



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education

REPORT TO THE 40TH BIENNIAL CLERGY LAITY CONGRESS

July 4-8, 2010

Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Atlanta, Georgia

THE DISTRICT SCHOOLS

A) The Parochial Day Schools

New York City is considered the stronghold of Greek American presence in the United States. A presence that has been nurtured since the turn of the 20th century by a large number of Greek Orthodox parochial day schools that have been flourishing under the guardianship of the local parishes and the Archdiocese.

Since 1912 when the *Greek American Institute* was founded in the Bronx, the parochial day schools of the metropolitan New York area have graduated thousands of boys and girls who proudly represent today the Greek-American Community as prominent members of the American society at large.

One hundred years later, the demographics in New York City have changed. These changes, coupled with other factors, have had a dramatic affect on the enrollment and the synthesis of the student population for the parochial schools, many of which attract today a diverse group of students: students of Greek and non-Greek descent, of Greek speaking and non-Greek speaking families, of the Christian Orthodox faith or other faiths. These students, who differ in terms of needs and learning abilities, the parochial schools are obliged to educate offering a program of studies of high academic standards that includes the teaching of the Greek Orthodox culture and the Greek language.

During the school year 2009-2010, **11 parochial day schools** were in operation in the metropolitan New York area with an enrollment of **1,922** students. The number indicates a slight decline as compared to the previous school year (2008-2009). (*For further information on the recent trends regarding student enrollment and its synthesis, please refer to the Appendix of this report.*)

The parochial day schools adhere to state guidelines regarding curriculum design and student assessment. Compliance with state mandates determines eligibility of the schools to federally funded grants and services earmarked for teacher training, textbooks, library books, and technology equipment.

B) The Greek Afternoon Schools

The *Direct Archdiocesan District* is also the host of **46 Greek language and culture schools** that operate after school hours or, in some cases, on a Saturday. **3,503** students were registered in the *District's*

afternoon Greek schools for the current school year (2009-2010). *(For further information on the recent trends regarding student enrollment and its synthesis, please refer to the Appendix of this report.)*

THE DISTRICT OFFICE OF EDUCATION

The *Archdiocesan District Office of Education* mission is to provide assistance to the 57 parochial day and afternoon schools of the *District*, ultimately benefiting the 5,705 students who are in attendance. The task is enormous and twofold.

The District Office is called to facilitate the work of the administrators and teachers of ALL *District* schools -- day and afternoon -- which differ in terms of their curricula, objectives, and student needs. Their only common characteristic is **the program of Greek studies** they offer. Greek studies, however, is just a part of the entire academic curriculum for the parochial day schools.

Assisting the Day Schools

In light of the fact that the National Office of Greek Education of the Archdiocese is responsible for providing assistance with the **Greek studies program** of the schools, the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* has been focusing its attention, in late years, to the parochial day schools of the District in order to address their needs.

The principals of the day schools had long wished for a unified presence within the nonpublic/religious schools sector of New York City and New York State. It was with the encouragement of **His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America** that the *District Office of Education* undertook the responsibility to organize the schools under the umbrella of the Archdiocese and represent them at the education authorities as their liaison.

Today, the *District Office of Education* represents the parochial day schools of New York at the **national** (U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC), **state** (State Education Department, Albany), and **city** (NYC Department of Education) levels.

The *District Office* is also a member of the *Standing Committee of NYC Religious Schools Officials* that includes representation from the following organizations: *the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, the Board of Jewish Education, Agudath Israel of America, the Lutheran Schools Association, and the Islamic Schools Association*. This *Committee* meets regularly with representatives of the NYC Department of Education and, once a year, with the Chancellor of Education of New York City.

