

St. Michael's, Frostburg to Close K-5 School

Father James Hannon, pastor of St. Michael Catholic Church in Frostburg, informed faculty, parents, and staff of the parish school this week that St. Michael's will close the K-5 school at the end of the current school year. The pre-school for three- and four-year-olds will continue to operate as an Early Childhood Development Program at St. Michael's. Fr. Hannon cited low enrollment and the inability of the parish to financially support the school as the primary factors for the decision.

Administrators of Bishop Walsh School, located nine miles away in Cumberland, have been in regular communication with Fr. Hannon and have indicated their ability and desire to accommodate current and prospective students of St. Michael. St. Michael's Church will offer financial assistance to any current school family choosing to send their child to Bishop Walsh and will subsidize busing to the Cumberland school.

According to school records, enrollment at St. Michael School peaked in 1968 as a K-8 school with 345 students. Enrollment has been on a steady decline since the 1999-2000 school year when 145 students were enrolled. There are only 86 students registered in the current school year, leaving every class in grades K-5 with 10 or fewer students.

Faculty and staff were notified about the closure at a meeting with Father Hannon this past Monday, when a letter was also sent to parents informing them of the decision and inviting them to a meeting at the school on Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

"Saint Michael School has a wonderful history of care for its students - and wonderful and involved parents," Fr. Hannon said. "That has been the case for many years. The faculty is a wonderful group of people who care deeply for the students and their good. The school has been a vibrant part of the parish for well over a century."

St. Michael School was established in 1891.