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Parents protest closing of Boston school

AP Associated Press



Ravi Rao, 7, sits near tents set up in a public park in the Brighton neighborhood of Boston, Saturday, June 11, 2005. Rao, a student at the nearby Our Lady of Presentation School, and about 50 other adults and children, camped out Friday night in protest after Archbishop Sean O'Malley decided to lock out students the school. About 80 of 357 parishes are scheduled to close as part of the church's reconfiguration and the archdiocese closed the school ahead of schedule after hearing reports that protesters intended to begin an occupation of the school building as early as Thursday. Similar sit-ins have prevented the archdiocese from closing several churches. (AP Photo/Michael Dwyer)

By Jay Lindsay, Associated Press Writer | June 12, 2005

BOSTON --Parents angry that the archdiocese abruptly locked their kids out of school before graduation ceremonies have started a camp-out protest in a city square across from the school. About 50 people stayed in the 10 tents set up Friday night across from Our Lady of Presentation School. The Boston archdiocese closed the school on Wednesday, two days ahead of schedule.

The archdiocese closed the school early after hearing reports that protesters intended to begin an occupation of the school building as early as Thursday. Similar sit-ins have prevented the archdiocese from closing several churches.

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Archbishop Sean O'Malley and parents agreed on Saturday to meet Monday in an effort to end their confrontation. The parents planned to continue the camp-out despite the upcoming talks, said Tom O'Brien, a member of the school board.

"It's been a very difficult few days," O'Brien said. "We're hoping this is the beginning of a cooperative process."

Parents held their own graduation for kindergartners on Thursday in the city square across the street. Mayor Thomas Menino, who has criticized the closing, allowed the school to use Faneuil Hall for graduation for older students on Friday.

More than 80 of 357 parishes have closed or are scheduled to close as part of the church's reconfiguration. The reorganization is the result of declining attendance, fewer priests and persistent financial struggles, due in part to the clergy sex abuse crisis. ■

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