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ANDOVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENTS NAMED SEMIFINALISTS BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
Andover Middle School Students to Compete in Massachusetts State Competition in March 2019

Andover, Mass. -- **Aneesh Ratnala**, a seventh grade student at Doherty Middle School and **Abhinav Bapanapalli**, an eighth grade student at West Middle School, have qualified as semifinalists eligible to compete in the 2019 National Geographic *GeoBee Massachusetts State Competition*. The contest will be held at Elms College in Chicopee on Friday, March 29, 2019.

“Competing in the National Geographic *GeoBee* at the state level is a significant accomplishment for Aneesh and Abhinav,” notes Dr. Sheldon Berman, superintendent of Andover Public Schools. “They have both worked diligently to achieve this milestone in the competition, and the entire APS community will be cheering them on.”

“Aneesh is a dedicated student and has truly excelled in the *GeoBee* competition,” adds Doherty Middle School Principal Robin Wilson. “With the support of his social studies teacher, Colette Berard, we are confident that Aneesh will shine at the state level of the competition.”

“Abhinav is committed to his studies of global geography and is ready for the next phase of the *GeoBee*,” says Becky Franks, principal at West Middle School. “Abhinav’s social studies teacher Emily Thompson and the entire West Middle School community are excited to watch Abhinav as he moves forward in the competition.”

The state competition is the second level of the National Geographic *GeoBee*, which is now in its 31st year. School *GeoBees* were held in schools with fourth- through eighth-grade students throughout the state to determine each school champion. School champions then took an online qualifying test, which they submitted to the National Geographic Society. The National Geographic Society has invited up to

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100 of the top-scoring students in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Department of Defense Dependents Schools and U.S. territories to compete in the State GeoBees.

This year, National Geographic increased the prize money for all State GeoBees. State champions will receive a medal, \$1,000 in cash, and other prizes, as well as a trip to Washington, D.C., to represent their state in the National Championship to be held at National Geographic Society headquarters, May 19-22, 2019. Students that come in second and third place will receive cash awards of \$300 and \$100, respectively.

Each State Champion will advance to the National Championship and compete for cash awards and college scholarships. In 2019, the national champion will receive a \$25,000 college scholarship, \$1,000 in cash, a lifetime membership in the National Geographic Society, and an all-expenses-paid Lindblad expedition to the Galápagos Islands aboard the *National Geographic Endeavour II*; second place will receive a \$10,000 college scholarship and \$1,000 in cash; third place will receive a \$5,000 college scholarship and \$1,000 in cash; and seven runners-up will receive \$1,000 in cash each. Visit www.natgeobee.org for more information on the National Geographic GeoBee.

Follow the National competition at National Geographic Headquarters in Washington, D.C., on May 19-22 at natgeoed.org/experiences.

ABOUT THE GEOBEE

Developed by the National Geographic Society in 1988 to promote geographic knowledge among young people in the United States, the National Geographic GeoBee is an academic competition for public schools, private schools, and homeschools in the United States and its territories, as well as the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS). Students in grades 4-8 from nearly 10,000 schools participate annually for a chance to win college scholarships and the glory of being the National Geographic GeoBee Champion. Over more than three decades, 120 million students have learned about the world through participation in the GeoBee.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

The [National Geographic Society](http://www.nationalgeographic.org) is an impact-driven global nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C. Since 1888, National Geographic has been pushing the boundaries of exploration, investing in bold people and transformative ideas to increase understanding of our world and generate solutions for a healthy, more sustainable future for generations to come. Our ultimate vision: a planet in balance. To learn more about the Society and its programs, visit www.nationalgeographic.org.

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