How quickly the year is moving along! The high school J-Term courses have ended and we are now two weeks into the second semester. The three January courses were monumental successes:

The Entrepreneurship and Design course has started a company, designed and fabricated products, and issued them for sale. They have decided to extend the business and have invited other students to join the team to help the business grow. If you’ve not seen their innovative lamp...
designs and you missed their kick-off sales event at Brasil Café, you can still order a lamp by contacting students, or the school's business office. The Psychology course students, in addition to learning the basics of psychology, deepened the school's connection with the Houston Museum of Natural Science through some field work. Students engaged in a several hour sociological observation in some exhibit areas of the museum to study how visitors interacted with the exhibit displays. Students compiled data on visitor patterns of engagement, aspects of the exhibit where they showed engagement, and areas that were more or less engaging for visitors. They have submitted their report to the museum and curators there have already expressed interest in further study with the help of the Post Oak students.

The students involved with the Study of History Through Game Simulation explored history through the eyes of the actors and documenters as they created their own mini-histories and wrote about them from various viewpoints. Simultaneously, they read classic histories by Thucydides, Polybius, and others. By documenting history through their own eyes as victors or vanquished, students gained a deeper understanding of how to read and interpret historic documents.

February is the month of consultation visits for the high school. Last week, we were visited by our International Baccalaureate (IB) consultant, Juanita Sacco, who spent two days assessing our ongoing preparation of our IB application for authorization. Ms. Sacco was very positive in her assessment, commenting, "The teachers have done excellent work on the development of the curriculum." Next month, we will submit the final application for authorization and begin preparations for a team of IB representatives to come for a site visit next fall. Our second consultation visit this month is really an accreditation visit; last week we hosted Jananne McLaughlin, Director of Accreditation Services for Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS). The visit is a part of our continued accreditation process with ISAS. Each year until we have completed the high school's four-grade cycle, we submit to ISAS continued documentation of the expanded curriculum and plans of The Post Oak School. Also, in each of those years a representative from ISAS will visit the school. Our third and final consultation this month is February 21 and 22 when we host Gena Engelfried, a Montessori high school expert. Ms. Engelfried is the head of school at The Grove School in Redlands, California. She serves as an external set of experienced and knowledgeable eyes in giving a review of our program during its first year. As a part of her visit, we look forward to her guidance on what we’re doing well and what areas need attention for continued improvement. We anticipate this review as the first of a regular consultation schedule over the next several years as we focus on the growth and refinement our work.

Earlier this month, students began organizing clubs that will start up as soon as possible. Listen for talk of golf, tennis, chess, improv, movies, and more!

Last weekend, the high school faculty attended the North American Montessori Teachers' Association conference in Tampa, Florida as part of the AMI/USA Annual Refresher Course (Association Montessori International), which is perennially attended by many Post Oak faculty and staff.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 23! Post Oak High School students will participate in the Rodeo Run 5K/10K as the culmination of their four-week running unit. All students have been challenging themselves the past few weeks with our bi-weekly training runs as part of the physical fitness classes. Two weeks ago we welcomed Post Oak Elementary Director, Jeff Schneider (running enthusiast and marathoner), to give a short presentation about efficient and effective running posture.

Why are we doing so much? There's a lot to do! It's all great work and we're happy with all the activity. 

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One of two lamp designs sold by Post Oak High School students.
2012–2013 Standardized Test Results

Each year Post Oak School students in grades three through eight take a series of standardized tests called the Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP 4). These are the standardized tests most commonly used by Houston private schools. The results for grades four through eight in math and reading are shown in the graph provided (grade three test results are reported differently).

A COUPLE OF NOTES

For each subtest there are three bars shown: the Post Oak norm, the independent school norm (outside of Texas, “independent school” means private schools only), and the national norm (which includes both private schools and public schools). Scores on this graph are “scale scores” between 0–400. These are the most useful scores for comparing test results from year to year (rather than percentiles, stanines, or grade equivalents). The scores on the reading test from year to year show movement upward and it is legitimate to compare them. The same for the math scores. But you cannot compare the reading scores to the math scores. They are not comparable.