Conferences & Meetings

Since the 39th CLC (2008), the *District Office of Education* has participated in conferences and meetings representing the Archdiocese and the parochial day schools of the *District* as follows:

At the U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC

September 26, 2008 - The 4th Annual Private School Leadership Conference

September 23, 2009 - The 5th Annual Private School Leadership Conference

At the New York State Education Department, Albany

November 17, 2008 – The 24th Annual Conference for Administrators of Independent and Religious Schools

November 16, 2009 – The 25th Annual Conference for Administrators of Independent and Religious Schools

At the New York City Department of Education, Brooklyn

Fall 2008 November 12; December 15

Spring 2009 March 18; May 5; June 17

Fall 2009 September 9; October 21; December 9

Spring 2009 March 10; May 12; June 16

Principals Meetings

The *District Office of Education* has held numerous meetings with the NYC day school principals these past two years. In these meetings, the *Office* usually invites representatives of the education authorities to enlighten the principals on various issues. The principals met on:

Fall 2008 October 2 and December 3

Spring 2009 February 9; April 28; May 7; and June 9

Fall 2009 September 30; October 22; and December 17

Spring 2010 March 18 and April 30

PROJECTS THAT BENEFIT ALL SCHOOLS – DAY & AFTERNOON

THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN MODERN GREEK

Developed and administered in accordance with the New York State standards on foreign language testing, the ***Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*** has benefited thousands of students in its 37 years of existence and still motivates young learners to remain in Greek school studying the Greek language.

The ***Examination*** is a foreign language test that assesses student proficiency in **listening, speaking, reading, and writing Modern Greek**. Students who pass the *Examination* receive foreign language credit in high schools, colleges, and universities. It is given in June of each year. (*The 2010 Examination was administered on June 22nd.*)



Last year, more than 500 students took the ***Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*** administered in the states of **New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Virginia, and Pennsylvania**. **93 percent** of the students passed with an **89** average.

THE ANNUAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR



The *District Office of Education* organizes, each year in November, a **Staff Development Seminar** offering in-service training to the teachers serving in the day and the afternoon schools of the *District*.

Held under the auspices of **His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America**, the **Seminar** offers an array of workshops pertaining to the English and Greek curricula – covering pre-K to high school grades. Approximately **300** administrators and teachers attend the **Seminar** each year.

Since the 39th CLC (2008), two **Staff Development Seminars** have taken place at St. Demetrios School, Astoria: on **November 4, 2008** and **November 3, 2009**, respectively. Plans are currently underway for the **2010 Seminar** that is scheduled for **November 2nd** (Election Day).

IN-SERVICE WORKSHOPS

On EAROBICS Software

In collaboration with **Sussman Sales, Co.**, a licensed by the NYC Department of Education vendor, the *District Office of Education* organized a two-day workshop, **March 9-10, 2009**, to train the day school teachers of grades K – 3rd on the new software program EAROBICS. The cost of the training and the materials worth over **\$25,000** was paid by federal funds.

On Math & Science

In collaboration with **Childcraft Co.**, a licensed by the NYC Department of Education vendor, the *District Office of Education* organized two workshops on **Math** and **Science** for the teachers serving in the parochial day schools. **51** teachers and administrators attended these hands-on workshops that were held on **April 12, 13 & 21, 2010** at **St. Demetrios School**, Astoria. Participants received materials worth **\$17,850** paid by federal funds earmarked for this purpose.

Smart Boards Training

The *District Office* was also instrumental in furnishing all of the NYC parochial schools with **smart boards** as well as providing training to the teachers. The installation of the smart boards by **Tequipment Inc.** took place during **April-June 2010**. The teacher training took place at St. Demetrios, Astoria on **May 4, 2010**. The cost of the smart boards and the training, worth over **\$17,000**, was covered by federal funds.

RESOURCE BOOKS AND AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

The *District Office of Education* selects books and resource materials (posters, CDs, games, puzzles, etc.) that are published by various Greek publishers, which it recommends to the community schools as appropriate for the teaching of the Greek language to young children.

A **Catalog** of the recommended books and resource materials may be downloaded from the *Office's* website www.education.goarch.org. All books and materials are available for purchase through the official online store of the Archdiocese, the **Orthodox Marketplace**, at www.orthodoxmarketplace.com.

