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Families Outraged Over Archdiocese Closing School Early

Parents Vow To Hold Graduation Exercises Anyway

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BOSTON -- Parents of children who attend a Catholic school in Brighton were outraged Wednesday night to learn the Archdiocese of Boston suddenly decided to shut down their school to prevent them from occupying the building.

Video



Rhondella Richardson Reports On Protest

Our Lady of Presentation was slated to close later this week, but the Archdiocese did not want to wait because of the possibility that parents might stage a vigil in the closed school, as has occurred at eight other parishes targeted for closure.

NewsCenter 5's Rhondella Richardson reported that dozens of stunned families turned out to protest in the rain Wednesday night at the school.

The Archdiocese of Boston has been in the process of shutting down 80 of 357 parishes and schools in the past year. The parents had offered to buy the Brighton school and keep it open, but their offer was rejected by church officials in January. The offer to buy the school was supported by several local politicians, including Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Secretary of State William F. Galvin, who attended the school as a child.

Dozens of students huddled outside the building in the rain with their parents, some of them sobbing. They said they still had all their belongings inside the school and came to retrieve them.

"To get in their school building that they've been locked out of. This is an outrage by the archdiocese. Insensitive, arrogant move by the archdiocese. Have they no shame?" parent Kevin Carragee asked. Carragee is chairman of a foundation that's been trying to keep the school open.

Parents and children vowed to hold graduation exercises at the closed school.

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they're going to graduate on the school grounds," vowed fifth-grader Evelyn Morano, who burst into tears.

Children as young as 3 had graduations planned for Thursday and Friday, but the archdiocese said it had learned parents had planned a protest Friday after school and issued a statement from Bishop Richard Lennon that said, "We simply could not permit the school year to continue based on the information we had received." The statement claimed the decision was based on safety concerns, but parents weren't buying that.

"We planned a peaceful rally," Carragee said.

"If I have to pick between the parents of children or the Archdiocese of Boston, when it comes to concern for children, I'm afraid that I have to go with parents," said Peter Borre, co-chairman of the Council of Parishes.

The parents said they'll hold a make-shift graduation outside the school in Oak Square and have already received permits to do so. They will also proceed with their planned protest on Friday afternoon.

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