



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE  
DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT CLERGY-LAITY ASSEMBLY

MAY 18 & 19, 2009  
CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION, BROOKVILLE, NEW

**THE DISTRICT OFFICE OF EDUCATION REPORT**

Maria Makedon, *Director*

**Mission**

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* serves the District's parochial day schools as well as the afternoon Greek language schools. It provides services and appropriate teaching materials to the schools, in order to enhance their curricula and promote the Greek Orthodox heritage and the teaching of the Greek language. Specifically, it provides the schools with

1. Professional development for the teachers of the **English** and **Greek** Departments.
2. Appropriate materials and curriculum guides for the teaching of the Greek language and culture.
3. The *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*, an assessment tool for the evaluation of student learning.

The *Office* also organizes student events that promote the Greek Orthodox cultural heritage and foster the teaching/learning experience.

Furthermore, the *District Office* represents the NYC parochial day schools at the federal, state, and city education authorities. The participation of the *District Office* in various conferences and committee meetings -- notably the *Standing Committee of Religious & Independent Schools* -- has initiated contacts that have helped provide the parochial day schools with services and teaching materials funded by the federal government.

**The District's Day & Afternoon Schools**

For the school year 2008-09, there are **10** Greek Orthodox parochial day schools operating in the District, **46** Greek afternoon schools, and **3** pre-school & day care centers. **5,593** students currently attend classes from pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> in these parish-supported schools, which employ **244**

Greek teachers. In addition, the Ministry of Education of Greece has assigned **28** teachers to teach the Greek language and culture in the New York City parochial day schools.

We are pleased to report that the community of Holy Cross, Whitestone, will be adding a **first** grade class to its Kindergarten next school year and plans to add additional grades in the future. It is expected that the “*Efstathios & Stamatiki Valiotis Greek-American School*” of Holy Cross will be fully operational as a parochial day school next year raising, thus, the number of day schools in the District to **11**.

The following charts may offer a perspective of the types of schools in the District, their days of operation, and the synthesis of their student population.

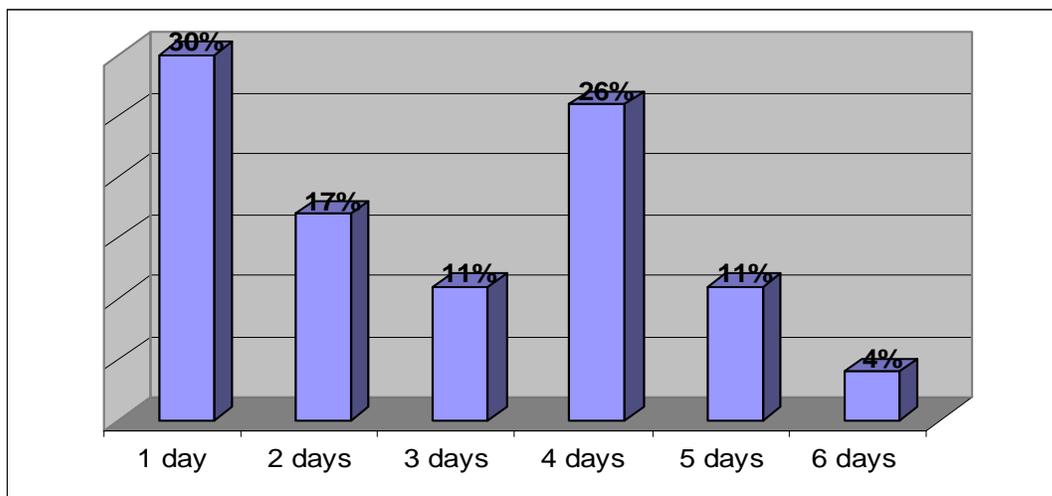
### 1. Types of Schools and Students Enrollment

Types of Schools	No. of Schools	No. of Students
Day Schools	10	2,018
Afternoon/Saturday Schools	46	3,475
Pre-School & Day Care Centers	3	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>5,593</b>

