



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Report to the 45th Biennial Clergy Laity Congress

Saturday-Sunday, September 9-10, 2020

PAROCHIAL SCHOOL EDUCATION

The Education Office

The primary goal of the *Office of Education of the Direct Archdiocesan District* is to assist the community day schools as well as the afternoon/Saturday ones in providing a sound academic program to their students – in both the English and Greek curricula. In doing so, the Office offers curriculum guides, in-service teacher training, and materials.

The *District Office of Education* represents also the Greek-American day schools (or *faith-based*) to the education authorities at the federal, state, and city levels. As a result, the Office has been instrumental in securing federally funded services and materials for the day schools, thereby benefiting thousands of students.

The director of the Office is a member of the *New York City Standing Committee of Religious & Independent Schools Officials*, comprised of representatives of the City's major religious institutions, as well as a member of the *New York State Commissioner's Advisory Council for Nonpublic Schools*.

The District Schools

During the current school year (2019-2020), there are **50 schools** – **six** day schools and **44** afternoon/Saturday Greek schools operating within the *District*. These schools employ **313** Greek teachers and have an enrollment of **4,913** students.

In addition, **four** of the parochial day schools maintain Pre-K for All programs with an enrollment of **206 students**. These schools are as follows: **St. Demetrios Day School**, Astoria; **A. Fantis** and **D.G.K.**, Brooklyn; **Greek-American Institute**, Bronx (*The Pre-K for All programs are funded by the New York State Education Department and operate as separate public school entities within our school establishments.*)

The District is also the host of **three** pre-school centers with **120** students in attendance. Pre-school centers are maintained by the following parishes: St. Nicholas, **Flushing**; Koimisis, **Brooklyn**; and Archangel Michael, **Port Washington**.

That brings the total enrollment of our District schools to **5,033** students.

Representing the Day Schools to the Authorities

As aforementioned, the *District Office of Education* is an avid advocate for the New York City parochial day schools and represents them to the education authorities. Under this capacity, the *Office* has been instrumental in securing federally funded materials and services for the schools. The funds are allocated per pupil, according to a formula used by the NY State Education Department, which takes into consideration the student's academic performance in state tests as well as his/her family's finances and the finances of the district (impoverished or not) where the student resides.

For the current school year (2019-2020), **\$133,743.48** was allocated to the NYC day schools for specific programs. Thus, in collaboration with the principals and the NYC Department of Education, the *Office* was able to offer the following programs and services to the schools:

1. Cover the tuition cost (fall, spring & summer semesters) of **three teachers**, who are presently attending *St. John's University* studying for their Master degrees in Educational Leadership;
2. Cover the cost of several professional development seminars (virtual & in-class) as well as *the District's Annual Teachers Seminar*. This year, the Seminar was held on November 5th, at St. Demetrios High School of Astoria. Provide in-class teacher training (Math, Literature, STEM) via coaching throughout the school year.
3. Cover a partial cost of school counseling and technology equipment via the "Students' Health and Safety Support" grant (Title IV).

In addition to the above, this school year three of our parochial day schools were offered support (tutoring, counseling, coaching, mentoring) for approximately 120 eligible students with learning difficulties (appr. \$1,000 allocation per capita). Those services are financially covered by NYS Education Department in collaboration with Brienza's Academic Advantage which is one of the Title I, Title IIA & Title IV service providers for our Non-public religious and independent school.

It is important to note that securing and handling federal funds for educational purposes requires tedious work on the part of the *Office* and many hours of communication with the central offices of the NYCDOE as well as its certified vendors.

The *Office* also holds regular meetings with the principals of the NYC parochial day schools, at which representatives of the NYCDOE are also invited to demonstrate the funded programs and discuss their application according to State mandates.

Support during the Pandemic

Due to the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic all of the public and private schools throughout the US were directed to close and transit to remote learning. Most of the DAD Parochial Day and Afternoon Greek Schools implemented successful online learning models in order to provide the most effective educational instructions to our students. In order to assist our parochial schools during this uncertain and stressful time, we have been in constant consultation with the parochial school directors and teachers as well as the Committee of New York City Religious and Independent School Officials ("Standing Committee"), the New York City Department of Education ("NYCDOE") and the New York State Education Department ("NYSED"). Some of the goods and services we have been offering are describing below:

