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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

Franciscan Hospital for Children adds to special-needs school, prepares to renovate

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Students in the Kennedy Day School look on as board chair Bob Needham cuts the ribbon.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A local children's hospital recently celebrated the completion of a new two-story, 20,000 square-foot expansion to its Brighton campus' special education and therapeutic services school.

The [Franciscan Hospital for Children](#) expects in three months to start a second undertaking at the [Kennedy Day School](#) to renovate the space where the school has served special needs students for the past 48 years, according to hospital spokeswoman Deanna Dwyer.

To help pay for that upcoming \$1.5-million renovation, she said the hospital was able to reach a \$500,000 fund-raising goal last month that triggered a matched donation from The New Balance Foundation, which made its high-incentive challenge to the hospital [at the beginning of the year](#).

But, struggling in recent years due to state funding cuts, the spokeswoman said the hospital remains \$300,000 shy of what it needs in order to pay for the school upgrade's second phase.

A ribbon-cutting was held at the new expanded section last Wednesday. Officials said they expect the facility, paid for by a \$7-million bond, will be in use by the end of the month.

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The school's new addition will allow for increased enrollment, hospital officials said, adding that the space has "larger, more flexible classrooms with a wide variety of specialized equipment and adaptive technology; vocational training; culinary arts; vision services; sensory motor therapy," Dwyer said.

The school serves students, ages 3 through 21, with multiple challenges in motor skills and mobility, developmental skills and learning, communication, vision, hearing and health, according to the hospital. There are currently 74 students enrolled from 38 local communities within a one-hour commute.

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