



The Rationale

Why is Hawken doing this?

This intellectual and business partnership is intentionally designed to make a Hawken education accessible to a broader community. Hawken believes that merging with Birchwood School will strengthen its impact and outreach in Northeast Ohio by opening new markets on the west side of Cleveland and diversifying educational models and tuitions under a unified mission. The addition of Birchwood School also positions Hawken to withstand demographic changes and shifts in market demand for independent schools.

Why is Birchwood doing this?

Birchwood's leadership team wants the school's distinctive mission and educational model to continue beyond its founders' tenure in order to provide a high quality education and character training for children and their families far into the future. This arrangement connects Birchwood to a like-minded school on the east side of Cleveland and provides a wonderful opportunity to create a partnership that will enhance the education of students at both schools.

Why is Birchwood doing this *now*?

This merger provides the long-term financial security needed by schools of Birchwood's size and longevity, supplying the short term resources that will strengthen school management through engagement with Hawken's admissions and advancement teams. This partnership will enrich Birchwood's academic and character development curriculum.

Mission Alignment

Are Birchwood and Hawken's missions and philosophies aligned?

On an ideological level, this merger makes sense because of the two schools' philosophical alignment and common fundamental beliefs and practices. Both schools are deeply committed to forward-focused education grounded in the development of both character and intellect. They also share a common commitment to Cleveland and have similar views on the future of education in this country. We see this merger as an opportunity to learn from each other and advance the quality of education at both schools.

The Merger

What are the organizational changes?

Birchwood School's Board of Trustees and Hawken's Board of Trustees have signed legal documents establishing the merger of our two schools. Birchwood School will be known as Birchwood School of Hawken. Birchwood will be represented on Hawken's Board of Trustees, contributing a respected voice in governance moving forward.

When does this merger commence?

The merger will be in effect immediately upon the signing of documents on October 10th, 2016.

What are the implications of this financial arrangement?

Hawken is not buying Birchwood; rather, Birchwood is transferring all assets, liabilities and contracts to Hawken. Even though it is now a division of Hawken School, Birchwood will continue to have a self-sustaining business model. In other words, Birchwood's tuition and philanthropy will continue to support Birchwood's business model and offerings just as Hawken's tuition and philanthropy will continue to support Hawken's. Each school's budget will remain separate and distinct.

Does Birchwood still need to fundraise?

Yes. Because the intention of this merger is to keep Birchwood a self-sufficient financial model, fundraising will continue to be an important effort. All funds that are designated for Birchwood will stay at Birchwood. All funds that are designated for Hawken will stay at Hawken.

Educational Commitment**What impact will this merger have on my child?**

While the merger aims to bring more eighth grade graduates of Birchwood to Hawken's Upper School, it will not affect the day-to-day experience or education of any Birchwood or Hawken student.

How does this benefit current Birchwood students?

This arrangement provides the financial, structural and administrative stability that Birchwood students and families deserve while also preserving the school's distinctive and successful education program. Birchwood graduates now have automatic admission into Hawken's Gates Mills Upper School campus and access to the Gries Center in University Circle. As an added benefit, Birchwood School will be a pick-up and drop off hub for west side families.

How does this merger benefit Hawken students?

While all Hawken students obviously benefit from a fully enrolled and funded school, they also benefit from the diverse perspectives, backgrounds and talents that Birchwood students will bring to the Hawken community. Birchwood has a richly diverse student body and a stellar reputation for producing some of the most accomplished students in Northeast Ohio. Over the years, many have gone on to attend Hawken's Upper School, and we look forward to welcoming more.

How will this merger affect the preschool through grade 8 curriculum and teachers?

The curriculum in both schools will continue to be delivered as it has been prior to the merger. The merger will not have any effect on teacher assignments. However, it is our hope that over time, our joint intellectual assets will ensure that both institutions will emerge stronger and better through the sharing of best practices, approaches and methodologies.

How will the merger affect enrollment and admissions?

Birchwood's enrollment has increased in each of its 30 years. With this merger, the plan is to continue growing enrollment from its current 214 students to a projected 260 students over the next few years. All Birchwood students will automatically be accepted into the Hawken Upper School without having to go through an application process. The addition of Stirn Hall to Hawken's Gates Mills campus expands the capacity of its Upper School, enabling Hawken to take on additional students coming from the Birchwood campus as well as from other feeder schools. Although both Hawken and Birchwood expect enrollment growth, each school is committed to preserving its low student-teacher ratio.

Why is Birchwood School keeping its name?

Birchwood has served the west side of Cleveland extremely well. By retaining the name Birchwood School, Hawken validates its own commitment to securing Birchwood's future and sustaining the Birchwood School educational model. The goal is to continue Birchwood's 30-year track record of exceptional education while also growing enrollment. The new Birchwood can be summarized this way: ***Same School: just better and stronger.***

Tuition & Fees

Will Birchwood's tuition change?

Birchwood's tuition scale will remain the same, separate from the other Hawken campuses. In 2016-17, Birchwood's tuition ranges from \$6,500 for five mornings of preschool to \$14,375 in 8th grade. Hawken's tuition ranges from \$9,616 for five mornings of preschool to \$29,371 in 8th grade.

Will Hawken's tuition change?

This merger will not alter Hawken's tuition at the Lyndhurst and Gates Mills campuses.

Why the difference?

Birchwood's tuition supports its business model just as Hawken's tuition supports its model. We encourage parents from both schools to learn more about the differences and then choose the campus that best serves their needs. Although both schools' goals and missions are closely aligned, there are specific differences in our curriculum models, campuses and facilities.

What happens to Birchwood's participation in the Cleveland Scholarship Program (the voucher program)?

Birchwood School will continue to participate in the Cleveland Scholarship Program under the same guidelines as it has in the past.

Will Birchwood students still be eligible to apply for Hawken’s Upper School merit scholarship program?

Yes, Hawken will continue to accept merit scholarship applications from Birchwood students. To be considered, Birchwood 8th graders must have the endorsement of Mr. Debelak and go through an application process. More detailed information about the process will be forthcoming.

Will current Lyndhurst students now be eligible to apply for Hawken’s Upper School merit scholarship program?

Yes. Hawken’s Board of Trustees recently voted to open up the merit scholarship program to Lyndhurst students. To be considered, Lyndhurst 8th graders must have the endorsement of their division director and go through an application process. More detailed information about the process will be forthcoming.

Location/Names of School

Where are Hawken and Birchwood located?

Hawken Lower & Middle School

Coed Preschool to Grade 8
5000 Clubside Drive
Lyndhurst, OH 44124

Birchwood School of Hawken

Coed Preschool to Grade 8
4400 West 140th Street
Cleveland, OH 44135

Hawken Upper School

Coed Grades 9 to 12
PO Box 8002 (12465 County Line Rd.)
Gates Mills, OH 44040

Gries Center for Experiential & Service Learning

Urban Extension Campus
10823 Magnolia Drive
Cleveland, OH 44106

Hawken’s Lyndhurst campus is located 16 miles from Birchwood School. The Upper School is 22 miles from Birchwood School. The Gries Center in University Circle is 11 miles away from Birchwood School. The Birchwood Campus will remain in its current location.

Where can we find more information about Hawken and Birchwood schools?

Each school continues to maintain its own website: www.hawken.edu and www.birchwoodschool.org. The sites are linked for easy navigation from one to the other.