



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OFFICE OF EDUCATION

ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING

October 15, 2010

Marriott Marquis Hotel, NYC

THE DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE OF EDUCATION REPORT

Mission

The *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* serves the parochial day schools and the afternoon Greek language schools of the District by providing professional training for all teachers (Greek and English programs), curricula and materials for the teaching of Modern Greek, and the *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* as an assessment tool for student learning.

Furthermore, the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* represents the parochial day schools of New York at the education authorities on the federal, state, and city levels. It is also a member of the *Standing Committee of Religious and Independent Schools of New York City*.

The District Schools

The **11** Greek Orthodox parochial day schools of the *District* began the new school year (2010-2011) with the expectation of a very productive year ahead. The schools reported an enrollment of **2,244** students; this figure includes **324** students in the state funded Universal Pre-K program. The enrollment figures for the **46** afternoon Greek schools of the *District* are not available yet.

It should be noted that the Parish Council of the **Three Hierarchs Parochial School**, Brooklyn, decided, last year, to revamp their School in order to attract more students from its neighboring area. (*The School had experienced declining numbers of Greek Orthodox students in recent years.*) Thus, with the collaboration of St. John's University, there was a change in the administration and staff during the summer, and the School was renamed "*Aristotle Academy of Math and Sciences*" of the Three Hierarchs.

CURRENT PROJECTS & EVENTS

The NYC Department of Education

On **September 14, 2010**, a meeting was held at the New York City Department of Education/Office of Reimbursable Services, Brooklyn. Officials of the Department of Health of New York City explained to the members of the *Standing Committee of Religious & Independent Schools* the City's regulations on immunizations governing the nonpublic schools.

Mr. Marc Spyliopoulos, principal of the DGK School of Holy Cross, Brooklyn, attended this meeting on behalf of the *Archdiocesan District Office of Education* due to its director being away on vacation.

The U.S. Department of Education "Leadership" Conference

On **September 22, 2010**, the *U.S. Department of Education*, Washington, DC, held its Sixth Annual Conference of Private School Leadership Conference, which featured various presentations and panel discussions on topics and services that matter to the nonpublic schools. The U.S. Secretary for Education, Arne Duncan, addressed the participants and answered questions at lunch.

Mrs. Maria Makedon, director of the *Archdiocesan District Office of Education*, attended the Conference representing the Archdiocese and the parochial day schools of New York.

School Visitations

While in Washington, DC, Mrs. Maria Makedon had the opportunity to visit the classes of the afternoon Greek schools in the area and meet the principals and teachers. Specifically, she visited **St. Sophia** afternoon Greek school annex located in Vienna, VA and the **SS. Constantine & Helen** afternoon Greek school, which is located in Olmey, MD.

Mrs. Makedon witnessed the conditions under which these schools function and discussed with the teachers their concerns (limited time for teaching; appropriate resources; long distance travel; parish support, etc.). The teachers listened to advices and expressed their thankfulness and appreciation for the visit.

Principals Meeting

On **September 30, 2010**, the *Archdiocesan District Office of Education* invited the principals of the parochial day schools of New York to attend a meeting – the first for the new school year – at St. Demetrios School, Astoria.

The meeting's Agenda included the following reports:

1. On the *NYCDOE/Reimbursable Services Meeting*, Brooklyn (Sept. 14, 2010) by Mr. Marc Spyliopoulos.
2. On the *Conference of Private School Leadership* (Sept. 22, 2010), at the U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC by Mrs. Maria Makedon.

Mrs. Maria Makedon also reported on the distribution, among the parochial day schools, of the moneys allocated to the schools for Title IIA & Title III services as well as on the purchase of smart boards and technology equipment from ARRA Funds-- the federal government stimulus money to public and nonpublic schools.

In addition, the principals discussed extensively and made final plans on the following **two** major projects that have a direct effect on the teachers and students of the *District*:

1. The *District's Annual Spelling Bee Competition* (Online registration to Scripps International; School Bee Competitions; Bee Coordinators Meeting; Archdiocese Finals Set for **December 14, 2010**. The *Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund* will sponsor the Finals again this year. (A *Spelling Bee Coordinators Meeting* (ELA teachers) is set for **October 19, 2010**.)
2. The *District's Annual Staff Development Seminar* that is scheduled for **November 2, 2010** and will include workshops for all the teachers serving in the *District's* day and afternoon schools.

The District's Annual Staff Development Seminar

The *Archdiocesan District Office of Education* has been working since June on organizing this **Professional Day** for all the teachers (of English and Greek curricula) who are serving in the *District* schools.

In order to enhance the English program of the parochial day schools, the *Office* collaborated with professors of the **School of Literacy & TESOL/St. John's University** and of **Manhattanville College**.

The *Office* has also invited two professors of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki / Institute of Modern Greek Studies**, Dr. Georgios Papanastasiou (director) and Prof. Panagiotis Andreou to present to the Greek teachers. Dr. Papanastasiou will address the teachers on "*Loan Words: How to Use Them in Teaching the Greek Language*" and Prof. Andreou will entertain the topic "*Student Assessment of Language Skills*" that has an important bearing on modifying teaching strategies.

(A complete list of workshops and presentations is attached.)

The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek

During the summer, the **New York State Board of Regents** announced the elimination, due to budget constrictions, of a number of **state** examinations, including the high school Foreign Language Regents exams in German, Italian, Hebrew and Latin as well as the discontinuation of paper-based scoring materials for these exams.

Furthermore, the **Board of Regents** announced that it will soon start “...discussions to amend the **Regulations** (100.5(b)(7) pertaining to foreign language studies and thus allow students to meet the assessment requirement in the languages for which **no** Regents comprehensive assessment will be available, that is **by passing a locally developed examination** aligned to the Checkpoint B learning standards for LOTE.”

The *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* is **not** a “**state**” exam. It is a “**locally**” **prepared foreign language examination** that is considered for “**state**” credits in foreign language studies done outside a formal public school classroom. The *Greek Examination*, however, is widely accepted and recognized for its validity by the public school principals.

It should be noted here that prior to an encyclical issued recently (9/21/2010) by the Senior Deputy Commissioner of Education, John B. King, Jr., representatives of the *Nonpublic Schools Office* of the State Education Department as well as the **Hebrew** community contacted the *Archdiocesan Office of Education* and spoke with its director, Mrs. Maria Makedon. They asked for information on the procedures followed for the creation of the Greek examination, in order to replicate.

Hence, the announcement regarding the amendment of the Regulations is an indication that the education authorities will offer state credits to all locally prepared exams such as the *Greek Examination* that the Archdiocese has been successfully developing since 1973 and has benefited thousands of students.

Therefore, the decision of the New York State Education authorities to eliminate a number of foreign language Regents exams **should not and will not** have any effect on the ***Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek*** and the *Archdiocesan District Office of Education* will continue developing it.

NEW Catalog of Resource Books and Audio-Visual Materials

The Archdiocesan District Office of Education has just published a colorful **new and updated** ***Catalog of Recommended Books and Resource Materials*** for the teaching of the Greek language.

The Catalog may be viewed in its entirety at the *Office’s* web site www.education.goarch.org or the web site of the ***Orthodox Marketplace*** www.orthodoxmarketplace.com, the online store of the Archdiocese where prospective buyers may place their orders.

Respectfully submitted by
MARIA MAKEDON

