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Students experience local government first-hand Research centers on business incubator

PEACHTREE CORNERS, GA, August 12, 2016 –

For nine weeks, six high school students from Gwinnett County participated in a cohort-style student government experience at the City of Peachtree Corners.

The on-site educational program was aimed at educating students about the different areas of government and exposing them to the challenges of running a city.

Located 30 minutes north of Atlanta, Peachtree Corners is a city of 40,000 people that incorporated in 2012. It is a limited-services government that includes: community development, code enforcement, and solid waste disposal.

“This program is purely about exposing students to the various facets of city government,” said program administrator Jennifer Howard. “We hoped to create a spark. But at minimum, students learned about the different functions and how they are intertwined.”

The student government internship included a group research project dealing with one of the city’s newest additions, the Prototype Prime business incubator. The incubator provides space and access to education, tools, venture capitalists, and other services to help local entrepreneurs launch and scale their startups. Working with members of Prototype Prime, students researched start-up incentive programs, support options and developed an awards program for the most innovative start-up. They subsequently presented a proposal to the city council, which lent its support.

“I got to see how the city interacts with businesses and people, and see policy in action,” said student intern Jeremy Fortin, of Norcross High School.

Developed by the student interns, the Vision Award was adopted by the city council in August, and involves the award of a \$2,500 grant each year to a STEM-focused startup with a product or service that is noticeably different from the competition. A local business incubator, Prototype Prime, is offering three months of free incubator space, as part of the award package, and student intern assistance will also be made available to the winner.

“Not only did I learn about processes behind running the city, I also saw first-hand the personal interactions between city employees, businesses, and the community,” said student Christian Jamison. “This experience inspired me to become actively involved with the community that will one day be my home.”

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CUTLINE: Peachtree Corners Community Development Director Diana Wheeler challenges students with a visioning exercise during a student government internship program this summer. Pictured are Norcross High School students Jonathon Finol, Lydia Gratwick, and Jeremy Fortin as well as Christian Jamison, who attends the Gwinnett School of Math and Science and Technology.

[About Peachtree Corners](#)

Gwinnett County’s newest and largest city, Peachtree Corners, was founded July 1, 2012 and is located along the shores of the Chattahoochee River in the southwest corner of the county. The city is home to some 40,500 residents and over 2,300 businesses. City Hall is located at 147 Technology Parkway, Peachtree Corners, GA 3009.