



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Statement by Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley
on the closing of Saint Joseph School in Belding:**

“Earlier, Father Fredrick Brucker, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Belding and St. Mary Parish in Miriam, provided me with detailed information regarding St. Joseph School and its future. The report presented strong evidence that the future of the school was in jeopardy due to declining enrollment and the financial burden the school was placing on the parishes despite efforts of local staff, parish members and diocesan staff to strengthen and sustain it. As a result of these findings, included in the report was a recommendation to close St. Joseph School. In a recent letter to me, Father Brucker asked that I consider the findings and act upon the recommendation.

Having examined the report, and considered the present request, I concurred and approved the request to close St. Joseph School effective immediately.

Father Brucker is working closely with parishes in neighboring communities to ensure that a Catholic education will remain available to present and future students of both parishes.

St. Joseph School has offered an outstanding Catholic education to children for many years. I am grateful and proud of the legacy of priests, religious and lay teachers, staff and parents who sacrificed much to provide such an excellent educational experience. I am saddened by the closing of any parish school. I am confident, however, that such a difficult decision will help provide for a stronger future for the parishes and for Catholic education in this instance through the collaborations with neighboring parishes.”

Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley
Bishop of Grand Rapids
July 30, 2006