



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Sherry Comer
573-346-9233
scomer@camdentonschools.org

***FIRST* Announces Camdenton R-III as a *FIRST* Class School District**

MANCHESTER, N.H., January – [FIRST](#)[®] (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), an international K-12 not-for-profit organization founded by inventor Dean Kamen, today announced Camdenton R-III Schools as a *FIRST* Class School District, joining schools from across the United States that have committed to expanding STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning and engagement opportunities using *FIRST* programs through a five-year implementation plan.

“I am truly honored to welcome Camdenton R-III as a *FIRST* Class School District,” said Donald E. Bossi, president of *FIRST*. “I am grateful the district is committed to making *FIRST* part of its STEM engagement culture. We share a mission to inspire young minds and build a culture where young people dream of changing the world through innovation and creative problem solving.”

For nearly 30 years, dedicated educators and industry STEM professionals have used *FIRST* programs to teach students science, engineering, technology, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving skills through engaging, hands-on robotics challenges developed to ignite curiosity and passion.

The *FIRST* progression of mentor-guided, student-led STEM programs include [FIRST[®] LEGO[®] League Jr.](#) for students in grades K-4, [FIRST[®] LEGO[®] League](#) for grades 4-8, [FIRST[®] Tech Challenge](#) for grades 7-12, and [FIRST Robotics Competition](#) for grades 9-12.

FIRST partners with school districts to make *FIRST* programs available to a greater number of students in districts with a strong desire to impact students with high-quality STEM programs. Camdenton R-III Schools has committed to a plan that includes adding kindergarten and first grade FLLJr teams to the progression of FIRST teams in the district. In addition, a HS robotics class was added to the schedule this school year and the district will be piloting Jr. Discovery at preschool locations this semester. The Camdenton HS LASER 3284 team serves as the Central MO Affiliate for 61 counties and oversee FLL qualifying tournaments, the Championship and the official FLL Jr Expo for the region.

Dr. Tim Hadfield, Camdenton R-III Superintendent, "Becoming a FIRST partner made our district a better place for our students by providing them opportunities to explore STEM offerings that we could not previously offer." The district will gain access to *FIRST* local and corporate support, educator training and curriculum resources, *FIRST* education implementation specialists, sponsorship and grant opportunities, and over \$70 million in scholarships for high school students, as well as *FIRST* Alumni internship opportunities.

FIRST participation is proven to build self-confidence in students, as well as STEM and digital literacy skills required in today's technology-rich society. STEM competence and confidence creates pathways to well-paying jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities in the fastest-growing fields, creating the potential for young people to achieve purposeful and prosperous lives.

FIRST Class School Districts commit to creating new robotics teams and supporting existing *FIRST* teams over a five-year implementation period, as well as to ensuring success by making available educator training opportunities and recruiting participants and teacher coaches.

School districts interested in becoming a *FIRST* Class School District should contact Vinnie Rodino at vrodino@firstinspires.org.

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Visit www.laser3284.org to learn more about the Camdenton FIRST robotics system.

About *FIRST*[®]

Accomplished inventor [Dean Kamen](#) founded *FIRST*[®] (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) in 1989 to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, N.H., *FIRST* designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology, and engineering. With support from over 200 of the Fortune 500 companies and more than \$70 million in college scholarships, the not-for-profit organization hosts the [FIRST[®] Robotics Competition](#) for students in Grades 9-12; [FIRST[®] Tech Challenge](#) for Grades 7-12; [FIRST[®] LEGO[®] League](#) for Grades 4-8; and [FIRST[®] LEGO[®] League Jr.](#) for Grades K-4. [Gracious Professionalism[®]](#) is a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community. To learn more about *FIRST*, go to www.firstinspires.org

