It is a small school with a lot of homework, but it’s cool and worth it.”

Teenagers are hungry for reality. They want real (adult) experiences. High school is the time for deliberate and intentional work in the adult world. The International Baccalaureate, like Montessori, focuses on student experience. At Post Oak, blending these two approaches means building on baseline content in classes and supporting student initiative and independence in taking on real-world activities.

continued on page 2
“We get to go on trips and have lots of fun and we are all smart and it’s WONDERFUL”

Post Oak is now an authorized IB World School! We have taken another concrete step in support of student excellence. The IB authorization sees Post Oak join a contingent of 3,700 IB schools around the world. These schools share a common vision of student development. The IB Learner Profile captures the qualities of IB students in a fashion similar to the Post Oak Portrait of a Graduate.

The profile lists ten attributes that we’d be hard-pressed to say aren’t already qualities of Post Oak alums: Inquirers; Knowledgeable, Thinkers; Communicators; Principled; Open-Minded; Caring; Risk-Takers; Balanced; Reflective.

Post Oak received specific commendations in the final report on authorization following the site team visit in November.

The Post Oak School is commended for:

1. The governing body, administrative and pedagogical leadership and staff for their excellent understanding of IB philosophy.

2. The understanding of, and commitment to, the programme by the school community is commendable.

3. The school for providing professional level facilities and personnel for visual and theatre arts.

The visiting team also commented, unofficially, that Post Oak had the cleanest bathrooms they had ever seen in a school! (While that seems like a funny, throw-off comment, it implies attention to detail in all matters... and a high level of ownership and responsibility on the part of students, which communicates a profound message about school culture.)

The report contained no ‘items to be addressed’ – a very rare occurrence on an initial accreditation visit.

We did receive the following recommendations:

1. The school should ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding regarding the payment of exam fees.

2. The school should ensure that teachers of language A, music, theatre arts and maths HL attend IB training for their subjects prior to implementation.

3. The school consider the addition of another science to provide students with more choices as the programme grows.

4. The school should consider developing an internal assessment calendar to inform faculty, students and parents.

We are acting on each of these recommendations and will have them in place by next fall when the class of 2016 begins the IB program.

“Post Oak has a more personal approach. The teachers actually care how you’re doing and if you understand. They want you to succeed and will help you.”

Post Oak’s journey with IB began in 2010 with the commitment to open a high school division. Since 2012, the faculty has worked diligently to specify a rich curriculum experience for the upper level students that combines academic outcomes, real-world applications, and keeps the student developmental experience at the core.

Post Oak is dedicated to helping

young people prepare themselves to be globally-aware citizens who are confident to contribute to the human story. By exploring their own interests and diving deep into research and activity, students at Post Oak create themselves and are ready to do hard work.

IB and Montessori

By John Long, Head of School

When people hear that The Post Oak High School will implement the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma program in grades 11-12, there are several different responses:

This is great!

The IB diploma is highly respected by universities around the world. Our graduates will have three feathers in their caps: The Post Oak High School, Montessori, and International Baccalaureate. IB’s strong track record with college admission offices will be a helpful endorsement for graduates of a start-up high school. In fact, IB graduates enjoy significantly higher acceptance rates to selective colleges.

Is IB for everyone? I’ve heard that it is a challenging academic program and not everyone can measure up.

It’s true that IB is a challenging academic program. Here’s what IB has to say: “The IB understands that success in higher education and beyond involves thinking critically and creatively. The IB Diploma Programme’s challenging curriculum educates the whole student, developing the capacity for inquiry, research and problem-solving as well as essential skills for communication and collaboration.”

IB invites students to think and work in ways not common in conventional high schools, but familiar to students who have completed Post Oak middle school and grades 9/10 at Post Oak High School. We saw direct evidence of this in last year’s results from the High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE). Compared to students in conventional private schools (NAIS and ISAS) and public schools, Post Oak High School students reported significantly higher levels of the following occurrences:

- Teachers engage students in class discussions;
- Creativity is encouraged in class assignments;
- Worked with other students on projects;
- Emphasis on information comprehension;
- Emphasis on analyzing ideas in depth;
- Discussed questions that didn’t have one right answer;
- Completed a draft of a paper;
- Completed a formal writing assignment;

Look at the IB Learner Profile, (or the two-minute video version) which IB describes as “our mission statement in action.” It is a perfect match for Post Oak and for Montessori high school. IB asks every candidate school how it will manage the paradigm shift required to adopt IB’s educational methods and philosophy because it is a leap for most schools. For Post Oak there is no paradigm shift required; it will be a seamless transition.

