



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **GCPS Explorers place in law enforcement competition**

Although relatively new, the Gwinnett County School Police Department's Explorers program is earning national attention. Having fewer than six months of training, team members earned third place in a competition involving more than 3,500 students. The Law Enforcement Explorer program provides young men and women interested in a law enforcement career an opportunity to better understand the role of law enforcement in today's society. The Explorer post also provides members with training and experience in leadership, teamwork, and positive self-confidence.

The Explorers traveled to Gatlinburg, TN for Winterfest, one of the largest competitions in the U.S. At Winterfest the cadets compete in more than 26 different law enforcement contests. Explorers from 103 law enforcement departments across the country were represented, including contestants from as far away as Wichita, Kansas. Gwinnett School Police Explorers competed in Class B Uniform, mock interview, tactical fitness, officer survival, DUI traffic stop, felony traffic stop, trouble unknown, and robbery in progress competitions. The team placed third in the Class B Uniform competition which, among other things, involved measuring the proper placement of collar brass on a uniform. Members of the team also finished in the top half of the rankings for felony traffic stop, and a student taking part in a mock job interview passed his employment interview and would have been offered the job.

"We proved a lot of people wrong," said **Joe Barnes**, a GCPS school resource officer who is a leader in the program. "We were told our team wouldn't win anything our first time there, but we did and I am so proud of the students and grateful for the officers who give their time and effort to train the kids. Without time and commitment, this trip would not have been possible." Barnes, who has been involved in this program since he was a teenager—both as a participant and an adult—says GCPS would like to encourage more students to get involved with Explorers. He says, "Many may not know about the program and do not realize the contributions it can make to a student's future."

The Explorer program is open to all high school students in Gwinnett County. For more information about the program contact Officer Joe Barnes at, 678-512-6045 or [Joe\\_barnes@gwinnett.k12.ga.us](mailto:Joe_barnes@gwinnett.k12.ga.us)

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