Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
Direct Archdiocesan District Clergy-Laity Assembly

May 18 & 19, 2009
Church of the Resurrection, Brookville, New York

The District Office of Education Report

Maria Makedon, Director

Mission

The Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education serves the District’s parochial day schools as well as the afternoon Greek language schools. It provides services and appropriate teaching materials to the schools, in order to enhance their curricula and promote the Greek Orthodox heritage and the teaching of the Greek language. Specifically, it provides the schools with:

1. Professional development for the teachers of the English and Greek Departments.
2. Appropriate materials and curriculum guides for the teaching of the Greek language and culture.
3. The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek, an assessment tool for the evaluation of student learning.

The Office also organizes student events that promote the Greek Orthodox cultural heritage and foster the teaching/learning experience.

Furthermore, the District Office represents the NYC parochial day schools at the federal, state, and city education authorities. The participation of the District Office in various conferences and committee meetings -- notably the Standing Committee of Religious & Independent Schools -- has initiated contacts that have helped provide the parochial day schools with services and teaching materials funded by the federal government.

The District’s Day & Afternoon Schools

For the school year 2008-09, there are 10 Greek Orthodox parochial day schools operating in the District, 46 Greek afternoon schools, and 3 pre-school & day care centers. 5,593 students currently attend classes from pre-K to 12th in these parish-supported schools, which employ 244
Greek teachers. In addition, the Ministry of Education of Greece has assigned 28 teachers to teach the Greek language and culture in the New York City parochial day schools.

We are pleased to report that the community of Holy Cross, Whitestone, will be adding a first grade class to its Kindergarten next school year and plans to add additional grades in the future. It is expected that the “Efstatios & Stamatiki Valiotis Greek-American School” of Holy Cross will be fully operational as a parochial day school next year raising, thus, the number of day schools in the District to 11.

The following charts may offer a perspective of the types of schools in the District, their days of operation, and the synthesis of their student population.

1. Types of Schools and Students Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Schools</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day Schools</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon/Saturday Schools</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-School &amp; Day Care Centers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5,593</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Afternoon Schools per Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New York City</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Long Island</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Westchester</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Upstate New York</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Afternoon/Saturday Schools Days of Operation
### Orthodox vs. Non-Orthodox Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day Schools</th>
<th>Percent of Orthodox Students</th>
<th>Percent of Non-Orthodox Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Demetrios Day School, Astoria</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Spyropoulos Day School of St. Nicholas, Flushing</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Hierarchs Parochial School, Brooklyn</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. and G. Kaloidis Parochial School of Holy Cross Church, Brooklyn</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek American Institute, Bronx</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cathedral School, Manhattan</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica Day School of St Demetrios</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Fantis Parochial School, Brooklyn</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Spyridon Parochial School, Manhattan</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>99.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of the Transfiguration, Corona</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>75%</strong></td>
<td><strong>25%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Includes the Astoria and Flushing Schools

![Pie chart: Orthodox 75%, Non-Orthodox 25%]

B. Excludes the Astoria and Flushing Schools

![Pie chart: Orthodox 49%, Non-Orthodox 51%]
SERVICES, PROJECTS & EVENTS

Advocating for the NYC Greek Orthodox Parochial Day Schools

During the last five years, the District Office of Education has intensified its efforts to be of meaningful assistance to the principals of the 10 parochial day schools in New York City and, consequently, benefit the teachers and students of the schools.

The District Office is a member of the Standing Committee of the New York City Religious Schools headed by Rabbi David Zwiebel, Esq. and director of the Agudath Israel Organization. Rabbi Zwiebel succeeded Dr. Catherine Hickey, former Secretary for Education of the (Roman Catholic) Archdiocese of New York, who retired last January.

Representing the NYC Greek Orthodox parochial day schools at the federal, state, and local education authorities, the director of the District Office participates in meetings, conferences and forums that are sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC, the New York State Education Department, and the NYC Department of Education in Brooklyn.

The NYC Chancellor of Education

The Standing Committee of the New York City Religious Schools meets, once a year, with the New York City Chancellor of Education Joel I. Klein at his headquarters (City Hall’s Tweed Bldg.) to discuss issues and policies pertaining to nonpublic school education.

The Committee met with the Chancellor on Friday, May 1st, 2009. Present were also his Deputy Chancellor, Ms. Kathleen Grimm, the director of the NYC Department of Education/Bureau of Reimbursable Services, Ms. Caren Moncher Zayde, Mr. Eric Goldstein, director of Student Busing, and Dr. Roger Platt, Chief Medical Officer. The agenda included the following:

1. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Stimulus Money)
2. The new National Service Law
3. Special education for children in nonpublic schools
4. Nonpublic schools security
5. Ongoing viability of religious schools / Charter Schools

The NYC Roundtable on Faith-Based Schools

The involvement of the District Office with the American education authorities would not have been possible without the Archbishop’s approval and encouragement. His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios’ insight and advice has been the guiding light for the Office’s endeavors to help the community schools and promote Greek Orthodox education.

