



**ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**MARRIOTT MARQUIS HOTEL**  
**September 29-30, 2000**

**A REPORT**  
**OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

*“... We are the carriers of extremely precious ageless traditions, which must be strong and decisive agents in the formation of our lives in the new millennium.”*

*+Archbishop Demetrios*  
*35<sup>th</sup> Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress Keynote Address*

**GREEK ORTHODOX EDUCATION**

Greek Orthodox education aims at instilling in the minds and hearts of our youth the spiritual, moral and cultural values of our Greek Orthodox Faith and Hellenic heritage -- the two major components of our Greek-American identity.

Greek Orthodox education helps our young people appreciate the value of the religious and cultural heritage of our Church. It contributes immensely to the development of well informed, responsible, and progressive members of the Church and, thus, it should be viewed as a vital component of the overall educational program in each parish.

**COMMUNITY DAY & AFTERNOON SCHOOLS**

There are **18 parochial day** schools currently functioning in the United States with an enrollment of approximately **4,000** students. Operating on an annual budget of **16-17 million dollars**, these schools maintain pre-school centers, kindergartens, elementary, junior high, and high school grades and offer well-structured educational programs that adhere to local state-mandated curricula.

**Parentetical:**

Last spring, a study was conducted by the Education Office to assess the need for Greek teachers of our communities. The study revealed that a number of communities operate early childhood programs (nursery-kindergarten, and even first grade classes). Such programs exist today in Niles, IL; Birmingham, AL; Salt Lake City, UT; Whitestone, NY; and Pittsburgh, PA. Parish representatives contact the Education Office for information and guidance on how to proceed in establishing such programs.

This is an area that needs to be explored and carefully studied by the Archdiocese, since these early childhood programs have the potential to expand to full elementary schools or, as they may otherwise be called, religious day schools.

In addition to the day schools, **300 parishes** from within the 500 communities in the United States sustain after school or Saturday programs. It is estimated that **25,000 to 30,000 students**, ages 6-15, are enrolled in these after school programs.

The community schools -- day and afternoon -- operate under the auspices of our Holy Archdiocese and constitute the Archdiocesan School System. Both types of schools incorporate in their programs the teaching of the Greek Orthodox faith, our ageless cultural traditions, and the modern Greek language.

### **THE ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

The Archdiocesan Office of Education oversees the community day and afternoon schools. Under its supervisory role and as the regulatory authority of the educational material taught, the Office of Education provides the schools with

1. curriculum guidelines for the teaching of the Greek language, the history and culture of Greece, and the Greek Orthodox faith;
2. books and audio/visual materials;
3. student examinations;
4. promotion certificates and diplomas;
5. teacher seminars and workshops; and
6. awards.

### **Projects & Activities**

Historically, the Archdiocesan Office of Education has focused on the Greek studies program of our community schools. During the last decade, however, it has entered a new phase of operation.

Because of its close proximity to the **11 parochial day schools** located in the **metropolitan New York area**, the Education Office has undertaken and successfully carried out, during the last 10 years, a multitude of activities and projects that specifically address the needs of these schools, their students and teachers. Since these activities have an affect on the education of a large number of students, they are deemed extremely important and necessary. They include the following:

- **meetings and conferences of state and local authorities**, regarding current educational practices, state mandates, and reforms;
- **bi-monthly meetings** among the principals;
- an annual **Spelling Bee Contest**;
- **in-service training** for the teachers, in collaboration with state and other non-public school agencies; and
- the development and administration of the **Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek** - an examination that has been highly regarded for its validity and reliability by the New York State Education Department. The development of this examination includes: **test item writing, publishing, production of an audiocassette, teacher and proctor training.**

## **Our Current Project: A Staff-Development Seminar**

Our Office is in the process of organizing a **Seminar** that will offer **in-service training** to all teachers and administrators serving in the day and afternoon schools, in the tri-state area (NY, NJ, and CT).

The Seminar will take place on Friday, **October 13<sup>th</sup>**, at the School of the Transfiguration, in Corona, NY, and is being held under the aegis of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios.

It will include **four workshops** in the areas of **English Language Arts, Social Studies, Math and Science**. It will also include **one workshop for the Greek teachers**. The educational counselor, Mr. Manolis Vassilakis, at the Greek Embassy in Washington, DC, will present the book series MATHENO ELLINIKA and conduct a demonstrative lesson.

The Seminar is partially funded by the New York State's Facilitator Center, an agency responsible for the in-service training of teachers of public and non-public schools.

## **Cultural Events**

Each year in January, the Archdiocesan Department of Education, in conjunction with the Feast Day of the Three Hierarchs, celebrates Greek Orthodox Education with festive programs for the teachers, students and the general public of the metropolitan New York area. The festivities organized by the Education Office include:

- a **Divine Liturgy** and an **Award Ceremony** for the students;
- a **Vasilopita Reception** for the teachers; and
- a **Lecture/Celebration** for the public.

## **Special Responsibilities of the Director**

These include, but are not limited to:

- Attending school programs and special events;
- Reporting regularly to the Archbishop and the Executive Administrator of the Archdiocese;
- Reporting to the Archdiocesan Council and the Clergy-Laity Congress.

## **FUTURE PROJECTS**

There are many important **programs** and **projects** that Archdiocesan Office Education would like to undertake in the future. Some of them have not been completed; some were never materialized, due to the Office's financial limitations and its limited number of personnel. These are:

1. Updating the existing Curriculum Guidelines.
2. The publication of new language materials for the teaching of modern Greek to young children, for school use and independent study.

3. The development of a Curriculum for Kindergarten, accompanied by instructional aids (books of songs, plays, games and simple learning exercises).
4. The development of appropriate materials exclusively for the teaching of the Greek Orthodox cultural heritage (books, videocassettes, and computer CDs on ancient Greek mythology, major historical events, holidays, Greek customs, and traditions), written in both Greek & English.
5. The development of examinations for student placement according to grade levels.
6. The creation of a national examination that will award students a diploma in Greek studies.
7. The creation of a pamphlet that will contain 3000 Greek words, intended for a Greek Spelling Bee Contest.
8. The compilation of the Comprehensive Examinations in Modern Greek of the last 10 years in a booklet to be used for instruction in higher grades.

In light of the above, the Archdiocesan Office of Education is faced with an enormous challenge. It is apparent that if the Office were to successfully implement these projects, as well as to act upon the Resolutions approved by the 35th Clergy-Laity Congress (**See attached.**), it will need additional human and technological resources. At present, the Office of Education operates with a staff of **two: myself**, as the assistant director, and Ms. **Katerina Papahartofili**, as my administrative assistant.

### **Of a Special Note**

This past Monday, **September 25<sup>th</sup>**, I met with two representatives of the **NIARCHOS FOUNDATION** with the purpose of obtaining funds for our Office. The directors of the Foundation had previously approached His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios and expressed to Him an interest in funding a number of the Archdiocese's educational programs.

At the meeting, the Foundation's representatives responded favorably to our proposal. They said that they are seriously considering giving us funds. However, they asked for assurances that the funded projects will be carried out efficiently and in a timely manner.

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In closing, I would like to thank all the members of this esteemed body and ask your assistance in empowering the Archdiocesan Office of Education to efficiently and successfully implement its future mission.

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Submitted by  
MARIA MAKEDON

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