs?

FTC and FLL/Jr.FLL are represented in the state by program partners and fiscal agents. IndianaFIRST is the fiscal agent for FRC. Lori Hall is the Partner for FTC with Purdue as the fiscal agent. Carol Dostal is the partner for FLL with IPFW as the fiscal agent.

The long-term (2018) goal is to better leverage the progression of FIRST programs and identify ways that IndianaFIRST can support the other programs. Steve Florence is leading the group investigating the best way to do this.

This is something IndianaFIRST looked at in 2015. With the change to districts, the BOD thought it would be too much to try to do at that time. IndianaFIRST will continue to provide support for the other programs, including encouraging FRC teams to support those programs and working to have multi-program representation at demonstrations.

This is something that PNW and Washington FIRST Robotics have done very well, and we will learn from their success.

What are the BOD's thoughts on the [new PNW District funding model](#)? ([Additional Chief Delphi discussion](#))

This is something the BOD is very interested in watching. In this model all of the funds raised by IndianaFIRST would go to offset team expenses. When fundraising, it is much easier to raise funds "for teams" than to cover things like operating expenses.

A funding model similar to this is the goal for IndianaFIRST, and it would not be entered into lightly or without significant team input.

The slides shows a new line item for Operational Expenses. Where does this come from and why is it new for 2015?

This is really a change in accounting from how FIRST HQ allocated funds to how IndianaFIRST allocates and tracks funds. Prior to 2015, Operational Expenses (most notably compensation for regional

employees) were rolled into event expenses. In 2015, we decided to break that information out to make it more transparent to teams and easier to track.

How do we begin to approach the success athletics has had at gaining sustainability in schools? It was noted that a school is potentially losing its FRC team while planning to put new turf in its football stadium.

One suggestion was to continue to highlight our success stories with individual student's stories.

We are working with Michigan and [RoboZone](#) to continue to make our events more accessible to the general public.

It was also suggested that we continue to push in the political arena to get a stronger foothold in the schools.

This could be a potential project for the PR & Marketing Committee that has been created to help with internal (team-focused) communications and external (community-focused) communications.