PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS EDUCATION REPORT

The 2014-15 School Year was a year full of activities - a very successful year for the community parochial schools as well as for the District Office of Education.

The District Schools

1) Day Schools

In 2014-15, there were eight parochial day schools in operation with a total enrollment of 2,309 students. This number included the 226 students enrolled in the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) programs and 141 students enrolled in the three pre-school centers.

Note:

1. The Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) programs are funded by the New York State and operate as independent public school entities within our parochial schools. Such UPK programs co-exist at the following four parochial day schools: A. Fantis School, Brooklyn; DGK School, Brooklyn; Greek-American Institute, Bronx and St. Spyridon School, Manhattan.

2. Pre-school centers exist in the following parishes: St. Nicholas, Flushing; Koimisis Tis Theotokou, Brooklyn and Archangel Michael, Port Washington.

2) Afternoon/Saturday Schools

In 2014-15, there were 42 Greek Afternoon/Saturday Schools in operation with an enrollment of 3,335 students.

Therefore, the total number of students enrolled in the District’s day and afternoon/Saturday schools was 5,644. The number of Greek teachers serving in the District schools has been estimated as 264.

*(This data are depicted in the statistical graph below)*
The District Education Office

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

The Office is also the liaison of the parochial day schools with the education authorities at the federal, state, and city levels. In doing so, the Office has been advocating on behalf of the schools and has succeeded, through the years, to allocate federally funded services for our community day schools.

During the school year 2014-15, the parochial day schools of the District received $55,021.00. This money was earmarked for the professional development of teachers and educational materials. For example, the District’s annual 2014 Staff Development Seminar that is held in November of each year was paid from these funds. Federal funds also cover the tuition fees of a number of our teachers who further their studies at the graduate level.

Principals Meetings

The District Office of Education holds regular meetings with the principals of the NYC parochial day schools. At these meetings, principals exchange information, discuss, and plan various projects. On certain occasions, the Office invites representatives from the NYC Department of Education to assist the principals on how to apply for certain programs.
In 2014-15, eight such meetings took place as follows: (2014) September 12; October 10; November 18 - (2015) January 16; February 5; March 20; May 19; June 26.

Events & Celebrations

The District Office of Education organizes a number of events, throughout the school year, that promote the Greek Orthodox heritage and Greek language teaching. They are as follows:

The Annual Staff Development Seminar

In November of each year, the Office organizes a Seminar for the professional development of all teachers under the auspices of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America.

On November 4, 2014, one such Staff Development Seminar was held at the High School of St. Demetrios Cathedral, Astoria. The Seminar included 11 workshops and presentations for the English and Greek programs and was met with great success. The Archbishop praised the 300 teachers who were in attendance for their untiring work and devotion to the noble vocation of teaching.

The Office had invited Dr. Marios Koukounaras – Liagkis, Professor at the School of Theology of the University of Athens, who presented current methodologies and techniques to the Greek teachers by means of using Art and Applied Theater.

The Three Hierarchs Student Awards Event

Another successful event organized by the Office is the Student Awards Ceremony, during which students who have excelled the previous year in the Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek are honored. This year’s event took place on Saturday, January 31st, at the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Manhattan, and honored students from the New York State as well as from other states.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America congratulated the 64 honorees and expressed gratitude to the parents and teachers.
Hon. Madeline Singas, acting District Attorney of Nassau County, Long Island, was the keynote speaker at the Awards Ceremony. Also, Mrs. Athena Kromidas, principal of “W. Spyropoulos” Greek-American Day School of St. Nicholas, Flushing, spoke on the importance of the Greek language. Mrs. Maria Makedon, director of the District Office of Education, also congratulated the honorees, while Mr. Ted Kusulas was the MC.

More than 300 attended the Awards Ceremony, including Hon. George Iliopoulos, Consul General of Greece and Vice Consul, Hon. Manos Koumbarakis as well as priests, principals, teachers, and family members of the honorees. The Awards Ceremony was followed by a beautiful artistic program that took place in the Cathedral Ballroom.

The Spelling Bee Finals

The District’s Spelling Bee Finals for the students of the NYC Greek American parochial day schools took place on Thursday, January 8th, at the Headquarters of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. Panagiotis Persianis, an 8th grade student of the Cathedral School of Holy Trinity, Manhattan was the finalist, while Anastasia Michialis, a 6th grade student of the Greek-American Institute of Zoodochos Peghe, Bronx, was the runner-up.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America presented each spelling bee champion with a Certificate of Award and a silver cross. Mr. Nick Katsoris, Esq., author of the Loukoumi Book Series and president of the Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund (HTSF), presented each student with a $100.00 check and the finalist with a $500.00.

Note: The Spelling Bee competitions are sponsored nationally by The E.W. Scripps Company. In NYC, the competitions are sponsored by the newspaper DAILY NEWS, while the Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education coordinates the competition among the NYC parochial day schools.

The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek

Another major project of the Office is the Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek, which was administered on Monday, June 22nd in various examination centers throughout New York State and in neighboring cities.

A total of 430 students took the Examination. Specifically, 306 were students of day and afternoon/Saturday schools, 101 public school students, and 23 independent.
These students were attending 50 community schools located in NY as well as CT, NJ, PA, VA, MD, DC, MO, and OH and six NYC public schools.

The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek assesses student proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing Modern Greek and is aligned to the Checkpoint B learning standards for Languages Other Than English (LOTE) as described in the Syllabus of the NYS Education Department “Modern Languages for Communication.” The Examination may afford high school students who pursue studies in the Greek language for more than two years the opportunity to earn a Regents diploma with advanced designation in the State of New York.

The Curricula for Modern Greek Language – Checkpoint A & Checkpoint B

To support the validity of the Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek to the education authorities, the Office has developed and published two curricula for the teaching of Modern Greek as follows: The Modern Greek Language Curriculum - Checkpoint A intended for the beginners level and The Modern Greek Language Curriculum - Checkpoint B aimed at the intermediate (Regents) level.

Both curricula were created by Prof. Panagiotis Andreou, a fellow of the Institute of Modern Greek Studies of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, under the supervision of Dr. George Papanastasiou, director, and with the collaboration of the Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education.

The Curricula of the Modern Greek Language (Checkpoint A and Checkpoint B) are in total compliance with the philosophy and standards on the teaching of foreign languages (LOTE) as described in the New York State Department of Education Syllabus: Modern Languages for Communication. They are an invaluable tool for the Greek language teachers who prepare students for the Examination. Thus, they are offered “gratis” to teachers and schools.
A Compilation of past Comprehensive Examinations in Modern Greek (2003-2011)

In addition to the Curricula, the Office published a Compilation of nine past Greek Examinations (2003-2011) in two books – one for the student and one for the teacher, in order to assist the teachers who prepare students for the Examination in Modern Greek.

The 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 accompanies the Student Edition. The books are offered “gratis” to teachers and schools.

Website & Facebook

The District Office of Education maintains a web page - www.education.goarch.org - within the Archdiocese’s main portal. The web page offers visitors an abundance of informative materials and resources as well as the Office reports, school mailings, and current news.

In addition, the Office has created a Facebook page as well. Its address is: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Direct-Archdiocesan-District-Office-of-Education/864168656927334.

Submitted by:
MARIA MAKEDON

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