### 2. Afternoon Schools per Region

Region	No. of Schools	%
<b>New York State</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>74%</b>
• New York City	12	26%
• Long Island	12	26%
• Westchester	3	7%
• Upstate New York	7	15%
<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Washington, DC</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4%</b>

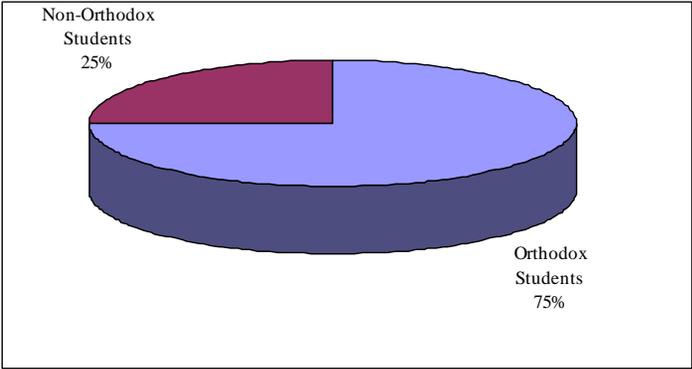
### 3. Afternoon/Saturday Schools Days of Operation



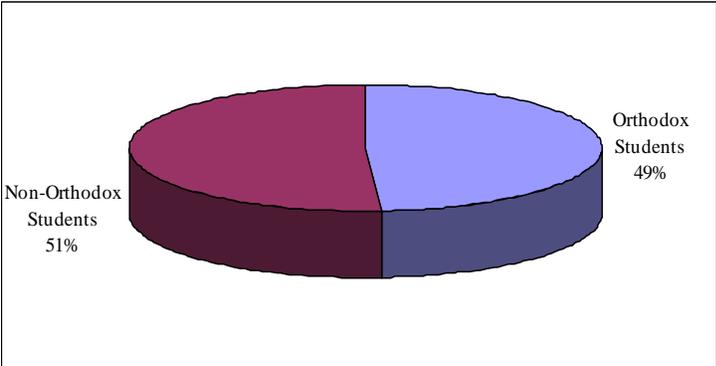
**Orthodox vs. Non-Orthodox Students**

<b>Day Schools</b>	<b>Percent of Orthodox Students</b>	<b>Percent of Non-Orthodox Students</b>
St. Demetrios Day School, Astoria	100%	0%
W. Spyropoulos Day School of St. Nicholas, Flushing	100%	0%
Three Hierarchs Parochial School, Brooklyn	89.7%	10.3%
D. and G. Kaloidis Parochial School of Holy Cross Church, Brooklyn	67.6%	32.4%
Greek American Institute, Bronx	52.6%	47.4%
The Cathedral School, Manhattan	50%	50%
Jamaica Day School of St Demetrios	45.2%	54.8%
A. Fantis Parochial School, Brooklyn	41.6%	58.4%
St. Spyridon Parochial School, Manhattan	0.8%	99.2%
School of the Transfiguration, Corona	n/a	n/a
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>25%</b>

**A. Includes the Astoria and Flushing Schools**



**B. Excludes the Astoria and Flushing Schools**



## SERVICES, PROJECTS & EVENTS

### Advocating for the NYC Greek Orthodox Parochial Day Schools

During the last five years, the *District Office of Education* has intensified its efforts to be of meaningful assistance to the principals of the 10 parochial day schools in New York City and, consequently, benefit the teachers and students of the schools.

The *District Office* is a member of the *Standing Committee of the New York City Religious Schools* headed by **Rabbi David Zwiebel**, Esq. and director of the *Agudath Israel Organization*. Rabbi Zwiebel succeeded Dr. Catherine Hickey, former Secretary for Education of the (Roman Catholic) Archdiocese of New York, who retired last January.

Representing the NYC Greek Orthodox parochial day schools at the federal, state, and local education authorities, the director of the *District Office* participates in meetings, conferences and forums that are sponsored by the **U.S. Department of Education**, Washington, DC, the **New York State Education Department**, and the **NYC Department of Education** in Brooklyn.

