



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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REPORT ON PAROCHIAL SCHOOL EDUCATION

The Office of Education

The primary concern of the *Office of Education of the Direct Archdiocesan District* is the young students who attend the parochial day and afternoon schools of the District and the quality of education they receive. To assist the schools in offering a sound academic program – of both the English and Greek curricula – the *Office* provides the schools with curriculum guides, in-service teacher training, and materials.

In addition, the District's *Office of Education* represents the parochial day schools (or *faith-based*) to the education authorities at the federal, state and city levels. Specifically, the director of the *Office* participates and attends various conferences and meetings held at the U.S. Department of Education, **Washington, DC**; the New York State Education Department, **Albany, NY**; and the NYC Department of Education, **New York, NY**.

The director of the District *Office of Education* is also a member of the *Standing Committee of New York City Religious & Independent Schools*, a coalition of school officials representing major faith institutions and private educational agencies, and a member of the *NYS Commissioner's Advisory Council for Nonpublic Schools*.

The District Schools

1) Day Schools

During the current school year (2013-2014), there are **eight** parochial day schools in operation in New York City with a total enrollment of **2,376** students. This number includes **219** students enrolled in **four** *Universal Pre-Kindergarten* (UPK) programs and **196** students enrolled in **five** community pre-school centers.

It should be noted that the *Jamaica Day School* of St. Demetrios Church ended its operation in September 2013 due to a steady decline in student enrollment that greatly impacted the School's operation. Furthermore, the four *Universal Pre-Kindergarten* (UPK) programs are funded by the New York State and operate as independent public school entities within the parochial day schools following the mandates of the State.

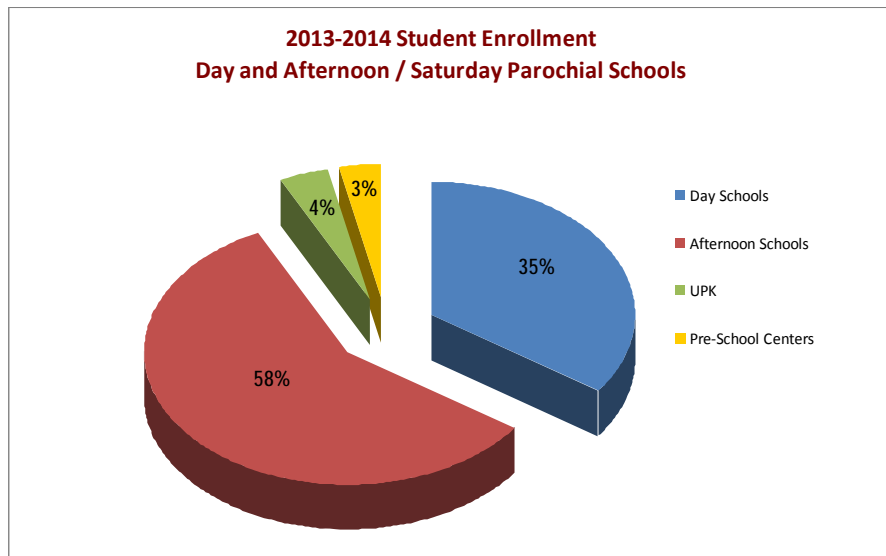
2) Afternoon/Saturday Schools

There are **43** Greek Afternoon / Saturday Schools operating during the current school year (2013-2014) in the Direct Archdiocesan District with an enrollment of **3,306** students.

In conclusion, the **total** number of students enrolled in the District's day and afternoon schools is **5,668**. And the number of Greek teachers serving in these schools is **236**.

Note: *This data are depicted in the statistical graph below. More graphs are attached at the end of this Report.)*

STATISTICAL DATA GRAPH – DISTRICT DAY & AFTERNOON SCHOOLS



Representing the Parochial Day Schools to the Authorities

As the advocate for the day schools, the *District Office of Education* has been instrumental in securing federally funded services and materials for the schools. The *Office* makes sure that the schools receive – and spend wisely each year – the allocated for them federal funds, which are specifically earmarked for **teacher training** and **teaching materials**.

The funds are allocated per pupil according to a **formula**, which takes into consideration the student's academic performance and family finances as well as the finances of the district where the student resides (impoverished or not).

For the past two school years, the NYC parochial day schools received a total of **\$96,745.00** (\$45,247.00 in 2012-13 and \$51,498.00 in 2013-14). In collaboration with the school principals and the NYC Department of Education, the *District Office of Education* was able to offer the following programs and services to the schools using these funds:

1. Cover the **tuition cost** (fall and spring semesters) of **six teachers**, currently serving and studying for a masters degree in school building leadership at *St. John's University*.

2. Cover the cost of on-site **teacher training** on *Literacy and Educational Technology*.
3. Cover the cost of the annual **Staff Development Seminars**, held **2012** and **2013**, for all the teachers of the District schools (day and afternoon).

