



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OFFICE OF EDUCATION

ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING

May 9-10, 2012

Philadelphia Marriott Downtown Hotel, Philadelphia, PA

REPORT ON PAROCHIAL SCHOOL EDUCATION

By Maria Makedon, *Director*

Focus

The Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education serves the parochial day and afternoon schools of the District. It provides schools with **a)** curricula and materials for the teaching of Modern Greek, **b)** in-service training to all teachers (Greek and English programs), and **c)** the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* for the assessment of student learning.

In addition, the *Office* represents the New York City parochial day schools at the federal, state, and city education authorities.

The District Schools

Following are the most current statistical data on the schools of the *Direct Archdiocesan District*:

The Schools

Student Enrollment

9 Greek American Day Schools
47 Afternoon Greek Schools
5 Early Childhood Centers

2,066
3,370
267

Note:

5 Day schools operate state-funded
UPK programs with an enrollment of

5,436 Total Student Enrollment in District

+ 290 Students in UPK programs

270 Greek Teachers serve in the schools

(Please refer to the charts at the end of this Report for detailed information on the District schools.)

FEDERAL FUNDS ALLOCATED FOR THE NYC DAY SCHOOLS

The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) is responsible for ensuring that services are provided equitably to nonpublic schools throughout NYC, under federal funding of Titles I-IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Funds for education services to nonpublic schools are proportioned according to the number of students attending those schools, their family's income, and their scores in state tests.

Under Title I, nonpublic schools receive supplemental education services in reading and writing, mathematics, and English as a Second Language (ESL) as well as ancillary student support services to students who demonstrate academic needs and live within the attendance area of a public school eligible for such services. Title IIA funds are allocated for the professional development of nonpublic school teachers to improve teaching and learning in those schools. Title III funds provide resources to children who are limited English proficient to help them attain English proficiency. And Title IV supports programs that involve parents and the community.

The Bureau of Nonpublic School Reimbursable Services (BNPS) of the NYC Department of Education consults regularly with the *Standing Committee of Religious and Independent School Officials*, which is comprised of representatives of the nonpublic schools in NYC -- the District Office of Education of the Archdiocese is represented by its director -- to make sure that the allocated federal funds are properly distributed among the faith-based schools in NYC.

As a member of the *Standing Committee of NYC Religious and Independent Schools*, the director of the Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education participates in various meetings -- such as with the Chancellor of Education of NYC (Dennis Walcott) -- and conferences held in the State's capital, Albany, and Washington, DC.

The Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education was instrumental in securing **\$36,975.00** for the Greek Orthodox parochial day schools of NYC. (*This allocation indicates a significant cut in federal assistance to nonpublic schools this year.*) As the liaison between the day schools and the authorities, the District Office of Education was responsible for equitably distributing the funds among the NYC parochial day schools and monitored spending. The *Office* approved all purchases of textbooks and technology equipment and, in collaboration with the principals, organized workshops for the professional development of teachers.

It is worth noting that **five** teachers who are currently serving in the NYC parochial day schools are doing graduate studies in colleges and universities, their tuition paid by federal funds.

PRINCIPALS MEETINGS

Meetings of the principals of our New York City based parochial day schools are of vital importance. They stimulate discussion and build collegiality, which lead to better collaboration on projects that are beneficial to all schools.

The Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education has long taken the leading role in organizing, at regular intervals, such meetings of the principals. The Office invites to these meetings representatives of the NYC DOE and other faith-based schools as well as various vendors. The principals have the opportunity to receive information on state mandates and learn about new educational materials.

Following are the meetings that have taken place since the last Archdiocesan Council meeting in October of 2011:

- [December 13, 2011](#) – with guest **Joan Benfatto**, coordinator of Title III Funds at the New York City Bureau of Nonpublic Schools. She spoke on the new NY State requirements regarding “*Alternative testing for English Language Learners.*”

Also, **Annemarie Hochkeppel** of **Catapult Learning** introduced a new software program on “*Identifying and Evaluating Special Education Students.*”

- [February 17, 2012](#) – with guests **Linda Mitchell**, executive director and **Corinne DiStephan**, director of Funded Programs / **The Lutheran Schools Association**, and **Marlene Lund**, executive director of the National Center for Urban Education Ministries / Wheat Ridge Ministries / The Lutheran Church. They entertained such issues as: governance and supervision of schools; funded services, and issues facing the Lutheran schools nationally (decreased enrollment, charter schools, etc.).

In addition, **Francis McEvoy** of **PC University Distributors** presented the new *Astronaut XL Soundfield System* and **Carly Caroselli** of **Uptown Education** introduced a web-based software program for evaluating student learning.