### The NYC Chancellor of Education

The *Standing Committee of the New York City Religious Schools* meets, once a year, with the New York City *Chancellor of Education* **Joel I. Klein** at his headquarters (City Hall's Tweed Bldg.) to discuss issues and policies pertaining to nonpublic school education.

The *Committee* met with the Chancellor on Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. Present were also his Deputy Chancellor, **Ms. Kathleen Grimm**, the director of the NYC Department of Education/*Bureau of Reimbursable Services*, **Ms. Caren Moncher Zayde**, **Mr. Eric Goldstein**, director of Student Busing, and **Dr. Roger Platt**, Chief Medical Officer. The agenda included the following:

1. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Stimulus Money)
2. The new National Service Law
3. Special education for children in nonpublic schools
4. Nonpublic schools security
5. Ongoing viability of religious schools / Charter Schools

### The NYC Roundtable on Faith-Based Schools



The involvement of the *District Office* with the American education authorities would not have been possible without the Archbishop's approval and encouragement. His Eminence **Archbishop Demetrios'** insight and advice has been the guiding light for the *Office's* endeavors to help the community schools and promote Greek Orthodox education.

On Tuesday, September 23, 2008, **Archbishop Demetrios** participated in a **NYC Roundtable** on "*Inner-City Children & Faith-Based Schools*," that was sponsored by the *U.S. Department of Education*, Washington, DC and the *NYC Committee of Religious Schools*.

The *NYC Roundtable* was chaired by Rev. Joseph M. McShane, S.J., President, Fordham University. Many notable government and church representatives, educators, politicians, and businessmen addressed a select group of attendees on issues such as: *tax tuition credits, vouchers, and scholarships for students of private/faith based schools.*

**H.E. Archbishop Demetrios** was applauded when he spoke on the invaluable contribution of the faith-based schools to the American society at large. The Archbishop was accompanied by the director of the *District Office of Education*, Ms. Maria Makedon.

### The 4th Annual Private School Leadership Conference, Washington, DC

Representing the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, Mrs. Maria Makedon, director of the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* and Dr. Tony Vrame, director of the *Department of Religious Education* attended the **Fourth Annual Private School Leadership Conference** on “*Educational Choice: Keeping Private Schools a Viable Option for Inner City Youth,*” which took place on Friday, **September 26, 2008**, in Washington, DC.

The Conference was sponsored by the U. S. Department of Education / Office of Innovation and Improvement (ONRE)/Non-Public Education, Washington, DC. The speakers included Mr. Doug Mesecar, Assistant Deputy Secretary / Office of Innovation and Improvement (ONRE); Mr. Jack Klenk, Director, Office of Non-Public Education, and Ms. Pamela Allen and Ms. Maureen Dowling, Education Program Specialists.

Five outstanding teachers of faith-based schools from around the country were honored at the *Conference* with the **American Stars Teaching Awards**.

### The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference for Administrators of Independent & Religious Schools



**His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios'** efforts to promote our parochial day school education were publicly recognized on **November 17, 2008**, at the *24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference for Administrators of Independent and Religious Schools*, in Albany.

At the Luncheon and in front of an audience of more than **400** educators, who had gathered from all regions of New York State, **Archbishop Demetrios** was presented with the **Leadership in Education Award**.

The *Conference for Administrators of Independent and Religious Schools* offers the opportunity to administrators of faith-based schools to attend workshops and meet with representatives of the NY State Education Department. A delegation of 23 persons – priests and administrators – from the NYC parochial day schools attended the event. Fr. Patric Legato, dean of St. Sophia Church, Albany, gave the morning invocation.

## The Benefits for the NYC parochial day schools

As a result of the involvement of the *District Office of Education* with the education authorities and the *Standing Committee of NYC Religious Schools* (or faith-based as the Feds call them), the parochial day schools in New York have greatly benefited from federally funded services and resources.

This year, for example, the NYC day schools received approximately **\$78,000** in federal money for **professional development** and **teaching materials**, including software. The funds are calculated based on the number of eligible students and disseminated by the ***Bureau of Reimbursable Services/ NYC Department of Education***.