The *NYC Roundtable* was chaired by Rev. Joseph M. McShane, S.J., President, Fordham University. Many notable government and church representatives, educators, politicians, and businessmen addressed a select group of attendees on issues such as: *tax tuition credits, vouchers, and scholarships for students of private/faith based schools.*

**H.E. Archbishop Demetrios** was applauded when he spoke on the invaluable contribution of the faith-based schools to the American society at large. The Archbishop was accompanied by the director of the *District Office of Education*, Ms. Maria Makedon.

**The 4th Annual Private School Leadership Conference, Washington, DC**

Representing the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, Mrs. Maria Makedon, director of the *Direct Archdiocesan District Office of Education* and Dr. Tony Vrame, director of the *Department of Religious Education* attended the **Fourth Annual Private School Leadership Conference** on “Educational Choice: Keeping Private Schools a Viable Option for Inner City Youth,” which took place on Friday, **September 26, 2008**, in Washington, DC.

The Conference was sponsored by the U. S. Department of Education / Office of Innovation and Improvement (ONRE)/Non-Public Education, Washington, DC. The speakers included Mr. Doug Mesecar, Assistant Deputy Secretary / Office of Innovation and Improvement (ONRE); Mr. Jack Klenk, Director, Office of Non-Public Education, and Ms. Pamela Allen and Ms. Maureen Dowling, Education Program Specialists.

Five outstanding teachers of faith-based schools from around the country were honored at the *Conference* with the **American Stars Teaching Awards**.

**The 24th Annual Conference for Administrators of Independent & Religious Schools**

*His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios*’ efforts to promote our parochial day school education were publicly recognized on **November 17, 2008**, at the **24th Annual Conference for Administrators of Independent and Religious Schools**, in Albany.

At the Luncheon and in front of an audience of more than **400** educators, who had gathered from all regions of New York State, **Archbishop Demetrios** was presented with the **Leadership in Education Award**.

The *Conference for Administrators of Independent and Religious Schools* offers the opportunity to administrators of faith-based schools to attend workshops and meet with representatives of the NY State Education Department. A delegation of 23 persons – priests and administrators – from the NYC parochial day schools attended the event. Fr. Patric Legato, dean of St. Sophia Church, Albany, gave the morning invocation.
The Benefits for the NYC parochial day schools

As a result of the involvement of the District Office of Education with the education authorities and the Standing Committee of NYC Religious Schools (or faith-based as the Feds call them), the parochial day schools in New York have greatly benefited from federally funded services and resources.

This year, for example, the NYC day schools received approximately $78,000 in federal money for professional development and teaching materials, including software. The funds are calculated based on the number of eligible students and disseminated by the Bureau of Reimbursable Services/NYC Department of Education.

Parochial School Teachers Studying at Local Universities

Half of ($78,000) the funds allocated to the Greek Orthodox day schools was spent for professional development. Five teachers currently serving in these schools are near completion of graduate work in school administration at St. John’s University and at Adelphi. Our teachers will graduate with a Masters Degree and ready to undertake the position of a principal if needed.

The Archdiocesan District Office of Education was designated by the NYC Department of Education/Bureau of Reimbursable Programs, as the coordinator for the equitable distribution of the funds among the NYC parochial day schools. Thus, the District Office was asked to affirm all teacher applications for professional development, in order for the Bureau to pay for their studies.

Teacher Training & the EAROBICS Software Program

Similarly, the District Office was requested to coordinate the purchase of materials for the parochial day schools through various vendors and organize workshops to train the teachers on how to use them.

With the remaining federal funds, the District Office was able to purchased materials and offer training to 28 teachers on the software program EAROBICS used for teaching English in grades K–3rd. The training took place on March 9 and 10, 2009, at St. Demetrios School in Astoria.

The Archdiocesan District’s Annual Staff-Development Seminar

Under the auspices of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, the District Office organized its annual Staff Development Seminar for the teachers serving in the District’s schools.

247 principals and teachers attended the Seminar, which took place on November 4, 2008 (Election Day), at St. Demetrios High School in Astoria and featured 15 workshops that covered all levels of instruction, from pre-K to high school (English and Greek departments). The workshops were conducted by prominent professionals in the field of education.
The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek for Regents Credit

The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek is scheduled for administration on **Tuesday, June 23, 2009** (9:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m.).

The District Office of Education develops the Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek, a foreign language test that assesses student proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing Modern Greek, following the standards of the Syllabus “Modern Languages for Communication” of the New York State Education Department.

The 2009 Examination is currently under development. **Part 1: Speaking** has already been sent to the teachers, who have already started the evaluation of the oral performance of the students.

The written part of the Examination has been already evaluated by Professor Stefanos Papazaharias of the University at Buffalo/The State University of New York and Dr. George Papanastasiou, director of the Institute of Modern Greek Studies/The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

The Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek placed under State Mandated Services

The Office of School Operations and Management Services of the State Education Department has placed the Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek under the State’s Mandated Services. As a result of this decision, the New York City parochial day schools can claim state money for the administration of the Examination (time spent for teacher preparation, administration of the exam and for grading the student answer booklets) as they could have done for giving any other state mandated exam – i.e. in Language Arts, Science, Math, etc.

