

Two Storied East Bay Independent Schools Join Forces In Historic Expansion

OAKLAND, CA

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Aurora School, a progressive K-8 independent school in Oakland's Upper Rockridge neighborhood, and Mills College Children's School (MCCS), a preschool-5 laboratory school on Northeastern University's Oakland campus, announced today that they are teaming up to expand as a joint educational community.

"This partnership combines the strategic vision of Aurora School with the century-long excellence and educational legacy of Mills College Children's School. Two communities with shared values will now be even stronger together," said Arjun Saroya, Aurora School Board President.

MCCS will close in June 2026, following Northeastern University's merger with Mills College. Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, Aurora School will welcome many of MCCS's students and educators, preserving MCCS's lab school legacy and integrating its innovative curriculum into an expanded Aurora School program.

"Mills has always been a place where innovation in education thrives," said Jenny Bond, Assistant Head of MCCS, who will take on the same role at the enhanced Aurora School. "This partnership ensures that the values, pedagogy, and joyful learning environment that MCCS families cherish will continue to flourish at Aurora School."

The first phase of expansion will include adding a full-day transitional kindergarten program at Aurora School. Over the next three years, the school also plans to develop a preschool program, modeled on the one that is closing at MCCS.

"The magic of Aurora School is that each child is deeply known, challenged, and supported," said Lynsey Kamine, Head of School at Aurora School. "This collaboration strengthens our ability to offer that kind of responsive, nurturing learning experience to even more students, while opening new doors for innovation."

The combined leadership intends to develop a lab school program that will partner with colleges and universities to support professional learning and cutting edge research, and strengthen the classroom experience for Aurora school students, teachers and families.

Aurora School was founded in 1988 as a K-5 school, and added a middle school in 2021. The addition of a preschool program would make the expanded school one of the only preschool-8 schools in Oakland.

About Aurora School

Aurora School is a growing progressive, independent K-8 school in Oakland whose mission is to nurture students' love of learning by cultivating academic excellence, emotional intelligence, and social engagement. It is renowned for its authentic, real-world project-based learning opportunities and multi-grade classroom approach.

About Mills College Children's School

Founded in 1926, Mills College Children's School at Northeastern University is a progressive independent school with a constructivist model of education and a hands-on experiential learning process that spans toddler through fifth grade classrooms. It is one of the oldest Lab School programs in the United States, which has helped make it one of the country's leading teaching college destinations. Northeastern University is closing Mills College Children's School after its recent merger with Mills College.

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