## Parochial School Teachers Studying at Local Universities

Half of (\$78,000) the funds allocated to the Greek Orthodox day schools was spent for **professional development**. Five teachers currently serving in these schools are near completion of graduate work in school administration at **St. John's University** and at **Adelphi**. Our teachers will graduate with a Masters Degree and ready to undertake the position of a principal if needed.

The *Archdiocesan District Office of Education* was designated by the NYC Department of Education/ Bureau of Reimbursable Programs, as the **coordinator** for the equitable distribution of the funds among the NYC parochial day schools. Thus, the *District Office* was asked to affirm all teacher applications for professional development, in order for the **Bureau** to pay for their studies.

## Teacher Training & the EAROBICS Software Program

Similarly, the *District Office* was requested to coordinate the purchase of materials for the parochial day schools through various vendors and organize workshops to train the teachers on how to use them.

With the remaining federal funds, the *District Office* was able to purchase materials and offer training to **28 teachers** on the software program **EAROBICS** used for teaching English in grades K-3<sup>rd</sup>. The training took place on **March 9 and 10, 2009**, at St. Demetrios School in Astoria.

## The Archdiocesan District's Annual Staff-Development Seminar



Under the auspices of **His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios**, the *District Office* organized its annual *Staff Development Seminar* for the teachers serving in the *District's* schools.

**247** principals and teachers attended the *Seminar*, which took place on **November 4, 2008** (*Election Day*), at St. Demetrios High School in Astoria and featured **15** workshops that covered all levels of instruction, from pre-K to high school (English and Greek departments). The workshops were

conducted by prominent professionals in the field of education.

## The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek for Regents Credit

The *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* is scheduled for administration on **Tuesday, June 23, 2009** (9:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m.).

The *District Office of Education* develops the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*, a foreign language test that assesses student proficiency in *listening, speaking, reading, and writing* Modern Greek, following the standards of the Syllabus “*Modern Languages for Communication*” of the New York State Education Department.



The *2009 Examination* is currently under development. **Part 1: Speaking** has already been sent to the teachers, who have already started the evaluation of the oral performance of the students.

The written part of the *Examination* has been already evaluated by Professor Stefanos Papazaharias of the *University at Buffalo/The State University of New York* and Dr. George Papanastasiou, director of the **Institute of Modern Greek Studies/The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**.

## The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek placed under State Mandated Services

The **Office of School Operations and Management Services** of the **State Education Department** has placed the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* under the State’s Mandated Services. As a result of this decision, the New York City parochial day schools can claim state money for the administration of the *Examination* (time spent for teacher preparation, administration of the exam and for grading the student answer booklets) as they could have done for giving any other state mandated exam – i.e. in Language Arts, Science, Math, etc.

The decision of the **Office of School Operations and Management Services/New York State Education** was based on documents that were submitted by the *Archdiocesan District Office of Education*. In a letter addressed to Mrs. Maria Makedon, director of the *District Office*, Mr. Charles A. Szuberla, Jr., Executive Director, wrote:

*“Thank you for sharing your very detailed records about the validity of the Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek, which the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese has been developing and administering in collaboration with NYS Education Department staff since 1973.*

*The correspondence that you shared with me enabled me to confirm that students receive Regents credit for the examination. The administration of the examinations by your parochial schools is a justifiable expense and can be reimbursed from Mandated Services Aid.”*

The *District Office* considers this decision a major accomplishment, since it places the *Greek Examination* in the same category with the officially recognized by the State foreign languages (French, German, Italian, Spanish and Latin). **The decision will go into effect with the 2009 Examination.**

## STUDENT EVENTS HIGHLIGHTING EXCELLENCE

### The Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence



Approximately **600 students** of day, afternoon, and public schools take the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* each year. Those who pass it receive three Regents high school credits in a foreign language.

Every year, the *District Office of Education* recognizes the students who excel during a special ceremony held in conjunction with the **Feast of the Three Hierarchs** on January 30<sup>th</sup>.

**15** students who received a score of 100 on the *2008 Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* were honored on **January 30, 2009**, at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, in Manhattan. **His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios** presented the honorees with *The Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence* and an icon of the Three Hierarchs, following the Divine Liturgy.