- [April 3, 2012](#) – with guests **Dr. Steven Albert** and **Lois Kessler**, deputy executive directors for the Office of Special Education of Students with Disabilities / The NYC Department of Education. They discussed: referrals, appropriate assessments, certain disabilities, parents involvement, individual education services plan (IESP), etc.

Also, **Kenneth McKenzie** of **Rediker Software** presented a fully integrated, web-based school administrative software system.

MAJOR PROJECTS & EVENTS

Following are the most important projects and events of the District Office of Education:

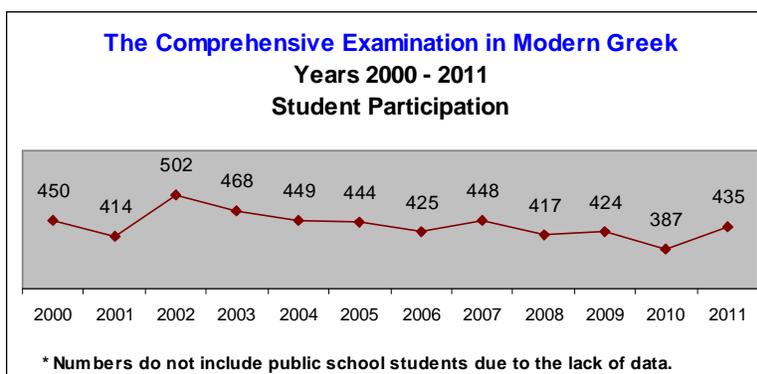
[The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek](#)

The *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* is a foreign language assessment tool, which is developed and administered by the District Office of Education, annually, to public and nonpublic school students in the State of New York and in other parts of the country. Students who pass it are awarded foreign language credits in high schools and in colleges.

Despite the substantial changes made to the NY State Assessment Program, this year, that included the elimination of all comprehensive examinations in languages other than English, the Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education vows to continue developing the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* for two reasons: a) It is in great demand among students who graduate from our parochial day and afternoon schools; and b) It is recognized for its validity by the state and local education authorities for foreign language credits.

With **His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America** leading the way, the Office has sought the assistance of **Mrs. Aravella Simotas**, a New York State Assembly member representing the Queens District, in order to protect and secure the Archdiocese's rights in developing the *Greek Examination* and, thus, continue benefitting the students of the parochial day and afternoon schools of the District. Since 1973, the Office estimates that more than 20,000 students have taken the *Examination*.

It is worth noting that the number of students who have taken the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* during the past 10 years has remained almost the same as the Table below indicates. (*This Table does not include public school students due to lack of information*)



[The Curriculum on Modern Greek Language \(Checkpoint A\)](#)

The **Curriculum of Modern Greek Language** (Checkpoint A) is ready for printing. The Curriculum is the result of collaboration between the Archdiocesan District Office of Education and the **Institute of Modern Greek Studies** of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

The Curriculum offers valuable guidance to the teachers of Greek. It will be officially presented to the teachers at the start of the new school year (2012-2013).

[The Annual Staff Development Seminar](#)

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America was the keynote speaker at the annual Direct Archdiocesan District Teacher Seminar that was held on November 8, 2011 (Election Day), at the High School of St. Demetrios Cathedral, Astoria.

Dr. Christos Tsolakis, professor emeritus of the Paedagogical School / Department of Elementary Education / The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, addressed the Greek teachers on the topic “*Language, Paideia, & Teaching.*”

Organized by the District Office of Education, **350** persons attended the **Seminar**, which included an array of workshops and presentations that offered new knowledge and insight to the teachers serving in the day and afternoon schools of the District.

The Annual Spelling Bee Competition

The Spelling Bee Finals (*English*) for the students of the NYC parochial day schools were held on January 10, 2012, at the Archdiocesan Headquarters with the blessings and in the presence of **His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America**. Local school competitions were held during the months of October and November 2011.

Eight students, all winners in school competitions, participated in the finals. **Garima Vohra**, an eighth-grade student of the Jamaica Day School of St. Demetrios was this year’s winner. **Perry Chresomales**, an eighth-grade student of “William Spyropoulos” Greek-American School of St. Nicholas Flushing, was the runner-up.

Archbishop Demetrios of America presented each participant with a “*Certificate of Award*” and the Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary. His Grace **Bishop Andonios** of Phasiane also congratulated the students and awarded, on behalf of the District, \$200 to each school bee and \$500 to the finalist.

