



ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING

**MARRIOTT MARQUIS HOTEL
FALL 2001**

REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

“...It is crucial that we continue to implement educational programs that will cultivate our children and youth, establishing them in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13) and introducing them to the treasures of our Hellenic heritage”.

† Archbishop Demetrios

Encyclical for the Ecclesiastical New Year (Sept. 1, 2001)

The Archdiocesan School System

The Greek Orthodox parochial schools – day and afternoon – provide a program of studies that incorporates the teaching of the Modern Greek language, history and culture as well as the Greek Orthodox faith. These schools constitute the Archdiocesan School System.

With a curriculum that offers a better understanding and appreciation of the religious and cultural heritage of our Greek Orthodox Church, the parochial day and afternoon schools contribute greatly to the development of well-informed and progressive members of our Church and, thus, play a vital role in the educational programs of each parish.

a) Greek American Day Schools

There are **18** parochial day schools currently functioning in the United States. These schools, which operate under the auspices of the Archdiocese, have an enrollment of **4,104** students for the school year 2001-2002.

Day parochial schools maintain pre-school centers, kindergartens, elementary, and secondary classes, and offer programs that adhere to local or state-mandated curricula.

In addition, a number of parishes in some dioceses have started, or are looking for ways to start early childhood programs, such as nursery, pre-K, and kindergarten classes.

b) Greek Afternoon Schools & Classes for Adults

Approximately **300** afternoon schools are in operation in the United States today. It is estimated that 25,000 to 30,000 students, ages 6-15, are enrolled in the afternoon schools.

In addition, a great number of adults of Greek and non-Greek ancestry are attending Greek evening classes. According to various reports, this number is on the rise.

The Archdiocesan Office of Education

The Office of Education of the Archdiocese oversees the community day and afternoon schools and provides them with:

- Curriculum Guidelines;
- Books and Audio/visual Materials;
- Assessment Tools;
- Certificates, Diplomas and Awards, and
- In-service Teacher Seminars.

Due to the proximity of the 11 day schools located in the metropolitan New York area, the Office of Education assists these schools by acting as their *coordinator/facilitator* in matters related to the implementation of the local and state curricula and mandates. Under this capacity, the Office of Education

- Holds regular meetings with the area day school principals.
- Organizes teacher seminars and workshops, in collaboration with state authorities.
- Is represented in meetings of state and other nonpublic school agencies.
- Participates in various school programs and graduation exercises.
- Coordinates the annual Spelling Bee Contest.
- Organizes cultural events for teachers, students and the general public, such as the annual festivities honoring Greek Letters and Arts.
- Develops and administers annually the *New York State Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* for REGENTS high school credit in learning a foreign language.

The NYS Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek (*GREEK REGENTS*)

On June 18, 2001, the Office of Education administered the Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek to approximately 650 public and parochial school students attending schools in the states of NY, NJ, CT.

The development and administration of this Examination by the Education Office involves: *item writing; publishing; audiocassette production, and proctor training.*

Students who successfully pass this examination receive a "Certificate of Studies & Grade Report", which grants them high school credit in a foreign language.

The Annual Staff-Development Seminar

Under the aegis of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, the Office of Education organized its annual **Staff-Development Seminar**, on September 24th, for the teachers of day and afternoon schools serving in the tri-state area of NY, NJ, CT.

The Seminar took place at St. Demetrios School in Astoria and included **10 workshops**: seven workshops were geared toward the day school core curriculum and **three** to the program of Greek studies.

The workshops for the teachers of English were organized in cooperation with state education agencies. The workshops for the Greek teachers were the result of a cooperative effort between the Archdiocese and the **Hellenic-American Union in Athens**. The workshops for the Greek programs focused on the teaching of the Modern Greek language and history using the **Internet** and other electronic media as resources.

The Ministry of Education of Greece

During the summer, the director of the Education Office, Dr. George Pilitsis, visited the Deputy Minister of Education of Greece, Mr. Philippos Petsalnikos and other officials. The Greek officials agreed to assist the Archdiocesan Department of Education in its endeavors to improve and promote Greek Orthodox Education offered in the community schools throughout the country.

The Deputy Minister – in collaboration with Greek Universities – has graciously agreed to assign professors specializing in the field of Greek language and education, to participate in teacher seminars in the United States. He also expressed an interest in inviting Greek teachers to attend special classes on the methodology of teaching Greek as a foreign language at the University of Athens. The Greek Ministry of Education will underwrite all expenses.

Hellenic American Union, Athens

Hellenic American Union is an educational institution known for teaching Greek/or English to foreigners. In April, the President of the Hellenic American Union in Athens, Mr. Chris Spyrou, and the managing director, Mr. Leonidas Phoebus Koskos met with His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, at his Office in New York. Present were also the director of the Office of Education, Dr. George Pilitsis, and the assistant director Mrs. Maria Makedon.

Mr. Spyrou discussed with the Archbishop plans to develop a *web-based, multi-media program for Learning Greek as a Second Language named **HELLAS ALIVE*** and requested the collaboration of the Archdiocese.

As a result of this collaboration, Mr. Dimitris Toliias, director of Greek Studies, visited a number of day schools in New York to evaluate what is being taught and the methodology used. (*Mr. Toliias was one of the presenters at the annual Staff-Development of the Office of Education that took place on Monday, September 24th, 2001 in New York.*)

Future Plans

1. The Office of Education is currently studying plans to organize educational seminars on teaching methodologies for Greek teachers. The seminars will be conducted annually, for three weeks in the summer, on the Hellenic College campus. Linguists, professionals, and other specialists in the education field, from Greece and USA, will be invited to share their views and experience on teaching Modern Greek as a foreign language, as well as Greek history and culture.
2. Discussions with the Archdiocese Office of Information Technologies are underway to design computerized teaching programs and other issues pertaining to Greek education. A web page will be established and become accessible to every teacher, student and parent.
3. In order to establish or improve communication among teachers, students, and parents in all Dioceses, the Archdiocesan Office of Education plans to publish a newsletter, which will be distributed to all the community schools of the Archdiocese.
4. The Office of Education is in the process of forming an Education Committee to review the “Regulations of the System of Greek Education” and propose suggestions for possible revisions and amendments.

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