



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE ^{OF} AMERICA

DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING

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DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OFFICE OF EDUCATION REPORT

OVERVIEW

There are 11 Greek-American parochial day schools and 44 afternoon Greek language schools functioning within the *Direct Archdiocesan District*. A total of 1,986 students are presently enrolled in the day schools and 3,331 in the afternoon schools. The day schools employ 241 teachers -- 42 of whom serve in the Greek department -- and the afternoon schools 196 teachers.

The *Office of Education* of the *Direct Archdiocesan District* has the responsibility of providing services to the District's day and afternoon schools, in order to facilitate their operation and assist the teachers in their work, ultimately thus benefiting their student population.

MISSION

To better serve the parochial day schools and the afternoon schools, the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* has assumed broader responsibilities in recent years and, thereby, it considers its mission as twofold.

As much as the *District Office* strives to ensure that all students acquire sufficient knowledge of the Modern Greek language and a good understanding and appreciation of our Greek Orthodox heritage, it similarly offers assistance to the parochial day schools to meet the curriculum standards and mandates of the New York State and the New York City Education Departments. Thus to successfully carry out its mission, the *District Office of Education*:

1. Participates in meetings of nonpublic school officials and state representatives;
2. Holds regularly meetings with the day school principals;
3. Coordinates the annual *Spelling Bee Contest* (in English);
4. Organizes seminars and workshops for the in-service training of teachers;
5. Develops and administers the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*;
6. Organizes cultural events in celebration of Greek Letters;
7. Promotes, through its Catalog, the sale of carefully reviewed books and other resource materials to schools and individuals interested in learning the Greek language.

ACTIVITIES PERTAINING TO THE OPERATION OF THE DAY SCHOOLS

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* has lately intensified its communication with the *federal, state, and city* education agencies and has sought the direct involvement and representation of the *Office* in committees whose membership represents religious and independent schools.

The Standing Committee of Religious Schools Officials

The *Standing Committee of Religious Schools Officials* is comprised of representatives from the *Catholic, Lutheran, Jewish, and Muslim* schools and meets under the chairmanship of Dr. Catherine Hickey, Secretary for Education of the Archdiocese of New York (*Catholic*).

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* is represented in the Committee by Mrs. Maria Makedon, who attends its meetings and keeps the principals of the Greek Orthodox day schools abreast of any developments concerning the operation of the schools and any changes in the regulations of the State and the New York City Education Departments.

The *Standing Committee of Religious Schools Officials* met, since October 2006, on the following dates:

November 16, 2006 - with **Chancellor Klein** - at the NYC Department of Education;

January 17, 2007 - with **Dr. Mark Misener** of the NYC Department of Health - at the Lutheran Association in Manhattan;

February 28, 2007 - with **Dr. Margaret Weiss**, NYC Department of Education/ Nonpublic Schools Reimbursable Programs

The Conference for Administrators of Independent and Religious Schools

The *Conference for Administrators of Independent and Religious Schools* is organized by the **New York State Education Department** and the **Coalition of Religious Institutions and Independent Schools** and takes place annually in Albany, New York.

The *Direct Archdiocesan Office of Education* was instrumental in having the **Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America** be a sponsor of this annual Conference and join with the other members of the *Coalition of Religious Institutions and Independent Schools*, whose members are the following: *Agudath Israel of America; Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York; Catholic School Administrators of NYS; Islamic Schools Association; Lutheran Schools Association; NYS Council of Catholic School Superintedents; NYS Association of Independent Schools*, and a few others.

At the *Conference* held on **November 13 and 14, 2006**, the *District Office* was represented by Mrs. Maria Makedon and a number of day school principals. All had the opportunity to attend an array of workshops and meet with representatives of the State Education Department. The next Conference (the 23rd Annual) is scheduled to take place on **October 15-16, 2007**.

Greek Orthodox Parochial Day School Principals Meetings

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office* holds regular meetings with the principals of the Greek-American day schools of the metropolitan New York area. The meetings take place under the chairmanship of Mrs. Maria Makedon, while on several occasions prominent educators join in – at the invitation of the *District Office* - to speak and enlighten the principals on various educational matters.