Conferences and Meetings

Since the **41st CLC (June 30-July 5, 2012)**, the director of the *District Office of Education* has participated in the following conferences and meetings representing the Archdiocese and the District's schools:

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

September 27, **2012** – The 8th Annual Private School Leadership Conference

September 23, **2013** – The 9th Annual Private School Leadership Conference

Note: At the conferences sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, participants listen to various panel discussions and receive information on innovative programs that are available to nonpublic schools. They also hear directly from the U.S. Secretary of Education.

At the New York State Department of Education

November 18-19, 2013 – The 28th Annual Conference for Administrators of Religious & Independent Schools

At the New York City Department of Education

School Year 2012-13: September 12; November 14; December 4 and 11 (2012)
February 26; April 16; May 29; June 11* (2013)

School Year 2013-14: October 1; October 22; November 13*; December 10 (2013)
January 15; February 25; April 8; May 13; June 11* (2014)

Note: The **asterisk (*)** denotes a meeting with the NYC Chancellor of Education.

Day School Principals Meetings

The *District Office of Education* holds regular meetings of the principals to disseminate information, discuss, and plan future projects. The *Office* invites to these meetings representatives of the NYC Department of Education who enlighten the principals on the federally funded programs and official NYC vendors to exhibit new educational materials and technology equipment.

Since the **41st CLC (June 30-July 5, 2012)**, the following **principals meetings** have taken place:

School Year 2012-13: September 21; November 15; (2012);
January 18; March 28; June 24 (2013)

School Year 2013-14: September 27; October 29; December 5 (2013)
January 16; March 13; May 22 (2014)



The Teaching of Modern Greek in compliance with the NY State Standards in Teaching a Language Other Than English (LOTE)

The *District Office of Education* has long realized that receiving foreign language credits for studying the Greek language plays a major role in motivating the students of the District's afternoon schools to attend classes until they graduate. Otherwise, students tend to drop out starting in the fifth grade – a critical and grave for the schools trend as the graphs at the end of this Report indicate.

Foreign language “*credits*” are offered to the students by passing the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*, an **assessment tool** that measures student proficiency in *listening, speaking, reading, and writing* Modern Greek and is aligned to the learning standards for Languages Other Than English (LOTE).

The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese has been developing the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* since 1973 benefitting thousands of students. In recent years, the New York State Education Department ceased to develop foreign language examinations and transferred this responsibility to the local school districts, which were to develop foreign language examinations “*locally*” and according to need.

The Archdiocese's *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*, however, has always been considered by the authorities as a “*locally developed examination.*” Thus, high school students in New York State (and elsewhere) may be eligible to receive up to *three “credits*” in foreign language studies by passing it. Also, they may qualify for a **Regents diploma** with advanced designation upon graduation.



The *2014 Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* will be administered on **June 23rd**, at 16 sites. **471** students of 56 parish schools, 4 public schools, and one charter school will sit for the Examination. These students come from the following six states: NY, CT, NJ, MD, PA, and VA.

Two Modern Greek Language Curricula – Checkpoint A & Checkpoint B

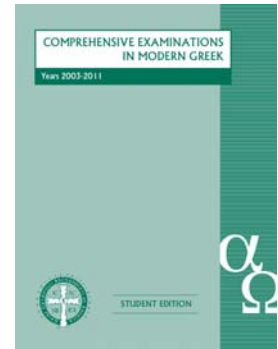
To support the validity of the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* and exhibit its compliance with the NY State standards on the teaching of languages other than English (LOTE), the *District Office of Education* has published **two** editions: *The Curriculum for Modern Greek Language – Checkpoint A* (beginners level) and *The Curriculum for Modern Greek Language – Checkpoint B* (intermediate/Regents level).



Both *Curricula* are in adherence with the **philosophy** and **standards** of the New York State Education Department. They were developed by the *Institute of Modern Greek Studies of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki*, Greece, in collaboration and under the direction of the *District Office of Education*. They may be used as a **guide** by the teachers who prepare students for the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* as well as by those who teach Greek to non-Greek speaking students.

A Compilation of past Comprehensive Examinations in Modern Greek (2003 2011)

To further assist teachers and students in preparing for the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*, the *District Office of Education* has published a **Compilation** of nine past *Greek Examinations* (2003 2011) in **two** books – one for the **student** and one for the **teacher**. The two books include an abundance of authentic Greek texts, communication tasks for *speaking drills*, and a variety of topics for *writing* compositions. An **Appendix** of the most commonly used words, verbs, phrases, and basic grammar is included in the *Student Edition*.



