



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE ^{OF} AMERICA
DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OFFICE OF EDUCATION

ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING
May 9, 2008
New York Hilton Hotel

REPORT OF THE DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE OF EDUCATION

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* serves the District's Greek Orthodox parochial day schools as well as the Afternoon Greek Language schools. It provides professional training for **all** teachers (Greek and English curricula), guidelines and materials for teaching Greek as a second language, and *The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* for the evaluation of student learning.

Following are the major projects and activities that have taken place since the last **Archdiocesan Council** meeting (*November 1-2, 2007 – Washington, DC*):

Professional Training Offered by St. John's University Faculty

The District's *Annual Staff-Development Seminar* for the teachers serving in the NYC parochial day and afternoon schools was held under the auspices of **His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America**, on **Tuesday, November 6, 2007**, at St. Demetrios High School, Astoria.

The Seminar featured an array of morning workshops and afternoon presentations, covering all areas of study and all grades (pre-K to high school). The Seminar's program was the result of a collaboration between the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* and the *School of Education/Department of Literacy of St. John's University*. Other distinguished educators from *Queens College* and *Manhattanville College* also conducted workshops.

The Greek language teachers had the opportunity to attend a workshop on "*How to Incorporate Culture into the Foreign Language Classroom.*" They were also informed about "*The Assessments that follow National Standards in Foreign Language Teaching.*"

For the first time this year, the *Staff-Development Seminar* for the teachers of the District schools was funded by the *NYC Department of Education / Bureau of Nonpublic Schools Reimbursable Services*.

The Kindergarten Curriculum Published

The long awaited *Curriculum for Kindergarten* for the teaching of Greek as a second language to children of this age group was finally published. The *Curriculum* places an emphasis on oral communication and aims to instill in the young learners a sense of pride, love, and respect for the Greek cultural heritage and the Christian Orthodox Faith.

The *Kindergarten Curriculum* is divided into 13 thematic units, with one unit devoted exclusively to major religious holidays and customs. It offers an abundance of activities and a list of resources (songs, poems, stories, and games) to help the kindergarten teacher meet the objective of each lesson. It is also accompanied by basic vocabulary words and phrases for communication. Teachers are advised to use it as a “*guide*”, adapt it to their student needs and abilities, and use their own resources to meet its goals and objectives.

The publication of the *Kindergarten Curriculum* was made possible due to a generous grant from the “*Stavros S. Niarchos*” Foundation and is offered **gratis** to the schools. This was heralded by schools and teachers, and the *District Office* has received numerous requests for copies and has mailed out **over 300** copies around the country.

Greek Teachers Workshop on Early Childhood Education – The K-Curriculum

The **St. Sophia Afternoon Greek School, Washington, DC**, in collaboration with the *Office of the Education Counselor/Embassy of Greece*, organized an afternoon workshop on Saturday, **April 5, 2008**, on the teaching of Greek to kindergarten-age children, and invited Mrs. Maria Makedon, director of the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* to present the new **Kindergarten Curriculum**.

Mrs. Makedon and one of the Curriculum’s writers, Haroula Ntalla, spoke on the philosophy, scope, and content of the **Kindergarten Curriculum** and participated into an extensive discussion on the role and teaching of the kindergarten teacher. 25 teachers serving in the area community and independent/charter schools participated in the workshop.

The 2008 Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek

The annual *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* is scheduled for Tuesday, **June 24, 2008**, at 1:15 p.m. It will be administered in schools throughout the State of New York and in some parts of New Jersey, Connecticut, and Virginia.

A major undertaking of the *Office*, the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* is a foreign language test that assesses student proficiency in *listening, speaking, reading, and writing* Modern Greek following the standards of the New York State Education Department’s Syllabus: “*Modern Languages for Communication*.” Public and parochial school students who successfully pass the *Examination* receive foreign language credits in high school and, in some cases, from colleges and universities.

Currently under development, the *Examination* will also be assessed and evaluated by the **University at Buffalo/The State University of New York** and the **Institute of Modern Greek Studies** (*The Manolis A. Triandaphyllidis Foundation*) / The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in order to guarantee its validity.

Greek Teachers Workshop, April 12, 2008, Hicksville, NY

On Saturday, **April 12, 2008**, the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* held a workshop on the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* for the teachers who are in-charge of preparing the students for the Examination. Held at **Holy Trinity Church, Hicksville**, the Seminar dealt with the administration and rating of the oral communication (*speaking*) and composition (Writing). **40** teachers serving in the afternoon Greek language schools of Long Island and Brooklyn attended.

Ms. Vivian Selenicas, Executive Officer for Instruction at the *Office of Integrated Curriculum and Instruction*, a Learning Support Organization of the New York City Department of Education and a LOTE specialist along with Mrs. Maria Makedon, director of the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* conducted the training which included hands-on experience for the teachers.

The Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence Student Event

In conjunction with the Feast Day of the Holy Three Hierarchs and in celebration of Greek Letters, the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* held on Saturday, **January 26, 2008**, a **Student Awards Ceremony** to recognize the students who excel on the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*. (62 students received a perfect score of 100 in June 2007.)

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America presented the recipients with *The Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence* along with an icon of the Three Hierarchs. Mr. John Stratakis, Esq., president of the Board of Trustees of the Cathedral of Holy Trinity, Manhattan and guest speaker spoke on the value of speaking the Greek language and living the Greek Orthodox heritage. Mrs. Sophia Veve, Consul of Greece, and the Hon. Michael Giannaris, NY State Assemblyman, gave greetings. The fifth-grade choir of St. Demetrios School, Astoria, gave a musical performance.

The Spelling Bee Competition

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* sponsored, once again, the **Spelling Bee Competition** for the students of the NYC Greek Orthodox parochial day schools on Tuesday, **February 5, 2008**, at the Archdiocese headquarters in Manhattan.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America congratulated and presented the students who participated in the local competition with an *Award Certificate* and a gift card from the bookstore Barnes & Noble.

Tessa Medakovich, an eighth grade student of the *Cathedral School* of Holy Trinity, Manhattan, won the first place. Alexandra Correa, a sixth grader from the “A. *Fantis*” Parochial School of Sts. Constantine & Helen, Brooklyn, was the runner-up. The principal of the Greek-American Institute, Bronx, Mrs. Anne Prokop, pronounced the words.

Resource Materials

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* has composed a list of recommended books, suitable to the needs of today’s young learners of the Greek language. These books and other resources – certificates and diplomas – are available through the *Office Catalog* and on the web at www.OrthodoxMarketplace.com.

Advocacy for the Greek Orthodox Parochial (Nonpublic) Day Schools

In recognition to the invaluable contribution of the Greek Orthodox parochial day schools to the Church and the Greek-American community, the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* has intensified its efforts, in recent years, to assist and facilitate the principals of the 10 day schools of metropolitan New York in implementing the academic program of their schools and benefit from the services available to them through the federal government’s “*No Child Left Behind Act.*”

As an advocate for the day schools, the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* represents the schools at the **federal, state** and **city** education authorities. The director of the *Office* also participates in various conferences and meetings and is a member of the following committees:

1. The *Coalition of Religious Institutions and Independent Schools*, Albany.
2. The *Standing Committee of Religious and Independent Schools for New York City*.
3. The *Committee of New York City Religious Schools*.

Members also of the above mentioned committees are the following: *Agudath Israel of America*; *Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York*; *Catholic School Administrators of NYS*; *The Archdiocese of New York (Catholic)*; *The Diocese of Brooklyn (Catholic)*; *Islamic Schools Association*; *Lutheran Schools Association*; *New York State Council of Catholic School Superintendents*; *the NYS Association of Independent Schools, etc.*

Conferences & Meetings

Since the last Archdiocesan Council meeting (November 1-2, 2007), the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* director, Mrs. Maria Makedon, has participated in the following conferences and meetings:

November 8, 2007: *Standing Committee of the NYC Religious and Independent Schools* meeting with **Joel I. Klein, Chancellor of Education** of the New York City Department of Education, Brooklyn.

January 16, 2008: *Standing Committee of NYC Religious and Independent Schools* meeting with **Karen Zayde-Moncher**, director, Bureau of Nonpublic Schools Reimbursable Services, NYC Department of Education, Brooklyn.

February 11, 2008: *Committee of New York City Religious Schools* meeting, chaired by **Dr. Catherine Hickey**, Secretary for Education of the Archdiocese of New York (Catholic).

Principals Meetings

The principals of the NYC parochial day schools met on the following dates: **November 19** (2007); **January 18** and **March 14 (2008)**, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Maria Makedon, to discuss matters of mutual concern and collaborate with the *District Office* on various projects and events.

The benefits for the NYC parochial day schools

As a result of the involvement, participation, and collaboration of the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* with the education authorities at the federal, state, and city level as well as with the previously mentioned committees of religious organizations and institutions the **Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America** has gained recognition and a place in the nonpublic schools community.

United under the umbrella of the Archdiocese, the Greek Orthodox parochial day schools in New York City were given **the distinct Code Number 4** by the *NYC Department of Education* and have received/ or continue receiving the following services and materials in the last two years:

1. The software program “**Earobics**”, a language-arts program suitable for the early grades (K-3), worth over **\$200,000**, including **72 computers** with a connection to the Web as well as teacher training (2006-07).
2. **\$11,000** towards expenses for the *Archdiocesan District’s* annual **Staff-Development Seminar** for the in-service training of teachers. (November 2007).
3. **\$35,000** for books and other materials (December 2007).
4. Teachers and administrators have been taking *college and university courses* to enhance their teaching skills **free of charge**. The courses are given at **Adelphi** and **St. John’s University** and lead to master degrees and certification (ongoing).

