

## **Lima's Leo Academy Closes, Leaving 150 Students Stranded**

The attached [Lima News](#) article tells yet another story of disruption in education.

### **Lima's Leo Academy to close Friday**

#### **Abrupt closure surprises parents, staff**

**By Mackenzi Klemann - [mklemann@limanews.com](mailto:mklemann@limanews.com)**

Leo Academy, the private charter school formerly known as Golden Bridge Academy, will close permanently on Friday.

LIMA — Leo Academy will permanently close Friday “due to critical financial circumstances,” according to a letter the school sent home to parents on Monday.

The roughly 150 students in preschool through eighth grade who attend Leo Academy now must find another school to attend weeks before the start of a new year.

“My older son didn’t want to be in Lima schools, so for him to get sent back to that environment is extremely upsetting,” said Odessa Hamman, an administrative assistant and nurse at Leo Academy whose children also attend the school.

“It’s not feasible as a parent to find another job and to find schools for my kids to go to,” Hamman said.

The private charter school, formerly known as Golden Bridge Academy, strives to “provide students with the opportunity to grow their knowledge in financial literacy,” according to its Facebook page.

The school moved to a new location in Town Square in July 2020. The school then changed its name to Leo Academy one year later when Principal Kendra Gottschalk, who was hired as a teacher in 2019, was promoted to principal.

The sudden closure surprised staff, who were notified last Friday.

Parents were notified this week by a letter sent home with students, which included a consent form asking parents to voluntarily deposit their child’s last two EdChoice Scholarship checks or pay their remaining tuition out of pocket.

Leo Academy staff sent their own letter to families stating that the decision to close the school did not come from staff or Gottschalk.

“As a staff we felt this was a very impersonal and inappropriate way to address the situation we are facing,” the letter said.

Parents have limited time to find another school for their children. Lima schools on Wednesday said families affected by the closure may still enroll.

Still, many of the students who attend Leo Academy were kicked out or experienced problems at other schools, said Natalie Geiger, an intervention specialist and kindergarten teacher who previously taught at Lima schools.

Others have attended the school since kindergarten, said Britteny Westley, who has taught middle school at Leo Academy since this fall.

“A lot of these kids are at crucial ages where they’re going to either make it or break it,” Westley said. “I just don’t understand how you can use kids as pawns, because that’s not what they are.

“That’s not what a community is about. If all of these people sit here and say that they’re here for the greater good of Allen County, Lima, the state of Ohio, then why are we playing with our kids’ futures?”

[Lima’s Leo Academy to close Friday - The Lima News \(limaohio.com\)](https://www.limaohio.com/news/2022/01/05/leopard-academy-closes-friday/)