The decision of the Office of School Operations and Management Services/New York State Education was based on documents that were submitted by the Archdiocesan District Office of Education. In a letter addressed to Mrs. Maria Makedon, director of the District Office, Mr. Charles A. Szuberla, Jr., Executive Director, wrote:

> “Thank you for sharing your very detailed records about the validity of the Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek, which the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese has been developing and administering in collaboration with NYS Education Department staff since 1973.

> The correspondence that you shared with me enabled me to confirm that students receive Regents credit for the examination. The administration of the examinations by your parochial schools is a justifiable expense and can be reimbursed from Mandated Services Aid.”
The District Office considers this decision a major accomplishment, since it places the Greek Examination in the same category with the officially recognized by the State foreign languages (French, German, Italian, Spanish and Latin). The decision will go into effect with the 2009 Examination.

**STUDENT EVENTS HIGHLIGHTING EXCELLENCE**

**The Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence**

Approximately 600 students of day, afternoon, and public schools take the Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek each year. Those who pass it receive three Regents high school credits in a foreign language.

Every year, the District Office of Education recognizes the students who excel during a special ceremony held in conjunction with the Feast of the Three Hierarchs on January 30th.

15 students who received a score of 100 on the 2008 Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek were honored on January 30, 2009, at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, in Manhattan. His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios presented the honorees with The Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence and an icon of the Three Hierarchs, following the Divine Liturgy.

The Archbishop congratulated the honorees and addressed an audience of 350 students, administrators, and teachers on the contribution of the Holy Fathers of our Church, the Three Hierarchs and the importance of speaking the Greek language and living the Greek Orthodox heritage.

**The Spelling Bee Competition**

The District Office of Education organizes annually a Spelling Bee Competition (in English) for the students of the parochial day schools of metropolitan New York.

The District’s 2009 Spelling Bee was held on January 8, 2009 at the Archdiocesan headquarters. Jordan Massey, a seventh-grade student of the “A. Fantis” Parochial School of SS. Constantine & Helen, Brooklyn, won the first place.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America congratulated the school champions and presented them with an Award Certificate and a gift card from the Barnes & Noble bookstore.

On March 24, 2009, Jordan Massey represented the Greek Orthodox parochial schools at the Daily News Spelling Bee Finals, at Hunter College in Manhattan, and won sixth place.
Principals Meetings

The Direct Archdiocesan Office of Education holds regular meetings with the New York City parochial day school principals.

The Office invites officials of the State Education Department as well as the NYC Department of Education and other City agencies to come to these meetings and enlighten the principals on various issues of concern.

Thus, on December 3, 2008, the District Office of Education invited Ms. Sharon Spence and Ms. Betty Sanchez, health epidemiologists of the Bureau of Immunizations/NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, who distributed forms and gave instructions to the principals on how to submit information regarding

On February 9, 2009, Ms. Mary Kurutz, Senior administrative analyst, Office of Grants Management/The State Education Department joined the principals. Ms. Kurutz provided one-to-one assistance to the principals and showed them how to do the calculations on their applications for the full reimbursement of services that are mandated by the State Education Department.

And on May 7, 2009, Dr. Paul Lynch, Asst. Superintendent for Government Programs/ the Archdiocese of New York (Roman Catholic) and Mrs. Marlene Lund, Executive Director/ the Lutheran Schools Association, participated in a joined meeting of principals and priests and informed them about the federally funded services to nonpublic schools.

School Visitations

The parochial day school principals had long expressed their wish for the director of the District Office of Education to visit their schools. Thus, during the months of February and March, Mrs. Maria Makedon visited all the day schools in New York City and witnessed the incredible work that is being done to offer a sound academic program that will make the schools competitive in their neighborhoods.

Mrs. Makedon had the opportunity to visit the classrooms, see the teachers in action, and meet with the principals and the teachers. The educators looked happy and eager to show her their work and expressed the wish that: “the communication with the District Office to be a continuous endeavor.” It was truly an experience, and the schools should be commended for their dedication to hard work and the Greek Orthodox ideals.
The Kindergarten Curriculum

The Curriculum for the Kindergarten, published by the District Office of Education is in great demand. The book is currently out-of-stock, but the waiting list continues to grow on the Orthodox Marketplace.

1,000 copies have been distributed “gratis” to community schools around the country since the publication was made possible due to the generous support of the “Stavros S. Niarchos” Foundation.

A PDF version of the Curriculum is available on the District’s web page http://www.education.goarch.org

Visit Us Online

The District Office has created, with help from the IT Department of the Archdiocese, a user-friendly web page, http://www.education.goarch.org.

The new web page contains information on the Office’s major projects, mailings and documents sent to the schools; reports to the Clergy-Laity Congresses, the Archdiocesan Councils, and the District Assemblies; the Curriculum for the Kindergarten in its entirety; past Comprehensive Examinations; a detailed listing of the District’s day and afternoon schools, and useful links.

Visitors may also download our Catalog of recommended books and resource materials. However, all book orders -- including orders for certificates and diplomas – are now being handled by the Orthodox Marketplace at www.orthodoxmarketplace.com.

Submitted by: Maria Makedon

May 15, 2009