

Mr. Ebersol's Woodie Flowers Finalist 2024 Submission

Dave Ebersol has played a substantial role in the development of The Career Academy Network of Public Schools, consisting of two high schools, one middle school, and two elementary schools. From being a teacher and head coach at Career Academy, to developing multiple new teams using Indiana's Department of Education (IDOE) Robotics grant, he continuously shows off the ideals of Woodie Flowers by leading, inspiring, and engaging the next generation of future problem solvers.

Leaders and mentors are the unsung heroes of the world, Dave Ebersol is the perfect example of this. He sets a strong example for the youth in our community and engages all ages in the excitement of *FIRST*. He also raises the team's mentor engagement to create a better experience and provide guidance for student-led projects by communicating with the mentors about what students need to succeed. Dave has done this consistently since Team 5484's inception and still works to provide the best experience for his students over a decade later.

On top of managing a *FIRST* Lego League team, two *FIRST* Tech Challenge teams, and two *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams, Dave maintains a 4.4 million dollar grant provided by the IDOE. This grant was designed to provide resources to engage and empower the local community of K-12 students using everyday engineering projects to create real-life STEM experiences. Hundreds of students in three makerspaces located in our community staffed with engaged teachers are bringing STEM into the classroom. To make STEM even more accessible, Dave has developed a mobile makerspace in collaboration with the Boys & Girls Club of Michiana (BGC) to involve even more youth. This makerspace travels to 26 BGC sites impacting over 1600 students. These programs have proven successful as they have produced the 2023 BGC "Youth of the Year," and direct admissions into Purdue University's College of Engineering two years in a row.

Dave had his start with *FIRST* when he was on FRC Team 135 during high school. At this time he saw a clear need for *FIRST* teams at schools that were low-income. Because of this, Dave had a dream to create an FRC team at a Title I school, meaning that the majority of the students come from families with income at or below the poverty line. Dave Ebersol encompasses equality by empowering and accepting the youth of any background, orientation, ethnicity, and gender. He ensures that everyone has a safe environment to explore who they are and what they want to achieve in his program. He encourages his students to work with other teams and the community by creating off-season events as well as using our space to house local world-class FTC teams, our local sister FRC team, and hosting FLL and FTC competitions and state championships in our schools for the greater community.

Dave Ebersol believes that you can change lives by building robots, and his decade of commitment to his community and team has proven that.