You’ll note that the Post Oak norms and the independent school norms are consistently higher than the national norms by a significant step. You’ll also note that Post Oak norms track closely with the independent school norms. This means that Post Oak students as a group perform as well as, or better than students from private schools across the country.

by John Long, Head of School
Bearkats Roll to Another Victory

*by Scott McGill, Post Oak parent*

The Bearkats continued their run of success against arch rival St. Stephen’s on February 6, winning 44–35. Leading the way was [player] with a season-high 28 points. While [player] made several highlight-reel plays on his way to scoring 15 of the team’s first 19 points, he and the other Bearkats really shined on the defensive end. It is an inviolate truth that defense makes a great basketball team. The Bearkats have imbibed the lesson and defend with a tenacity that would make Celtic great Kevin Garnett liken them to a pack of wolves.

It was St. Stephen’s, however, that came out of the gate fast. [player] hit on three straight early three-pointers, giving St. Stephen’s a 9–4 lead. At that juncture, the Bearkats took it upon themselves to raise their intensity and to start to play their vise defense. They held St. Stephen’s to seven points for the rest of the first half and went into halftime holding a 23–16 lead.

Some unwanted drama met the team in the locker room. Floor leader [player] had twisted his ankle with the first half winding down and needed to treat the injury during the break. Distinguishing between playing in pain and playing with an injury, he decided that he could continue on and even raised his game in the second half: his coast-to-coast basket in the fourth quarter gave him six points for the half and gave the Bearkats a commanding 40–21 lead.

The Bearkats coasted from that point on to a comfortable win in what was likely the last game of the year. The team gave us plenty of thrills during the season. Their selfless brand of basketball delighted and inspired all the fans that came out to root them on. With some key players graduating this year, Coach Tucker will be challenged to field a comparable team in the future. But his track record coupled with the basketball tradition at the school—what some call “The Post Oak Way” that emphasizes teamwork and accountability—should give us fans every reason to be confident that more great play awaits.
The Young Artist

by Nikayla Thomas, Post Oak parent

Families Integrating School and Home (F.I.S.H.) met last Friday in the Common Room. Teachers Deidre Lodrig, Danielle Dalsey, and Tamara Townsend, and Early Childhood Director Mirani Smith shared strategies and resources for creating an environment at home to support the young artist.

Topics included:

• How to create an environment that allows for experimentation

• Focusing on experience-based rather than project-based art

• Providing freedom while limiting materials to promote success

• Use of the finest quality art materials and how these materials can be successfully presented

• The importance of repetition in both the activity and the clean-up process

• Finding spaces that allow freedom for the child and comfort for the adult

• Resources and presentation techniques for exposing children to fine art (books and museum materials)

Thank you to our facilitators! Friday’s discussion was rich with information and ideas! Don’t miss our next F.I.S.H. event, Thursday, March 7, Outfitting your Montessori Home at 9 a.m. in the Common Room.

Recipe For Play Dough

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup of salt
1 cup of water
2 tablespoons of cream of tartar
1 cup of flour
1 tablespoon of oil
Food coloring

DIRECTIONS

Mix the flour, salt, cream of tartar and oil in a pan.

Mix the water with the food coloring.

Add the water/color-mix to the other ingredients, stir well.

Cook on medium heat for 4-5 minutes, stirring constantly.

When the mixture becomes “doughy”, remove from heat and let cool slightly before kneading.

When desired texture is achieved, the play dough is done.

F.I.S.H. Meetings

Join Post Oak faculty and parents for the Families Integrating School and Home (F.I.S.H.) meetings, which start at 9:00 a.m. in the Common Room:

Thurs., March 7—Outfitting your Montessori Home
Fri., April 19—Young Chef
Fri., May 10—Backyard Fun
The Power of Vulnerability & Shame Resilience

PARENTING ADVICE FROM HOUSTON’S BRENÉ BROWN

by Bernadette Verzosa, Post Oak parent and founder of ParentsPost.com

Editor’s Note: ParentsPost.com attended two Houston events that featured the inspiring Brené Brown as speaker. She addressed Houston parents at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church just days after engaging guests downtown at the Dad 2.0 Summit, a national conference. ParentsPost.com gathered feedback from parents at both engagements.

They were unexpected and disarming first words from a woman whose advice parents worldwide seek. “I don’t believe in the idea of parenting experts. There are a million different ways to be a great parent,” said Brené Brown to the crowd of about four hundred people at the St. Mark’s Episcopal School gymnasium in Bellaire.