THE KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

The *District Office of Education* published, two years ago, a *Curriculum for the (Greek-American) Kindergarten* that was met with great success and copies were shipped throughout the United States. Although it is currently out of print, it can be downloaded, in its entirety, from the *Office's* website www.education.goarch.org.



EVENTS

THE ANNUAL SPELLING BEE COMPETITION

The *District Office of Education* sponsors, annually, a **Spelling Bee Competition** among students of the New York City parochial day schools. Student preparations start in September and competitions take place, in each school, in November. The *District's* finals are held at the Archdiocesan Headquarters in December or January.

The **Spelling Bee Competition** is an educational endeavor sponsored by *The E.W. Scripps Company*, in conjunction with over 260 newspapers around the world. Sponsors organize spelling bee programs in their locales and send their champions to the finals of *The Scripps National Spelling Bee* that takes place in Washington, DC, in the spring of each year.

The annual *Direct Archdiocesan District Competition* is held under the auspices of **His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America**. The Archbishop presents each local bee and the finalist with an *Award Certificate* and a gift.

THE THREE HIERARCHS STUDENT AWARDS CEREMONY

The *District Office of Education* organizes an annual event to honor the students who excel in Greek studies, especially those who achieve a good command of the Greek language.

During a festive ceremonial event that takes place on **January 30th**, in conjunction with the Feast of the Three Hierarchs and in celebration of Greek Letters, **His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America** presents the students who achieve 100 on the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* with the **Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence** and offers them a silver cross.

Collaboration with *The Institute of Modern Greek Studies /Aristotle University of Thessaloniki*

For the past three years, the *District Office of Education* and the *Institute of Modern Greek Studies* (Institute of Manolis Triantafyllidis) /*Aristotle University of Thessaloniki* have been collaborating on the development of the **Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek** as well as other projects pertaining to the evaluation of student learning of the Greek language.

The director of the *Institute of Modern Greek Studies*, **Dr. Georgios Papanastasiou**, a professor of Linguistics at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, has visited the United States twice. With the blessings of **His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America**, Dr. Papanastasiou visited a few day schools, witnessed the administration of the *Greek Examination*, and lectured the Greek teachers at last year's *Staff Development Seminar* held in Astoria.

The collaboration of the *District Office of Education* and the *Institute of Modern Greek Studies* has resulted in the creation of a **Manual** (in Greek) of the **“Standards and Checkpoints of the Examination.”** Currently, the director of the *District Office* (Mrs. M. Makedon) and the *Institute* (Dr. Papanastasiou) are working on the development of a **Curriculum for Beginners (Level A)** for the teaching of Greek.

The new **Curriculum** will be based on the philosophy and standards for the teaching of languages other than English of the New York State Education Department (*New York State Syllabus: Modern Languages for Communication*). Its purpose is to help teachers design their own school programs and choose materials suitable to the needs and abilities of their students who are at the Beginners Level.

It is worth noting that the *Institute of Modern Greek Studies* offers its services to the *District Office of Education* **gratis**. The *Institute* and its director fervently believe that it is their duty to assist the Archdiocese in any way they can and to enable our *Office* to offer the best Greek education to the students of the parochial schools in the United States.

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VISIT US ONLINE

The *District Office of Education* has created a user-friendly **web page** www.education.goarch.org where it posts information pertaining to its *projects, encyclicals, and any documents* sent to the schools. The site includes *reports* to Clergy-Laity Congresses, the Archdiocesan Council, and the District Assembly.

Visitors may download our **Catalog** of recommended books and resource materials, the **Curriculum for the Kindergarten**, the **Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek** of past years, a **list of the District's day and afternoon schools**, and other useful *links*.

