

State school closing protested by parents

Parents of retarded children staged a sit-in yesterday as the Gouverneur State School on Manhattan's lower East Side, protesting plans to close the school and transfer some 200 patients to Willowbrook State School.

Meanwhile one of the parents, Willie Mae Goodman, sought an injunction against the closing in Manhattan Supreme Court on behalf of herself and other parents.

Mrs. Goodman said in an affidavit that Willowbrook, with an accepted capacity of 1,400

now has 5,400 patients and 17 children were transferred from Willowbrook to Gouverneur last month "because of the terrible conditions at Willowbrook."

She charged that the state's "warped sense of budgetary economy" could cause "death . . . and irreparable injury" to the retarded patients.

Dr. Jack Hammond, director of Willowbrook, announced in a letter to parents last week that the Gouverneur school, a division of Willowbrook, was being closed and its patients moved to Staten Island beginning about April 28.

"We very much regret that this is taking place," Hammond said, "but the matter is entirely out of our hands."

Parents said they feared that efforts might be made to move the children before the April 28 date, and vowed that children would be taken out "only over our dead bodies."

Irene Allen, a member of the nursing staff, said the Benevolent Society for Retarded Children was supplying food for the sit-ins and members of the predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican community surrounding the school were supporting the parents' protest.