We received word last week that Post Oak has been recognized as an IB World School and that we are authorized to offer the diploma program for students in grades 11 and 12 beginning next year, just as we had planned. This is a great accomplishment, achieved through the diligent and thoughtful work of many people, most notably high school director James Moudry and the high school faculty. Congratulations to everyone who contributed to this effort, including Post Oak administration and trustees.
Many thanks for a successful Book Fair to all who assisted in any way. There were numerous volunteers Wednesday and Thursday who prepared for and produced this successful event. Thanks to Jennifer Brenckman and Vareen Cunningham for chairing, your hours of help and creative input were critical to the success of the day. Thanks also to all who purchased books for classrooms and for yourselves, the donations enrich your child’s classrooms directly and send a message of care and commitment to the education of all the children in our community.

With deep appreciation,
Jami Sweeney, Post Oak Media Specialist
All Post Oak Parents are strongly encouraged to attend one of the upcoming Big Work information sessions. We will discuss how Big Work construction will impact your family in the upcoming school year, and how you can lend your support to this growth and enhancement of The Post Oak School. You will receive an invitation to attend a session based on your child’s grade level, and there are plenty of additional dates if you are unable to attend the session specified. We look forward to sharing this next chapter in Post Oak School history with the community – See you there!

**SESSION DATE** | **TIME**
--- | ---
Thursday, April 3 | 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, April 8 | 11:30 a.m.
Thursday, April 10 | 5:00 p.m.
Thursday, April 10 | 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 15 | 9:00 a.m.
Wednesday, April 16 | 5:00 p.m.
Thursday, April 17 | 9:00 a.m.
Friday, April 25 | 10:45 a.m.

**Post Oak’s Mutton Bustin’ Champ!**

We had a 'Montessori Moment' that we wanted to share regarding . The story begins last year at rodeo time. While at the carnival, she decided on a whim that she wanted to try Mutton Bustin'. She entered in the little tent outside, did not win but had a blast and asked what she had to do to compete in the big race! S she entered in Re- liant Stadium. Fast forward to this past Monday night's rodeo when competed in Reliant Stadium alongside 11 other children. She earned a perfect score, qualifying for the finals on March 23rd. was also featured on Ch. 13 news. She was, naturally, thrilled by her victory and had a grand time with the whole experience.

Since Monday, we have received numerous congratulatory calls, emails and texts from friends, family, acquaintances that were either at the rodeo or who saw her on television. Every person commented on how well spoken, poised and confident she was - a 6-year-old competing and speaking in front of a packed stadium of over 75,000 people!

While she is by nature adventurous and confident in spirit, we attribute so much of this experience to her Montessori journey over the past 5 years where she has been encouraged to try new things, challenge herself, not let failure be a deterrent and to persevere. Furthermore, Post Oak has shown her from day one how to interact with others (adults and peers) in an engaging and collaborative manner and, most importantly, that her voice and opinions are valued.

We are extremely proud of and welcome anyone who wants to join us in cheering her on!

**OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE**

This A-Term experience features a five-day camping trip. Students will learn outdoor skills such as setting up a tent, tying various knots, safe use of a knife, starting a fire, finding help in the wilderness, setting snares, and foraging for edible plants. This A-Term experience will be physically demanding, for which students will prepare with an exercise regimen in the first week. Students will also work together to plan our objectives and details before departing for the trip. Upon return, students will reflect on their experience in written form and share what they’ve learned with their classmates.

**THE BRAIN AND THE MIND: WHERE NEUROSCIENCE MEETS PSYCHOLOGY**

This A-Term will focus on Neuroscience and how the last several decades of research have informed the studies of psychology and behavior. Students will study the anatomy and functions of the brain, neurotransmitters and their effects, how the study of disease informs researchers, and how new technologies such as fMRI allow researchers to study normal brains in action. Participants will coordinate with the HMNS to do a sheep brain dissection, observe at the Paleo exhibit, and visit the Zoo to observe and analyze animal behavior. In addition to presentations by faculty and guest lecturers, students will teach each other about parts of the brain, and other areas of interest to them so as to inform the group.

