# IEEE Lone Star Section and San Antonio BEST Robotics

SA BEST and IEEE have worked together since 19xx to give secondary school students a hands-on experience in robotics. Proof of the program’s success is shown by the number of schools that enter teams and by the size of the waiting list each year.

Since the beginning (1993), the San Antonio “hub” provided kits of parts and materials to every entrant team. The earliest kits included surplus PC printers from which the students could harvest electromechanical parts, along with other materials suitable for building each year’s robot. Materials were provided at no charge to the school. Today’s kit is divided into a “consumable” part that contains wood, metal, and plastic materials to be used in construction, and a “return” part that contains higher-value electronics and electromechanical parts. As before, the kits are provided at no charge.

As the availability of surplus materials changed, BEST developed a robot controller for the “brain” of each project. IEEE Central Texas Section provided direct financial assistance during the development of the “brain” module. The economics of the competition have evolved to the point that today’s return kit has a commercially produced controller-receiver that is programmable using robot programming language and can operate autonomously on the playing field.

IEEE Central Texas Section, and now IEEE Lone Star Section, provide annual financial support to SA BEST, with some IEEE members providing volunteer operational support for each year’s competition.