Since October 2006, principals meetings were held by the *District Office* on **November 28, 2006** and on **February 8, 2007**. At the last meeting, the principals were joined by **Ms. Margaret Weiss, Ms. Nancy Woods, and Mr. John Byrne** of the *Bureau of Reimbursable Programs/ Nonpublic Schools/ NYC Department of Education*, who discussed the availability of federally funded programs on teacher training.

The next principals meeting will take place on April 20, 2007. The *Archdiocesan District Office of Education* has invited **Dr. Paul Lynch, Associate Superintendent for Federally Funded Programs/Archdiocese of New York (Catholic)** and a member of the *Standing Committee of Religious Schools Officials* to speak to the principals about the new NYC Regulations (Article 47) pertaining to the operation of nursery schools.

The Hon. Margaret Spellings, U.S. Secretary of Education

TIAA-CREF, the Business/Higher Education Forum, and the Partnership for New York City hosted a “*conversation*” with the **Honorable Margaret Spellings**, U.S. Secretary of Education, on **February 15, 2007**, in New York City. Mrs. Spellings spoke about the Nation’s education system and its role in preparing America’s workforce to compete in a global economy.

The event took place, at the headquarters of TIAA-CREF, one of the world's largest retirement pension firms. A select group of people representing the *academia, industry, and business world* were invited to attend. Representing the **Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America** was Mrs. Maria Makedon.

The Annual Spelling Bee Competition

The *Spelling Bee Competitions* are an educational promotion sponsored by *The E.W. Scripps Company*. It takes place on two levels: *local* and *national* and champions are sent to the finals of the *Scripps National Spelling Bee* in Washington, DC.

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Annual Competition* is part of an extended round of competitions that are held throughout NYC, in public and nonpublic schools, among students in grades fifth to eighth. This year’s *Competition*, among the *spelling bee champions* of the parochial day schools took place on **February 6, 2007**, at the Archdiocesan headquarters. Jordan Massey, a fifth grader of the “*Argyrios Fantis*” *Parochial School* of SS. Constantine & Helen Cathedral, Brooklyn was the winner. His Eminence **Archbishop Demetrios** of America congratulated all the *champions* and offered them a Greek History book as a gift.

The Annual Staff-Development Seminar

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* held the Annual Staff-Development Seminar -- under the auspices of His Eminence **Archbishop Demetrios** -- on **November 7, 2006** (Election Day), at the High School of St. Demetrios Cathedral, Astoria. The Seminar included a wide array of workshops that covered all areas of study and all grades (nursery to high school, in order to help teachers integrate new knowledge and techniques into their practice.

210 day school teachers of both the English and Greek departments attended the following workshops: *Creating a Quality Early Childhood Classroom Learning Environment; Crafting Characters Using Picture Books; Literacy in the Classroom; Mathematics for Elementary School Teachers; Habitat Ecology Learning Program; Stress and Anger Management; Classroom Management; Evaluation and Treatment of ADD/ADHD Disorders; ESL: Teaching in the Multi-Level Classroom; Technology in the Classroom (Use of Power Point, Internet and Webquests); School Safety/School Negligence and the Law; and Sexual Harassment.* The teacher evaluations of the workshops and the presenters, all of whom taught at renowned universities, were very positive.

THE BENEFITS FOR THE PAROCHIAL DAY SCHOOLS

Federal funds, earmarked mainly for student learning and teacher training, are channeled to state education departments and, as in our case, end up in the NYC Department of Education. Federal funds are allocated for the nonpublic (private and religious) schools as well.

As a result of the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education's* involvement, participation, and collaboration with other religious schools representatives as well as state and city education agencies, the Greek Orthodox parochial day schools of the area have greatly benefited.

1) Acquisition of the software program "*Earobics*"

The *District Office* was instrumental in providing **nine** (out of 11) day schools with "*Earobics*", a language arts software program for the early grades. Besides the software, the schools were also furnished with **72 computers** (2 computers per class: K-3) and other equipment that connected them with the Internet. There were also **two** workshops to train our teachers on how to use the program.

The total expenses for the educational program "*Earobics*," worth over **\$200,000**, and the workshops were fully covered by the *Bureau of Reimbursable Programs/Nonpublic Schools Office/ NYC Department of Education*. Principals and teachers have expressed their satisfaction and thanked the *District Office* and the *NYC Department of Education*.