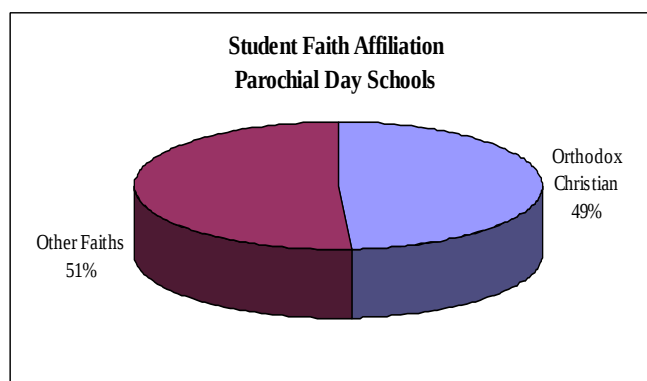
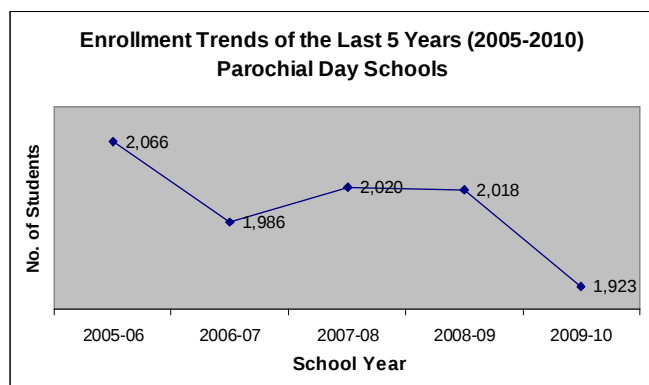
Respectfully submitted by:

MARIA MAKEDON

Director

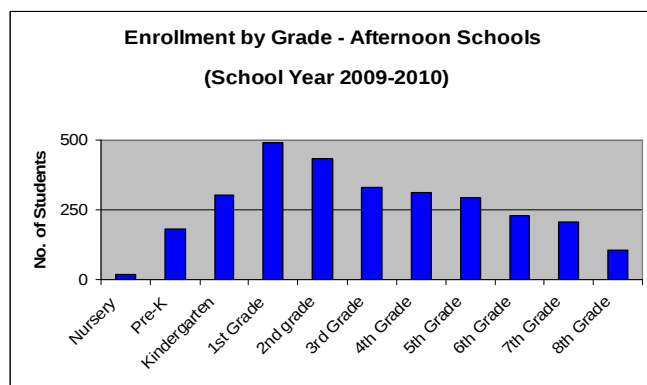
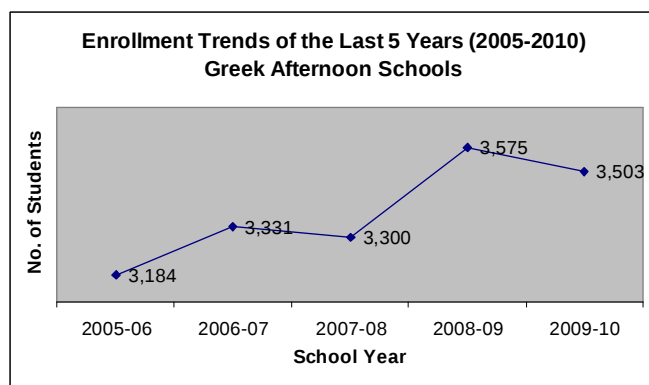
APPENDIX

A) PAROCHIAL DAY SCHOOLS



NOTE: The St. Demetrios School, Astoria and the “W. Spyropoulos” School of St. Nicholas, Flushing accept only students of the Orthodox faith. The schools were excluded from this graph.

B) GREEK AFTERNOON SCHOOLS



GENERAL NOTES:

In the last five years (2005-2010),

- The enrollment of day schools **declined 7%**.
- The enrollment of the afternoon schools **increased 10%**.

For the 2009-2010 School Year,

- **84%** of day school students and **89%** of afternoon school students attend grades **N-6th**.
- **60%** of day school students and **61%** of afternoon school students attend grades **N-3rd**.

For the 2009-2010 School Year, in the Afternoon Schools

- Enrollment **peaks** in the **1st and 2nd grades** (60% of students).
- Enrollment **declines** after **grade 3**.