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Participation in the Kansas KidWind Challenge quadruples

The science behind wind energy has captured the attention of Kansas students and boosted the number of competitors in the state's KidWind Challenge from 17 teams in 2018 to 71 teams this year. The increased number of participants also prompted the addition of a fifth regional competition. Regional events begin on February 5 and continue through March 6 culminating in a state competition on April 4.

KidWind is an annual competition where student teams build and test their own wind turbines, then compete in a regional event for a chance to move on to state and national competitions. The events are part of the Energy Education partnership between the Kansas Corporation Commission and K-State Engineering Extension with a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy.

"KidWind is a fantastic hands-on opportunity that allows students to tinker and experiment with wind turbine designs. They experience the thrill of scientific discovery as their designs are validated through performance testing, and they hone their public-speaking skills as they present their turbine design to a panel of judges," explained David Carter, Director of the Kansas Energy Program at K-State Engineering Extension.

Tatum Vogel, a teacher at Dighton Elementary, said the skills her students learned from KidWind extended beyond science to include perseverance and other life skills.

"We went to the regional competition with a turbine that was heavy and barely turned. We weren't out of the city limits that day, and these students had already redesigned the entire top. The life skills involved were priceless. They had to communicate, work together, take initiative to learn more, and apply all the science and physics along the way," said Vogel.

Teams compete by age group, 4th – 8th grades or 9th – 12th grades, with three to five students per team (recommended). At each regional competition, the top two teams in each age group advance to the state finals. State winners move on to the national competition in Denver. The complete schedule of events appears below. All events are open to the public.

Region	Date	Location
Kansas City	Feb. 5	Olathe (Olathe West High School)
Northeast	Feb. 20	Manhattan (Unger Complex)
Southwest	Feb. 25	Dodge City (Village Square Mall)
Northwest	Feb. 27	Oakley (NW Kansas Educational Service Center)
Southeast	March 6	Burlington (Wolf Creek Nuclear Power Plant)
State Finals	April 4	Topeka (Topeka Center for Advanced Learning and Careers)
National Finals	June 1-4	Denver

More information about KidWind is available at https://kansasenergyprogram.org/kidwindchallenge.