2) Teacher Participation in a Conference on Technology

The *Bureau of Reimbursable Programs/Nonpublic Schools Office/ NYC Department of Education* also covered all expenses for the participation in a two-day *Teacher Conference on Technology*

of 11 teachers serving in the Greek Orthodox parochial day schools. Hosted by *Channel Thirteen*, the *Conference* took place on **March 23-24, 2007**, at Pier 94 (The UnConvention Center). The actual cost was \$590 per person.

3) Free in-service courses for teachers

Under Title IIA and Title IID Federal Funds, a great number of teachers and administrators serving in the Greek Orthodox parochial day schools have been taking *in-service courses*, **free of charge**, leading to master degrees and certification. These courses are given at local colleges and universities, such as the Adelphi and St. John's University.

ACTIVITIES PERTAINING TO THE OPERATION OF **ALL** SCHOOLS (DAY & AFTERNOON)

The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek

The *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* is a foreign language achievement test that assesses student proficiency in *listening, speaking, reading, and writing* Modern Greek according to the specifications of the **New York State Syllabus: Modern Languages for Communication (at Checkpoint B)**. The proficiency level of the Examination is equivalent to a third year of a foreign language course in high school.

The *Direct Archdiocesan Office of Education* develops and administers the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* to public and parochial school students in the State of New York as well as in a few other localities outside New York State (New Jersey, Connecticut, N. Carolina, Virginia and Texas). Students who successfully pass the *Examination* receive foreign language credits in high schools and institutions of higher learning.

The *2007 Examination* is scheduled to take place on Friday, **June 15th**. The writing team is currently working, under the guidance of Mrs. Maria Makedon, to finish up its development by the end of April. Afterwards, it will be sent for evaluation to the University at Buffalo/ Department of Linguistics/the State University of New York.

Greek Letters Celebration – The “Three Hierarchs” Awards Ceremony

With the blessings of His Eminence **Archbishop Demetrios**, the *Direct Archdiocesan Office of Education* has instituted a special event to honor the high achievers – those who receive a perfect score (100) – on the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* each year. This special event takes place in conjunction with the **Greek Letters Celebration** and in commemoration of the Feast Day of The Three Hierarchs on January 30th.

The *Students Awards Ceremony* was held on **January 27, 2007**, this year, at the Holy Trinity Cathedral Center in Manhattan. His Eminence **Archbishop Demetrios** bestowed *The Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence* to 42 students who had excelled on the *2006 Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*.

The Archbishop congratulated the honorees and offered to each one of them a silver cross and the icon of the Three Hierarchs in front of a huge audience of proud parents and grandparents who had come to applaud their children. The program also included speeches by Prof. John Spiridakis of St. John's University and Mrs. Athena Krommidas, principal of the "W. Spyropoulos" Greek-American School, Flushing. The *Archdiocesan Metropolitan Youth Choir* singers were the highlight of the event.

Catalog of Books and Other Resources

The *Direct Archdiocesan Office of Education* has recently updated its *Catalog of Books and Other Resources*. The Catalog was mailed to parishes throughout the country and requested that schools place their orders for *certificates* and *diplomas* well before the end of the school year for their timely handling. The *Catalog* will soon be posted on the Office's website, which at present is being re-designed.

Internet

The *Direct Archdiocesan Office of Education* is currently working on the development of a new web page featuring a broader array of choices. The new user-friendly design of the web page is being developed with both teachers and students in mind.

The *District Office* has created a list-server for the New York City day school principals, which is used to disseminate important information from *federal*, *state*, and *city* education agencies and is currently in the process of creating a list-server for all the parochial day school principals, in order to be able to distribute important information sent from the U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

A Visitation to The Annunciation Church, Buffalo, NY

At the invitation of the parish council president and the principal of the afternoon school of the *Annunciation Church*, Buffalo, New York and with the blessings of His Eminence **Archbishop Demetrios** and **Metropolitan Nikolaos** of Detroit, Mrs. Maria Makedon attended the Community's **25th of March** celebration. Mrs. Makedon was the main speaker of the event, which took place in the Church's auditorium following the Divine Liturgy and a Doxology. She also had the opportunity to meet with the teachers of the afternoon school.

