

**ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING
MARRIOTT EAST SIDE HOTEL
March 3-4, 2000**

**A REPORT
ON THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

The Archdiocesan Department of Education oversees the parochial day and afternoon schools, which function under the auspices of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and constitute the Archdiocesan School System.

There are 19 parochial day schools currently functioning in the United States with a total student enrollment of **3,870 students**. They maintain pre-school centers, kindergartens, elementary, junior high, and high school grades and have an annual operating budget of approximately \$16-17 million dollars. (Please refer to the attached tables.)

In addition to the parochial day schools, there are approximately **300 parishes** from within the 500 Greek Orthodox communities in the United States, which sustain afternoon school programs and classes for adults for the teaching of the Greek language and culture. It is estimated that **25,000 students**, ages 6-15, are enrolled in these after school programs.

The main objective of the Greek Orthodox parochial education is to instill in the students of Greek and of non-Greek descent the spiritual, moral and cultural values of the Greek Orthodox Faith and heritage. In its capacity as the regulatory authority of the educational material to be taught, the Archdiocesan Department of Education provides the community schools with the following:

- general curriculum guidelines for the teaching of the Greek Orthodox Faith and Worship;
- general curriculum guidelines for the teaching of the Greek language and culture;
- seminars and workshops on the teaching of Greek as a foreign language;
- programs and presentations that promote Greek culture;
- assessment and evaluation materials and examinations;
- materials for the teaching of the Greek language and culture (books, audio/visual cassettes, maps, computer CDs, etc.).

MAJOR PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The beginning of each ecclesiastical (or school year) marks the start of major activities and projects for the Archdiocesan Department of Education. Such activities have included the following:

- mailing out statistical forms, pertinent information, and catalogs on materials for the teaching of the Greek language and culture;

- processing orders for books and other materials submitted by schools, teachers and interested individuals (The Department collects approximately \$15,000 annually from the sale of these books.)
- issuing “certificate of studies” to our community school students of the tri-state area (NY, NJ, CT) who pass the annual Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek;
- coordinating the annual **Spelling Bee Contest** among our parochial day school students of the metropolitan New York area, which took place at the Archdiocese, on **January 12, 2000**. The Contest has been sponsored for years by the newspaper **DAILY NEWS**.
- organizing, in cooperation with the **Jewish Board of Education**, a **Staff-Development Workshop in Science** for day school teachers of the fourth grade. The Workshop took place at **St. Demetrios High School of Astoria, on January 13, 2000**.

Conferences and Meetings

In its effort to address the needs of the New York area parochial day schools, the Department of Education

- organized **two Principals Meetings**: on **November 17, 1999**, at the **Transfiguration School** in Corona; and on **February 15, 2000**, at the **Archdiocese**. (The meeting was followed by a **Luncheon** hosted by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios.)

In addition, the assistant director of the Department attended and/or participated in the following educational conferences and meetings:

- The **Annual Conference of Public and Non-Public School Administrators**, sponsored by the New York State Education Department, Albany (**October 25 & 26, 1999**);
- The annual **Conference of the New York Collaborative of Public and Nonpublic School Officials**, sponsored by the Graduate Center of CUNY (**November 18, 1999**);
- The **Conference of the Council of Hellenes Abroad (SAE)**, sponsored by the Greek Government, Thessaloniki (**December 1-8, 1999**);
- **Two meetings** of the joined **Committee of Public and Nonpublic School Representatives**, that took place in Albany (**October 25, 1999**) and in NYC (**Board of Jewish Education**), (**January 13, 2000**);
- A **meeting on Greek Education in the United States**, sponsored by **St. John’s University**, **February 5, 2000**. (Participants included the four educational counselors of the Greek Ministry of Education in the United States as well as prominent Greek American professors and educators.)

Cultural Events

Greek Letters and Arts Week was celebrated this year with much enthusiasm. To celebrate the Feast Day of the Three Hierarchs and honor Greek Letters, the Department of Education organized the following **events**:

- A **Divine Liturgy** for day school students (grades 5 and up) at St. Demetrios in Jamaica, on **January 28, 2000**, officiating His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios;
- An **Award Ceremony**, immediately following the Divine Liturgy at St. Demetrios, Jamaica, on January 28, 2000, during which the students who excelled in last year's Greek Regents Examination were honored by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios;
- A **Vasilopita Reception** for the teachers and administrators of the community day and afternoon schools located in the tri-state region (NY, NJ, CT), that was held at the Archdiocese, on **January 28, 2000**.
- A **Lecture and a Celebration of Greek Letters and Arts** at Holy Trinity Cathedral, in Manhattan, on **January 30, 2000**, that was attended by more than 300 persons. Main speaker of this event was His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. The Lecture was followed by a Reception.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS

- In March, the Department will launch its most significant project of the year, which is the development of the annual **Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek**. The Examination offers the students of public and nonpublic schools in the tri-state area (NY, NJ, CT) the opportunity to attain **credits in foreign language studies**. It will be given in June 2000.

During this **first phase** of the project (March-April), the Department will

- ✓ form a team of writers;
- ✓ designate test sites according to student demand;
- ✓ prepare informative materials for dissemination to community schools.

During the **second phase** (May-June), the Department will

- ✓ finalize the Examination and supervise its printing;
- ✓ produce an audio-cassette for the Listening Part of the Examination;
- ✓ train the proctors.

During the **final phase** (July-August), the Department will

- ✓ supervise the grading of the examinations;
- ✓ inform the schools and students about the results.

- The Department's assistant director **will attend** various school programs in celebration of the **Greek Independence Day (March 25th)**.
- In the coming months, the Department's assistant director **will visit** the schools, which are participating in an on-going experiment **in the use of new teaching materials** developed by the University of Crete. Her intent is to inform accordingly His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios.

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Submitted by
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March 3, 2000