In addition, **Nick Katsoris, Esq.**, president of the *Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund* (HTSF) and author the *Loukoumi* Book Series offered a scholarship of \$100 to each student and \$500 to the winner of the Finals.

The Three Hierarchs Awards Student Event

In conjunction with the Three Hierarchs Feast Day and in celebration of Greek Letters, the Archdiocesan District Office of Education organizes, every year, a special event to honor the students who demonstrate excellence in the Greek language. Honorees are selected on the basis of their score attained on the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*.

During this year’s celebration, which took place on Saturday, January 28, 2012, at the Holy Trinity Cathedral Center in Manhattan, **His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America** presented the *Three Hierarchs Awards of Excellence* to the students.

Mrs. Aravella Simotas, a member of the New York State Assembly representing the Queens District, was the keynote speaker. Mrs. Simotas spoke on “*Greek: The language of Democracy.*” The program featured also a musical performance by students of the “William Spyropoulos” Greek-American School of St. Nicholas, Flushing, under the direction of Ms. Areti

Giovanou. A lavish reception followed.

This was a very successful and well-attended event. Parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers, and guests filled the Cathedral Center Hall to honor the students and celebrate Greek Letters.

Useful Information & Resources Online

The Archdiocesan District Office of Education maintains its own **website** that offers visitors an abundance of informative documents, useful links, and a *Catalog of Selected Books and Resource Materials*.

Please visit www.education.goarch.org.



The Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education serves the District schools with efficiency, professionalism, and respect.

It provides **schools** with curriculum guidelines, **teachers** with in-service training, and **students** with the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* to assess their knowledge of the Greek language.

This Office strives to promote academic excellence and project our Greek Orthodox cultural heritage. In turn, it benefits thousands of students and teachers, which makes its staff very proud.

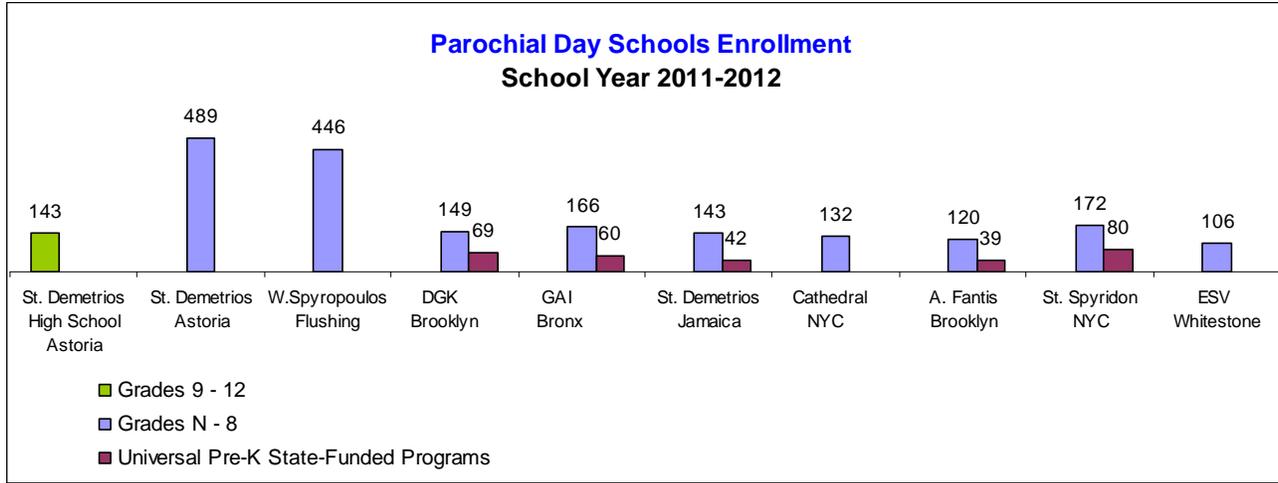
Submitted by
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04/05/2012