The Archbishop congratulated the honorees and addressed an audience of **350** students, administrators, and teachers on the contribution of the Holy Fathers of our Church, the Three Hierarchs and the importance of speaking the Greek language and living the Greek Orthodox heritage.

### The Spelling Bee Competition

The *District Office of Education* organizes annually a *Spelling Bee Competition* (in English) for the students of the parochial day schools of metropolitan New York.

The District's *2009 Spelling Bee* was held on **January 8, 2009** at the Archdiocesan headquarters. **Jordan Massey**, a seventh-grade student of the "*A. Fantis*" *Parochial School* of SS. Constantine & Helen, Brooklyn, won the first place.



**His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America** congratulated the school champions and presented them with an *Award Certificate* and a gift card from the Barnes & Noble bookstore.

On March 24, 2009, **Jordan Massey** represented the Greek Orthodox parochial schools at the *Daily News Spelling Bee Finals*, at Hunter College in Manhattan, and won *sixth* place.

## Principals Meetings



The *Direct Archdiocesan Office of Education* holds regular meetings with the New York City parochial day school principals.

The *Office* invites officials of the **State Education Department** as well as the **NYC Department of Education** and other City agencies to come to these meetings and enlighten the principals on various issues of concern.

Thus, on **December 3, 2008**, the *District Office of Education* invited **Ms. Sharon Spence** and **Ms. Betty Sanchez**, health epidemiologists of the *Bureau of Immunizations/NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*, who distributed forms and gave instructions to the principals on how to submit information regarding

On **February 9, 2009**, **Ms. Mary Kurutz**, Senior administrative analyst, *Office of Grants Management/The State Education Department* joined the principals. Ms. Kurutz provided one-to-one assistance to the principals and showed them how to do the calculations on their applications for the full reimbursement of services that are mandated by the State Education Department.

And on **May 7, 2009**, **Dr. Paul Lynch**, *Asst. Superintendent for Government Programs/ the Archdiocese of New York* (Roman Catholic) and **Mrs. Marlene Lund**, *Executive Director/ the Lutheran Schools Association*, participated in a joined meeting of principals and priests and informed them about the federally funded services to nonpublic schools.

## School Visitations

The parochial day school principals had long expressed their wish for the director of the *District Office of Education* to visit their schools. Thus, during the months of February and March, Mrs. Maria Makedon visited all the day schools in New York City and witnessed the incredible work that is being done to offer a sound academic program that will make the schools competitive in their neighborhoods.



Mrs. Makedon had the opportunity to visit the classrooms, see the teachers in action, and meet with the principals and the teachers. The educators looked happy and eager to show her their work and expressed the wish that: “*the communication with the District Office to be a continuous endeavor.*” It was truly an experience, and the schools should be commented for their dedication to hard work and the Greek Orthodox ideals.

## The Kindergarten Curriculum



The *Curriculum for the Kindergarten*, published by the *District Office of Education* is in great demand. The book is currently **out-of-stock**, but the waiting list continues to grow on the Orthodox Marketplace.

**1,000** copies have been distributed “*gratis*” to community schools around the country since the publication was made possible due to the generous support of the “*Stavros S. Niarchos*” **Foundation**.

A PDF version of the *Curriculum* is available on the *District’s* web page <http://www.education.goarch.org>

## Visit Us Online

The *District Office* has created, with help from the IT Department of the Archdiocese, a user-friendly **web page**, <http://www.education.goarch.org>.

The new web page contains information on the Office’s *major projects, mailings and documents* sent to the schools; *reports* to the Clergy-Laity Congresses, the Archdiocesan Councils, and the District Assemblies; the *Curriculum for the Kindergarten* in its entirety; past *Comprehensive Examinations*; a detailed *listing of the District’s day and afternoon schools*, and useful *links*.

Visitors may also download our *Catalog* of recommended books and resource materials. However, **all book orders -- including orders for certificates and diplomas – are now being handled by the Orthodox Marketplace at** [www.orthodoxmarketplace.com](http://www.orthodoxmarketplace.com).



Submitted by:  
Maria Makedon

May 15, 2009