

**Mississippi State University**  
**Notice of Proposed Sole Source Purchase**  
**234-99**

Mississippi State University anticipates purchasing the item(s) listed below as a sole source purchase. Anyone objecting to this purchase shall follow the procedures outlined below.

1. Commodity or commodities to be purchased (make, model, description):

Qty: 50 Vex Robotics Go Education Kit with Storage

Qty: 300 Vex 123 Robots and Coder Bundle

Qty: 297 Vex 123 Fields

2. Explanation of the need to be fulfilled by this item(s), how is it unique from all other options, and why it is the only one that can meet the specific needs of the department:

During CCE's annual Summer Elementary Institute, the department gifts the teacher who participate in the 2 day training robots and other resources to take back to their class room. VEX's products offer learning in three stages, where other products on the market do not.

**Intuitive Introduction to Robotics and Coding:** VEX 123 is designed as an entry-level robot that introduces students to the concepts of robotics and coding in a very intuitive manner. Unlike many other educational robots that require a certain level of reading or coding skills, VEX 123 can be used by very young learners. It employs a simple, touch-based interface that allows students to interact with the robot directly, making it an excellent tool for teaching basic programming concepts through physical interaction.

**Scalability of Learning:** The VEX 123 system is designed to grow with the student. It starts with touch-based programming directly on the robot itself, progresses to graphical block-based coding via the VEX 123 Coder app, and eventually leads to more advanced coding opportunities. This scalability makes it unique in offering a seamless learning curve that can adapt to different age groups and skill levels within the K-12 spectrum.

**Curriculum and Educator Support:** VEX Robotics excels in providing comprehensive educational resources and curriculum support that are directly tied to STEM learning objectives and standards. The curriculum designed for VEX 123 is focused on not just teaching how to use the robot, but also on developing critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and computational thinking. This ensures that educators have a structured pathway to integrate robotics into their classrooms effectively.

**Integration with VEX Ecosystem:** VEX 123 is part of the broader VEX Robotics ecosystem, which includes a range of robots suitable for various educational levels, from elementary school through college. This integration means that students who start with VEX 123 can easily transition to more complex robots and challenges, such as VEX IQ or VEX V5, as they advance. This continuity supports sustained interest and deeper learning in STEM subjects.

**Durability and Classroom Readiness:** Designed with the classroom environment in mind, VEX 123 robots are built to withstand the rigors of frequent use by young learners. Their durability ensures that they can be a long-term investment for schools, unlike other educational robots that might require more delicate handling or frequent replacements.

**Accessibility and Inclusivity:** VEX 123 robots are designed to be accessible to a wide range of learners, including those with disabilities. The tactile interface and visual programming language are particularly beneficial for students with learning differences, making robotics education more inclusive.

**3. Name of company/individual selling the item and why that source is the only possible source that can provide the required item(s):**

Vex Robotics – the VEX 123 Robot is a 3 phased learning resource, which begins with simply touching the top to directionally program the robot. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase allows students to continue deeper programming concepts through using a coder card tablet and strips of block based code that's eventually blue toothed to the robot. The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase allows students to use an online platform to program the robot using block-based code or python. The phase 2 of the learning process is not available in any other known product.

**4. Estimated cost of item(s) and an explanation why the amount to be expended is considered reasonable:**

\$55,806.29. The per unit cost of these robots are comparable to other robots purchased in the past; however, VEX's product has added functionality.

**5. Explanation of the efforts taken by the department to determine this is the only source and the efforts used to obtain the best possible price:**

Vex Robotics – they are a wholly owned subsidiary of Innovation First International Inc. and the OEM sole source provider of VEX Robotics components and supplies.

Attached is a Sole Source letter from VEX Robotics.

Any person or entity that objects and proposes that the commodity listed is not sole source and can be provided by another person or entity shall submit a written notice to:

Jennifer Mayfield, CPPO  
Interim Deputy Director of Procurement & Contracts  
[jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu](mailto:jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu)  
Subject Line must read "Sole Source Objection"

The notice shall contain a detailed explanation of why the commodity is not a sole source procurement. Appropriate documentation shall also be submitted if applicable.

If after a review of the submitted notice and documents, MSU determines that the commodity in the proposed sole source request can be provided by another person or entity, then MSU will withdraw the sole source request publication from the procurement portal website and submit the procurement of the commodity to an advertised competitive bid or selection process.

If MSU determines after review that there is only one (1) source for the required commodity, then MSU will appeal to the Public Procurement Review Board. MSU will have the burden of proving that the commodity is only provided by one (1) source.