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The school is reopening under a different charter and with a new name.

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YOUNGSTOWN — Summit Academy Community School for Alternative Learners may be gone, but Summit Academy Management will open Summit Academy-Youngstown in its place Sept. 8.

The Ohio Department of Education ordered the Community School for Alternative Learners, serving some 140 special-needs children in kindergarten through the fifth grade, closed at the end of last school year because of poor academic performance.

The school, located at 144 N. Schenley Ave., had been rated in academic emergency on its state local report card in each of the three previous years and showed no improvement in the last two, resulting in the order to close, according to the state.

Gerald Horak, CEO of Summit Academy Management, said at the time that Summit was approaching its charter school sponsor, Lucas County Educational Service Center, to determine if the mission of the Summit Academy Middle School at 810 Oak Street could be expanded to include children at the elementary grade level.

The middle school covers grades six through nine.

Middle school programming could be expanded to include the elementary grades without prior ODE approval if the sponsor agrees with the change, Horak said.

That is exactly what has happened, said Nancy Peacock, Summit Academy Management spokeswoman.

The middle school now has two campuses, she said. Summit Academy-Youngstown will serve K-5 at 144 N. Schenley Ave. as the “elementary school campus.” The “middle school campus” will remain at 810 Oak St., she said.

Peacock said the elementary campus doesn’t anticipate any loss of students resulting from the change.

Summit also operates a high school in Youngstown, Summit Academy Secondary-Youngstown, which won’t be affected by the change, Peacock said.

The middle school opened in 2006-07 and has been rated in academic emergency on its 2006-07 and 2007-08 report cards. However, the first two years of a new school's operation don't count under the state's closure criteria for poor academic performance, said Scott Blake, ODE spokesman.

Further, changes in that criteria enacted as part of the new biennial budget bill last month exclude schools offering "dropout recovery" education and those focusing on special needs children. Summit, which does the latter, might qualify for that exemption, he said.

Blake said the state has been notified of Summit's plans to extend the grade-level mission of its middle school and the change of the elementary school name. ODE is awaiting a copy of Summit's school contract for review, he said.

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