Intended mainly for the students preparing to take the *Comprehensive Examinations in Modern Greek*, these books could very well be used as instructional material for students in grades 6 and above. **They are offered “gratis” to schools.**

EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS & CULTURAL EVENTS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

Each year, the *District Office of Education* organizes a District- wide **Staff Development Day** offering a vast array of workshops pertaining to the English and Greek curricula and covering grades from pre-K to high school. Since the **41st CLC (June 30-July 5, 2012)**, the following teacher seminars have taken place:

2012: The District’s annual **Staff Development Seminar** was postponed due to Hurricane SANDY and was held instead on **February 15, 2013**, at St. Demetrios School in Astoria. The Seminar included a *keynote* speech and workshops for the English program teachers that focused on the national and state **Common Core Standards**. It also included presentations for the Greek teachers that examined the standards in foreign language teaching and their application on the development of the “*The Modern Greek Language Curricula – Checkpoint A & B.*”

2013: The District’s annual **Staff Development Seminar** was held on **November 5, 2013**, at St. Demetrios School in Astoria. It featured a *keynote* speech and a series of workshops for the English program teachers centered on “**Leadership: Making the Home-School Connection.**” The Greek teachers had the opportunity to learn “*Fun Ways and Methods of Teaching a Foreign Language*” as well as to hear from the professors of the University of Thessaloniki about *The Pronunciation in the Language Classroom.*”

Held under the auspices of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, the Seminars attract a great number of educators whom the Archbishop thanked and praised “*for their untiring work and devotion to the noble vocation of teaching.*”



HONORING STUDENT EXCELLENCE

The Three Hierarchs Student Awards

Each year in January, the *District Office of Education* organizes a festive event commemorating the Feast of the Holy Three Hierarchs and celebrating Greek Letters and Arts, during which the students who exhibit excellence in Greek studies are honored.



Since the 41st CLC (June 30-July 5, 2012), the following events were held with great success:

2013: On Saturday, **February 2nd**, more than 300 persons (priests, parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers, and guests) attended the *Three Hierarchs Student Awards Ceremony*, which took place at the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Manhattan. The event featured a *keynote* speech by Mrs. Anne Prokop, principal of the Greek-American Institute, Bronx that was followed by a musical program with

traditional Greek songs and dances. The students who excelled in the Greek language were presented the *Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence* by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America.

2014: On Saturday, **February 1st**, a great number of people attended the *Three Hierarchs Student Awards Ceremony*, including the Consul General of Greece as well as priests, principals, teachers, and family members of the honorees. His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America placed a significant focus on the writings of St. John the Chrysostom, which have impacted the writings of many contemporary thinkers and presented the honorees with the *Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence*.

The event's *keynote* speaker was Ms. Yanna Darilis, production director of New Greek TV. The artistic program was dedicated to the renowned Greek novelist *Alexandros Papadiamantis* and was arranged by actress Martha Tomboulidou and music professor Vagelis Chazioglou. The *St. Demetrios Greek-American Day School Choir* performed songs based on A. Papadiamantis' novels.

Spelling Bee Awards Finals

To award excellence in the English Language spelling, the *District Office of Education* coordinates the annual *Spelling Bee Competition* among the finalists of the District's parochial day school students.

The competition is held at the Archdiocesan headquarters and with the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, who presents all the spelling bee champions with a *Certificate of Award* and gifts. The *Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund* (HTSF) and its president, Mr. Nick Katsoris, Esq., has been sponsoring the event for a number of years and also offer awards to the students.

Since the 41st CLC (June 30-July 5, 2012), *Spelling Bee Competition Finals* were held on **January 16, 2013** and on **January 9, 2014**.



OUR WEBSITE

The *District Office of Education* maintains its own web page - www.education.goarch.org - within the Archdiocese's main portal. The web page of the *Office* is updated often offering its visitors the opportunity to peruse an abundance of informative materials and resources as well as reports, school mailings, and current news of the *Office*.

BOOKS & OTHER RESOURCES ON THE ORTHODOX MARKET PLACE

For many years, the *District Office of Education* selects the best books and other resources from Greek publishers, which are deemed appropriate for use in our parish schools, and compiles a *Catalog* that is available online at the Orthodox Marketplace, the official bookstore of the Archdiocese. We advise the public to visit www.marketplace.com to find the newest and best editions for the teaching of the Greek language and culture.

STATISTICAL GRAPHS APPENDICES

The statistical graphs in the following pages depict the situation that exists today in the community day and afternoon schools of the Direct Archdiocesan District. Specifically, the graphs show the following:

1. The enrollment of the NYC parochial day schools has **declined by 12 percent** in the last decade, during which four schools close down. This trend is attributed mainly to demographics that led to financial constrains.
2. The number of students attending Greek afternoon schools has been **increasing by 3.2 percent** in the last ten years, a trend that shows a steadfast interest in learning the Greek language and culture.
3. Afternoon school students are leaving the Greek school starting at the **fourth** grade.

The increasing number of afternoon school students in the primary grades suggests that there is a great need of teachers appropriately trained for this age group. However, the *District Office of Education* has noticed that there is a **lack of Greek teachers** in general, a fact that should be seriously considered.



Submitted by
MARIA MAKEDON

May 30, 2014