The large group of Houston parents and educators gathered on a school night to find out for themselves why the global spotlight is fixed on Brown, a Houston mother of two, a research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work and a New York Times best-selling author. Her 2010 TEDx Houston talk, The Power of Vulnerability, is one of the top ten most viewed TED talks on TED.com with more than six million viewers.

Brown who was born in San Antonio and attended high school in Klein quickly revealed her endearing personality and easy disposition when her microphone malfunctioned at the beginning of her address. “My expertise is imperfection so I’m comfortable,” she said reassuring the audience while alluding to the title of the evening’s event: “Gifts of Imperfect Parenting.”

STUDIES ON GUILT AND SHAME

Garhett Wagers [the headmaster of St. Mark’s Episcopal School, who brought Brown to his campus] says the responses from parents have been overwhelmingly positive. “It is interesting to hear the various takeaways from the evening, since so many of them latched onto different things,” he said. “One powerful message of the night was the distinct difference between guilt and shame, which seems to be universally reflected by teachers and parents. Shame is terribly harmful, and for many the distinction between the two has a great deal more clarity.”

Brown differentiated the two feelings by saying that guilt can be a positive part of an individual’s conscience and self-regulation. However, she urged everyone to eliminate the shaming of children. She backed her recommendation with numbers—statistics that showed that children who are made to feel shame are more likely to conduct in risky and harmful behaviors.

Brown weaved through her trademark topics of vulnerability and gratitude with a combination of funny anecdotes and substantial studies. They are issues she explores in her book, “Daring Greatly.” In it, she challenges readers to allow themselves to be emotionally exposed.

“Her message of ‘be what you want your kids to be’ really ups the ante on personal accountability,” said Amber Alonso, a Museum District mom. “It makes you reflect on your own conduct and makes you conscious of how you are. I went home and immediately talked to my spouse and in-laws about everything she said.”

Alonso appreciated that Brown’s advice was supported by scientific research. “I found the sociological statistics on amorphous topics like joy, passion, comfort and kindness compelling,” she continued on page 7
“She somehow turned data for engineer minds into practical information that’s usable in daily family life.”

INTERNET FAMILY RULES AND DADS

Brown also talked about technology’s impact on family dynamics. She advised parents to embrace the internet and learn Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with their children. She suggested boundaries be clearly defined from the start which includes the rule that all online accounts have parental access.

Brown’s observations on new technology and electronics were especially relevant just days before her presentation at St. Mark’s Episcopal School. She delivered a similar message across town as keynote speaker at the Dad 2.0 Summit, a national conference for social influencers that include internet pioneers, website owners, dad bloggers and brand marketers.

Dad 2.0 Summit co-founder John Pacini selected Brown for his conference line-up. “I had seen Brené’s TED and TEDx talks online, but nothing compares to the live experience with her. She absolutely electrifies a room. And when I learned that she has spent the last few years of her research career focusing on men’s vulnerability issues, I knew without question that we absolutely had to have her there,” Pacini said. “What’s magical about Brené is that in a packed ballroom with hundreds of people, you feel like it’s just the two of you in the room, that she’s connecting with you individually and your own set of circumstances.”

Brown custom tailored her vulnerability message to this group by incorporating issues of leadership and authenticity. She also defined what vulnerability is not, for the many parents in the audience who have an online presence. She said telling the whole world via internet about your child’s struggles does not necessarily qualify as emotional exposure. She called the revealing of intimate details online an attempt to establish a “hotwire connection,” a connection that’s not lasting.

Gerome Sapp, a Galleria area dad, former professional athlete and founder of Fluencr.com was among those in the audience. “Coming from the world of being a National Football League athlete and having to live by the motto of ‘let there be no chink in your armor,’ I was initially uninterested. However, the more I sat there and listened to Brené speak, I couldn’t help but to be entranced by her, her candidness and the truth behind her initial uncomfortable message,” Sapp said. “It even allowed me to look at my current life and my life as an athlete and remember that being vulnerable and acknowledging it is the fundamental starting point for any type of real growth in a person whether they are a man, woman or child. Her words and deliverance of that ‘simple’ message was something I will keep with me for a long time.”