- In partnership with the Professional Development Resource Center (PDRC)/ Fordham University as well as the Brienza's Academic Advantage we have been offering several virtual webinars based on the teachers' needs.
- In collaboration with certified NYCDOE vendors, special instructions were also provided to the students with different skills and special needs via remote learning, as well as technology equipment (such as chromebooks), and free meals to all the NYC non-public school students.
- The **CARES Act** authorizes the Education Stabilization Fund, a new appropriation that creates funding streams for several distinct education programs that address the impact of the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19") on educational services across the Nation. Under these programs, the U.S. Department of Education will make awards to Governors, State educational agencies and institutions of higher education to help States to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the devastating effects of COVID-19. According to the latest update we received from the NYCDOE all the NYC non-public schools will be receiving the total funding of \$91 million for goods and services (such as mental health support, professional development, technology equipment, nursing, online applications, etc.) The allocated funds per capita will be released shortly.

Various Projects & Events

The *Office of Education of the Direct Archdiocesan District* organizes projects and events that take place each year as follows:

1. The annual ***Professional Development Seminar*** in November (on *Election Day*) for all the teachers serving in the District schools. The **2019 Seminar** was held at St. Demetrios School of Astoria under the auspices of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America and was met with great success. **250** teachers and administrators attended various **presentations** and **workshops** of both the English and Greek programs. Due to the well management system of the funding our schools received in SY 2018-19, we were able to provide another two full day PD workshops at the end of the school year (June 2019 – "STEAM") and at the beginning of the current year (August 2019 – "The First Days of School") at St. Demetrios School of Astoria.
2. The ***Spelling Bee Contest*** among the students of the Greek American Day Schools of the District organized and coordinated by the District Office of Education. Sponsored by the ***Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund***, the **2020 Spelling Bee Contest** took place on **January 14th**, at the Archdiocesan Headquarters. This year, 12 school bees and runner ups competed and all received a *Certificate of Award* and monetary gifts. The first two winners will be participating this month in the ***NYC Spelling Bee Finals*** sponsored by DAILY NEWS. In **May 2019** the **Greek Spelling Bee** was administered for the very first time by the DAD Office of Education and the St. Demetrios Greek Afternoon School of Astoria. Dr. Tsioulis, the president of the St. Demetrios Afternoon School sponsored the event in collaboration with the Hellenic Federation of New York. (The prizes were as follows: #1-\$2,000, #2-\$1,000, #3-\$500)
3. The ***Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence Ceremony***- organized by the District Office of Education in conjunction with the Feast Day of the Three Hierarchs - was held on **February 1st** under the auspices of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America at the Archdiocesan Holy Trinity Cathedral in Manhattan with great success. Over **250** people attended the Event where **47** parochial school students (NY, NJ, CT, MO, VA, OH) who achieved the highest score in the **2019 Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek** were

presented with the *Three Hierarchs Award of Excellence* by His Eminence. Additionally, this year the NYS State Senator, Andrew Gounardes, presented the 47 honorees with the State Senate Proclamation.

4. The *Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek* - developed by the District Office of Education- is a Checkpoint B foreign language exam assessing student skills in listening, reading, writing and speaking the Greek language. High school students in New York State (and elsewhere) may be eligible to receive “credits” in world language studies by passing it. Additionally, they may qualify for a Regents diploma with advanced designation upon graduation. The Greek Examination is reviewed and evaluated by the Literacy and Language Assessments Office / NYC Department of Education, the World Languages Program/ Department of Linguistics/ University at Buffalo/ The State University of New York as well as the Institute of Modern Greek Studies / Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece. In June 2019, **464** students from NYC Public Schools and Parochial Schools in NY, NJ, CT, VA, MO, OH took the Examination in Modern Greek.

Upcoming New Projects

In addition to the aforementioned, our goal is to expand and establish the Comprehensive Examination in Modern Greek at higher level educational institutions (colleges and universities) throughout the US. For that specific purpose we will collaborate with exceptional professors from Universities in Greece as well as educators from the NYC World Language Department to create the Checkpoint C Examination in Modern Greek which will be equivalent for the NYSED **Seal of Biliteracy**.

Publications

The District *Office of Education* has developed the following publications in collaboration with the **Institute of Modern Greek Studies** of the University of Thessaloniki, according to the philosophy and standards of the New York State Education Department.

The *Modern Greek Language Curriculum - Checkpoint A – Beginners Level*

The *Modern Greek Language Curriculum - Checkpoint B – Intermediate/Regents Level*

Website and Facebook Page

The District *Office of Education* has created and maintained a **Website** and a **Facebook** page, both of which are full of useful information and current events. We recommend that you visit them as follows: www.education.goarch.org and www.facebook.com/greekamericanschools.



Submitted by
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