STATISTICAL DATA GRAPHS

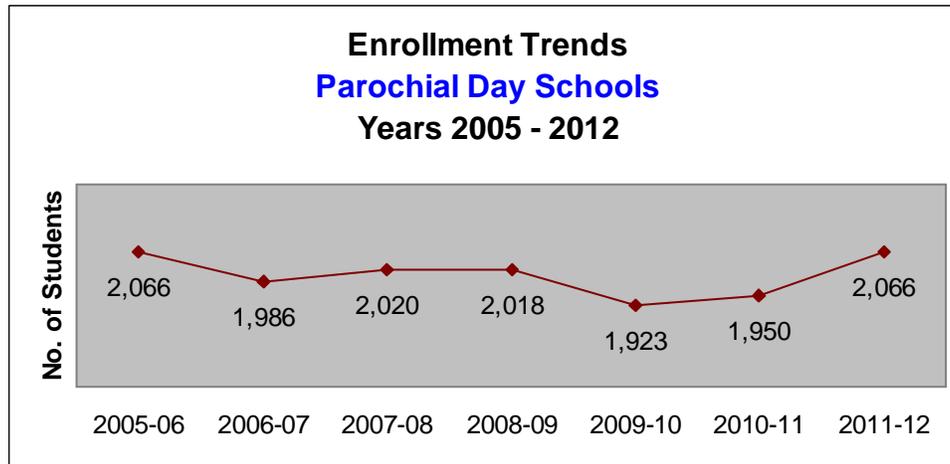
NYC PAROCHIAL DAY SCHOOLS

Schools: 9
Enrollment: 2,356



Note:

- ✓ 2 schools – the *Transfiguration, Corona* & the *Three Hierarchs, Brooklyn* – closed down this year.



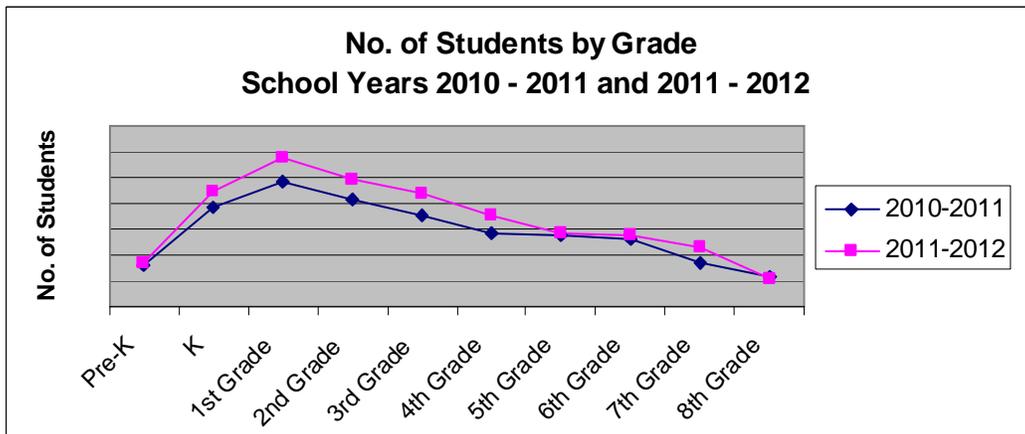
Note:

- ✓ Enrollment has remained the same during the past five years despite changes in the student population's ethnic origin.

STATISTICAL DATA GRAPHS

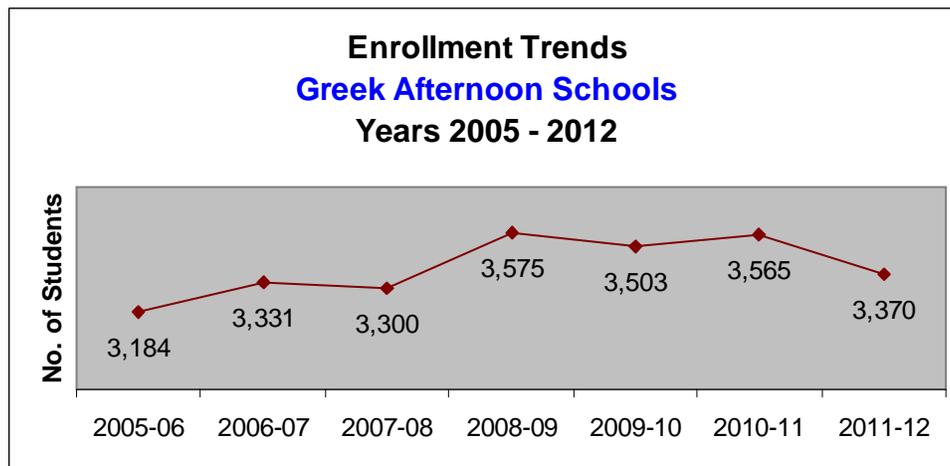
AFTERNOON / SATURDAY GREEK SCHOOLS

Schools: 47
 Enrollment: 3,370



Notes:

1. Attendance slightly increased in grades Pre-K – 4 this year.
2. Attendance declined steadily in grades 5 – 8 during the past two years.



Note: Enrollment reached a peak in 2008-09, but has since declined by 6%.