Brené Brown’s other best-selling books include *The Gifts of Imperfection* and *I Thought It Was Just Me (But It Isn’t)*. She has also developed a Shame-Resilience curriculum called Connections.

Reprinted with permission from ParentsPost.com
1. An activity in Infant Community requiring focus.
2. Primary students develop gross motor skills in PF.
3. Practicing writing the number 9.
4 & 5. Students demonstrate their knowledge in Primary Parent/Child Night.
6. Students in PHE marched in a parade around the school for the Chinese Lunar New Year.
7. MS small group work.
8. Using the peg board in Upper EL to build the square of a binomial.
9. A Lower EL student works with the 1000 chain.
10. Two students discuss the concept of place values with the visual aid of hierarchical materials.
Important Dates

Watch The Weekly Post and our website for more information about next year’s academic calendar. Here are a few dates we have already determined:

Aug. 19–23
First week for EL, MS, and HS

Aug. 26–30
First week for IC and PRI

Sept. 2
Labor Day (school closed)

Oct. 14
Columbus Day (school closed)

Nov. 27–29
Thanksgiving Break (school closed)

Dec. 23–Jan. 6
Winter Break (school closed)

Jan. 20
Martin Luther King, Jr. (school closed)

Feb. 17
Presidents Day (school closed)

Mar. 17–21
Spring Break—only students with expanded-year contracts attend

April 18
Good Friday (school closed)

May 26
Memorial Day (school closed)

May 30
Last day of school
Love & Logic®
Follow Ups

Tuesdays, 9:00–10:00 a.m.
March 5, April 9, and May 7
at The Post Oak School

Join Post Oak counselor Phylis Tomlinson for
three one-hour sessions, brainstorming solutions
and reinforcing Love and Logic® concepts. These
gatherings are for all interested parents whether
you’ve attended the series or not.

This event is free. Contact Phylis for more
information at phylistomlinson@gmail.com.

LETTERS TO POST OAK COUNSELOR
PHYLIS TOMLINSON

Parents, send in your parenting questions now
for this column in The Weekly Post. Post Oak
Counselor Phylis Tomlinson offers guidance
and advice on issues such as discipline,
consequences, money and children, peer
relationships, and more. Please include the
gender and age of your child for an appropriate
response—letters will be included anonymously
in conjunction with Phylis’ response.

Send questions to phylistomlinson@
postoakschool.org or leave a note
anonymously in her mailbox at the front office.

High School Admission
OPEN HOUSE

Tues., Feb. 26, 7 p.m.
1102 Autrey St., Houston 77006

Great minds
go to Post Oak.

THE POST OAK SCHOOL
50
FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY
1963–2013
2013–2014 is our celebration year
### CALENDAR

**FEBRUARY 24–MARCH 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>High School Admission Open House (HS campus)</td>
<td>7:00–8:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>No Weekly Post this week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>Admission day: PRI</td>
<td>IC, EL, MS, &amp; HS in session</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expanded year contract day for PRI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td></td>
<td>IC &amp; HS in session</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expanded year contract day for PRI, EL, &amp; MS</td>
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**MARCH 3–9**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Bellaire City Council meeting</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>POPA Coffee/Work Day</td>
<td>8:45 a.m.–noon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>F.I.S.H meeting: Outfitting your Montessori home</td>
<td>9 a.m.</td>
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**Sun 3/10**

Daylight Saving Time begins

### NOTICE BOARD

**Please wear your nametag or visitor’s badge when at the school**

This helps people identify you and see you as a part of the community. People without name badges will be asked to go up to the front office to get one.

Thanks for your help with this.

### Summer School Application Available Online

Visit [www.postoakschool.org/postoak/Download_Forms.asp](http://www.postoakschool.org/postoak/Download_Forms.asp) to download a copy of the Summer School program and application. Copies are also available at the Front Office.

### ABOUT THE WEEKLY POST

The Weekly Post appears on most Fridays of the regular school year. You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or a PDF version online.

Submit letters, articles, or photos in electronic form by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before publication to Communications Coordinator Elaine Schweizer (elaineschweizer@postoakschool.org). If publication is on a Thursday due to school closure on Friday, then the deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the preceding Monday.

All photos in The Weekly Post are by Elaine Schweizer unless otherwise noted.

The Post Oak School was founded in 1963 and accredited by both the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS).

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