

ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING  
March 17 – 18, 2006  
Marriott Marquis Hotel, New York City

**Committee Report On Greek Education**  
Dr. Steven Gounardes

Your Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Your Eminences, Your Graces,  
Reverend Clergy, Mr. Jaharis, Archdiocesan Council members and staff...  
Good Afternoon.

Attending our committee meeting yesterday, Friday, March 17, 2006 were  
His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos, His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios,  
Dr. Efthymiopoulos, Fr. Anargyros Stavropoulos, George Dariotis, Tom  
Dallas, Savvas Tsivicos, Panicos Papanicolaou and Steven Gounardes.  
Enclosed in the packages you received are reports from both Ms Maria  
Makedon director of education of the Direct Archdiocesan District Office  
and Dr. Ioannis Efthymiopoulos, Director of the Department of Greek  
Education for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. Both reports highlight their  
many successes and progress since our last meeting. Dr. Efthymiopoulos and  
Ms. Makedon should be commended for their efforts.

The Recent activities of the Department of Greek Education include

- Educational training seminar, held November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005 in New York  
for all educators of parochial schools in the states of New York and  
Connecticut, under the auspices of His eminence Archbishop Demetrios.

The seminar included two separate workshops:

- a) For teachers who teach Greek as a second language in our  
parochial schools and
- b) For teachers of day schools who teach in English programs.

Dr. Efthymiopulos and Ms. Maria Makedon were in charge of these two  
workshops respectively.

In the Seminar for the instruction of Greek as a second language, proposals  
of thematic units were made for kindergarten, elementary school, and high  
school grade levels. Modern teaching methods and practices were introduced  
and a sample instruction of the Greek language was presented with the use  
of verbal communication based on subjects selected from our rich Greek  
Civilization.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, the Consul General of Cyprus, the Consul for educational affairs of the Greek Consulate as well as many other community dignitaries and educators were present.

- An educational training seminar for the educators of parochial schools of the Metropolis of Chicago was organized with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of Chicago. Teachers of the parochial schools of the Metropolis of Chicago and Dr. Efthymiopoulos were the presenters of the Seminar. Aside from this seminar, Dr. Efthymiopoulos made many local school visitations in the Metropolis.

- A training seminar took place on November 29<sup>th</sup> in the Metropolis of San Francisco with the blessing and support of His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos at the Holy Cross Community in Belmont, California.

- On December 17, an educational training seminar took place in the Metropolis of Boston with the support of His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios.

As a result of an in depth evaluation /assessment of the current conditions of our parochial schools, it was determined that obsolete books and curriculums present obstacles against their efficient operation. Let it be noted that most of the books have been published 20 years ago and others are considered hard to use by our schools. According to the opinions expressed by our teachers, both these factors do not address the reality and demands for teaching Greek as a second language to Greek-American children growing up in the USA.

Also, within the thematic units of most of them, one does not find educational practices that would give emphasis to methods through verbal communication for the instruction of Greek as a second language; out of appropriate thematic units students could be taught Religion, History, Geography and Culture.

Thematic units, as they are, do not serve well the instruction of the Greek language; they do not stimulate students and thus do not cover basic principles of didactic instruction of Greek as a second language at a local level in today's reality.

Our goal is to create new thematic units and a curriculum for the instruction of Greek as a second language that will be adjusted to the needs of the children of our Parochial Schools.

In light of the fact that the process of evaluating a book is not an easy task, and to be able to achieve objectivity, a special questionnaire was drawn up which aims at the evaluation of:

- A) The content of texts or thematic units,
- B) The way they are presented, and
- C) Their instructive efficiency.

With the blessing and support of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, the office proceeded and formulated a questionnaire that will aid us with the evaluation of the responses we will receive, so that we will be able to undertake further steps in regard to methodological and pedagogical issues.

A relevant proposal along with the questionnaire has already been sent to all Metropolitans of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America as well as to all prospective Offices of Greek Education; with their help and support we will proceed.

At the same time, this questionnaire was sent to all parochial schools of the Holy Metropolises so that teachers will have greater participation in the pedagogical research process of book evaluation.

When we receive the completed questionnaires, then all answers will be evaluated and codified leading us to certain conclusions that will prompt further decisions.

Equally important priorities of our committee are how to recruit and retain new teachers and to how train them with standardized teaching methodologies and curriculum that are relevant to the needs of our student population.

Of course we also need to focus in on maximizing the number of students who attend our schools.

Students, teachers and the instructional material and its presentation are all crucial and essential links to the success and future of Greek Education in the United States. If one of these links is missing we will not be able to achieve our goals.

The committee applauds the efforts of its director Dr. Efthymiopoulos and believes it has a good start on a long journey ahead of us. For us to be successful we need the continued support of everyone involved including the

parents, teachers, parish councils, local clergy and their Metropolitans.  
Without the sincere support of all of these entities our progress and  
achievement of goals will be limited.