

DECA Competitions: GMHS Students Qualify for States!

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February 13, 2026

Students in Groveport Madison High School's Marketing and Logistics course competed in a district level DECA competition last Friday, with several students qualifying for the upcoming state conference on February 24th–25th.

DECA is a nonprofit organization that helps high school and college students prepare for careers of their choosing. While at GMHS, the Marketing program is currently the only one available to take. Through competitions and simulations, students are able to apply what they learn in class to real-world situations.

The DECA competition tests both knowledge of class materials and communication skills learned throughout the course. Ghita Ait Raiss, who competed in the Principles of Finance event, explained that students choose their events at the beginning of the school year.

"Every participant chooses an event during the beginning of the year," she said. Ghita claims that the competition will look different depending on what event a student chooses. Ghita says, "I chose Principles of Finance, and for me, the competition consisted of an exam and a roleplay."

Her given exam was made up of 100 questions and was taken in class mid-January. The roleplay portion of the DECA competition took place on January 23rd at Capital University with students from schools across the district. "When the roleplays start, we get time to read our scenario and write notes," Ghita said. "When time is up, we meet with the judges and the roleplay begins."

During the roleplay, students are only allowed to use their notes and any prepared visuals that they have. Judges ask questions and score participants as the roleplay goes on. Final scores are based on a combination of the exam and roleplay, with the top three competitors in each event advancing to the state level.



Ghita ended up placing second in Principles of Finance, opening a new door for a spot at the state competition!

The competition reflects many of the skills students practice in the class and through hands-on labs. They are given these opportunities in the Marketing and Logistics program; out of the 168 courses offered at GMHS, this is the only one integrated directly into DECA.

Many Groveport Madison students qualified for the DECA State Career Development Conference in multiple events. These students are:

- Genesis Cruz Silva GM: 3rd in Restaurant and Food Service Marketing
- Ghita Ait Raiss GM: 2nd in Principle of Finance
- Ty Cooper GM & Andy Jiang GM: 1st in Hospitality Team Management
- Janelle Addawoo GM & Alexa Rosales GM: 1st in Travel and Tourism Team Management
- Jennifer Hongsamanut GM & Jabe Infante GM: 1st in Buying and Merchandising Team Management
- Justin Stewart GM & Elijah Bowers GM: 3rd in Business Law and Ethics Team Management
- Emily Sombrano-Cabezas GM & Arame Yade GM: 1st in Start-Up Business Plan
- Oumar Ba & Anthony Newell: 3rd in Hospitality Team Management
- Aurrie Benjamin & Trinity Askew: 3rd in Marketing Management Team
- Ashley Hernandez Guizado: 3rd in Business Services

Also placing in the top 5 and qualifying for state alternates are:

- Baohe Huang GM: 4th in Food Marketing
- Abrafi Ama Asare GM: 4th in Principle of Finance
- Ismaila Fall GM 5th: in Marketing Communications
- Conner Murphy GM: 5th in Personal Financial Literacy
- Tatyana Bailey and Jazzye James: 4th in Sports and Entertainment Team
- Lynel Johnson: 4th in Quick Serve Series
- Denise Goodridge: 5th in HR Management Series
- Sir'King Williams: 5th in Hotel/Lodging Series

Students in this program have worked hard for their spot and still do to this day. Students moving on are dedicated and ready to win, so be ready for the state competition held at the Hyatt Regency on dates February 24th and 25th.

The top five finishers in each event at the state competition advance to the international finals, which take place April 25-28 in Atlanta, GA. Ty Cooper and Pape Ndaw have already qualified, and hopefully many of those GMHS state qualifiers will join them.

GMHS Wrestling: Beyond the Mat

Adrianna Paul

02.13.2026

Do you have what it takes to be the Baguba? You are probably wondering what a Baguba is. Baguba is an acronym for “Brutally Aggressive Guys Uninhibited by Adversity,” something everyone on the GMHS wrestling team aspires to be. The wrestling assistant coach, Donato Natale, describes a Baguba as “somebody who does not let any obstacle or barrier get in the way of their final goal.” Coach Donato clarifies, “[Being the] Baguba does not mean that you won your match. It means that you won the day. You stuck to your guns, you left it all out there, and you can look back on your performance, whether you won or lost, and be proud of what you did.”

Wrestling is an individual sport that ends with a final team score. Only one person from a team is on the mat during a match, and each teammate's points go towards the team total. Wrestling is all about accountability. Each wrestler has to fix their eating habits to stay at a certain weight, put in all the time and work needed, and never give up during a match. Not only will that match affect them, but it also affects the team as a whole. When a wrestler is on the mat, they are completely alone. The coaches are on the sidelines to guide them, but no one can go out and help you if you get into trouble. It is a rough, competitive sport that only dedicated students can be a part of.

Talking about the season so far, the head wrestling coach, Matt Miller, claims, “It is going quite rocky, but we're trying to build a culture for kids with a lack of experience that haven't wrestled before. It is still quite fun.” Culture is crucial for a strong team, no matter what sport. Taking a closer look at the team, Coach Matt also states, “They are meshing well. Upperclassmen are starting to take a leadership role on the team.”

The Baguba wrestler is chosen after each duel and tournament. The wrestler who has earned the Baguba title the most this year is senior Mario Difazio, one of the wrestling team captains. Mario stated, “The work I've been putting in for the past several months has been working out for me. The past two events we've had have been really hard, but I did wrestle to my best ability and succeeded.” He views his position as



“one of the leaders of the team. [I’m] definitely someone that the lower class looks up to. I am a good role model for people, especially when it comes to questions about moves.” Given all the hard work Mario and his teammates put into wrestling, before, during, and after matches, you might expect their efforts representing their school to be recognized. Unfortunately, many around the wrestling program feel that this is not the case.

The school does not give wrestling the attention they work so hard for. These students deserve more accolades for their hard work and dedication as Groveport Madison wrestlers than they receive.

Appreciating the GMHS Kitchen Staff

Dilynn Hatheway

02.13.2026

It's important to pause and recognize the efforts of Groveport Madison High School's kitchen staff. The amount of hard work and thought that is involved in feeding over two thousand students is remarkable!



Gackie Burton is the head cook of GMHS. She served eight years in active military service, and she has since worked for 26 years cooking and managing staff at Groveport Madison Schools.

Ms. Burton's work routine starts at 5:00 AM when she turns on all the equipment. She begins her day by "prepping and cooking all the hot food for the day." She must also "calculate how many servings are needed" while "putting stock away as required to follow the posted menu."

Cafeteria staff repeat this routine daily to serve meals to many children, making sure portions are measured correctly and the menu is followed. The cafeteria staff work hard and long to ensure we're able to have nutrients and energy for the day.

Some days bring more challenges than others. "If an item doesn't come in the delivery, I have to make a substitute." Ms. Burton says that these situations can make the day even more stressful, especially with her having to stick to the predetermined menu.

You can truly tell how much Ms. Burton genuinely cares about her job. She puts herself into her work, and it is very admirable how much she does every day. She and her team always create a positive atmosphere. Even if they have a hard day in the cafeteria or when they accidentally drop food, they are able to laugh about stressful situations.

Cafeteria workers are often taken for granted, even though they play a vital role in students' daily lives. They work hard behind the scenes, yet their efforts frequently go unnoticed. Without their dedication and care, the school day wouldn't run as smoothly as it does today.

We should recognize our staff for who they are, admire their positivity, and show respect to them every day, because that is what they do for us. Let's start treating our cafeteria staff with the appreciation they deserve. They play an integral role in our schools.