

Antiochian Archdiocese Convention Report - 2015
Department of Home Schooling
Submitted on May 28th by Archpriest Noah Bushelli
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In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

With us everything should be secondary compared to our concern with children, and their upbringing in the instruction and teaching of the Lord.

-St. John Chrysostom

History of the Department:

On April 21st, I presented the needs of the Homeschoolers of our Archdiocese to our Metropolitan JOSEPH at a meeting regarding youth and education. This report, attached, included information that I gathered in a survey about the numbers (10-15%), strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the homeschooling families of our archdiocese. The report suggested the establishment of this department. His Eminence said, "You have your department!" I was overwhelmed with this responsibility, but have been even more overwhelmed by the excellent feedback, enthusiastic support, and thoughtful help I've received. By God's grace and with support we've made some progress to establishing the department in the last month.

Goal and Strategies of the Department:

To promote and support homeschooling and home education throughout the archdiocese.

1. Organize a **Homeschooling Sunday** that will include a letter from the Metropolitan drawing attention to the work of the department, the benefits of homeschooling, and the necessity for all parents to educate their children whether or not they home-school them.
2. **Publish** articles in "The Word" about homeschooling, host an online presence, publish curriculum, curricular guides, and guides to online education opportunities.
3. Host **Events**: diocesan homeschooling Retreats/Conferences, workshops at Parish Life Conferences, Electives at Clergy Symposia
4. Help establish **Parish-based Co-ops**
5. **Cooperate** with other departments of the archdiocese.

Next Steps:

We are working on proposing a **Structure** to His Eminence including a Hierarchical Overseer, a Spiritual Advisor, Director, an Advisory Board (interested clergy and veteran homeschooling parents) and Diocesan and Deanery Volunteers. We are also proposing a **Budget** for 2016, including the hiring of a **Director**, or **co-directors**.

Call for Volunteers: HELP NEEDED!

If you love God, Christ and His Church, and our Archdiocese and its families, and have a passion for the salvation of our youth, and experience with home education, please email me and let me know how you can help. Also, share the work and needs of this department to all who may be interested and willing to help.

Initial Tasks of the Director or two co-directors:

- Work under the Spiritual Advisor, the Hierarchical Overseer, and, ultimately, the Metropolitan
- Work with the Advisory Board as well as Diocesan and Deanery Coordinators and Volunteers
- Develop and Maintain Website – with a blog and other dynamic content
- Publish Articles for Website and Word Magazine
- Organize annual conference (at Antiochian Village) and expand to other conferences
- Ensure that each Parish Life Conference has some Homeschool Support Events
- Attend Clergy Symposium to encourage and equip hierarchs and priests in promoting and supporting Homeschooling.
- Plan and Execute Homeschooling Sunday (suggested letter, materials to be distributed)
- Facilitate networking throughout Archdiocese, in dioceses, in deaneries, and in parishes
- Guide and connect families beginning to home school (legal, curricular, practical issues)
- Support and Promote home-education in all families, whether homeschooling or not.
- Organize and Support Diocesan Volunteers
- Get to know the directors and staff of the other departments and organizations with over-lapping goals.
- Interface with a national legal defense association (HSLDA) to encourage and facilitate the homeschooling families to retain this support.
- Develop Curriculum and Guides of Curriculum
- Support and Encourage the development of Parish-based Homeschooling Co-ops.

Caveat

Homeschooling is the ideal educational modality, as seen throughout history, and yet not every family is equipped for it. Our Church and our Archdiocese, like our nation, really need strong families. A strong family produces strong children just as a healthy vine produces abundant grapes. We need to support our families in sanctifying their children no matter what educational path they choose. This is even more important as our country and society become not only post-Christian but also anti-Christian. We have to be purposeful, diligent, and faithful in forming our children with an Orthodox Christian Worldview, and not relying on the world, the schools, the media to do so.

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, Wisdom, Word, and Power of God, Our Teacher and Enlightener, reared by the Virgin Mary, trained by Saint Joseph the Betrothed, help us to raise our children in Thy love and fear so that they may live lives well pleasing to Thee and inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. **Amen**