**HISTORICAL GAME DESIGN**

The goals for this A-Term are to learn about history through game design, to have fun, and possibly to become a billionaire. Students will play an assortment of historical games while researching a period or aspect of history that is of interest to them. The students’ analysis of the structural and design elements of the games should correlate to aspects of the events they are researching. Ultimately students will design, build, play, test, and refine their own historical game based on their research.

**CRITICAL WRITING**

The goal of this A-Term is to learn to write within the genre of review by critiquing new albums, films, and TV shows as well as local restaurants, coffee shops, and museums. Students will contribute their reviews to a Wordpress or Tumble page while researching professional reviews in publications. Students will be assessed on their participation in activities and workshops as well as the progress in their writing skills. At the end, students will prepare a presentation for the school outlining their experiences and impressions.
Then and Now: Post Oak Faculty and Staff

Longevity looks good! Take a look at these Post-Oak-ers that have been here for 10 years or more!

Manuel Mejia – 1985
Lupe Lopez – 1986
Norma Paulin – 1986
Mirzani Smith – 1992
Alma Armendariz – 1993
Asenet Garcia – 1994
John Long – 1995
Debbie Nickerson – 1995
Mark Tucker – 1995
Debbie Henderson – 1996
Kathy Long – 1996
Miriam Winton – 1997
Mirna Andrade-Salgado – 1997
Julie Parraguirre – 2001
Errol Pinto – 2003
Jeff Schneider – 2004

Singing with a Legend

by James M. Winslow, Music Specialist

I often encourage the students to remember one thing: “Everything that you do onstage or in a presentation is a story that you get to share.”

This past December, I received an invitation to tell a story. It is the World Premiere of a brand new opera titled, “A Coffin In Egypt”. It is a co-production of Houston Grand Opera, the Annenberg Center for The Arts in Los Angeles and Philadelphia Opera. The same cast will also perform in Los Angeles next month.

The work is based in small Texas towns near Houston and is based on a play by Horton Foote, a native Texan. The story involves a 90 year old woman, named Myrtle, as she recalls events from her very full life. The title comes from the final verse of the Book of Genesis. Fredericka Von Stade (a vocal legend who came out of retirement for the role) sings the part of Myrtle, and I am in the ‘gospel quartet’. Ms. Von Stade is an amazing storyteller, whom I have always admired. Seeing her perform, I am reminded that all performing artists have important things to share. One of her greatest joys is sharing music with her grandchildren and children at a school near her home, where she volunteers when not traveling the world. My responsibility in this production is great as one of only five singers onstage. I am challenged to do the very thing which I urge students to do every day: bring this work to life. I am excited to do that and sing onstage with someone who continues to be a great example to me.

Come see the production!

A Coffin in Egypt
March 14th, 16th and 24th 2014
Wortham Theater Center
(http://www.houstongrandopera.org).

CLASS PICTURES

Wed., March 26
starting at 8:30 a.m.
Please be sure that your child arrives at school on time. We will not be able to re-take photos if someone is late.

Where in the world will your 50th shirt go on Spring Break?

Join us this Spring Break as we gather images of Post Oak families and friends sporting their 50th gear all over the world! We will be capturing all of the fun on our Facebook and Twitter pages, and in The Post. Send your pics during Spring Break to jessicajackson@postoakschool.org.
Parenting the Love and Logic Way®
Enriching Summer Family Time

presented by Phylis R. Tomlinson, LPC, LMFT, ATR-BC
Post Oak Counselor & Independent Facilitator of Parenting the Love and Logic Way® curriculum

LEARN AND REFRESH THESE SKILLS:
reduce arguing • respond to “I’m bored”
manage sibling issues • money matters
planning family work/play • engage cooperation
create a more peaceful home environment

SUMMER SHORT COURSE
AT THE POST OAK SCHOOL
4600 BISSONNET ST.
Friday, May 2 & May 9, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
$30 per day or $50 pre-paid for 2 days

AT ST. MARK’S CHURCH
3816 BELLAIRE BLVD.
Friday, May 2 & May 9, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.
$30 per day or $50 pre-paid for 2 days
Bring a brown bag lunch!

The 2 week “short course” opportunities are different from the 6 week series. We will view videos, handouts, sharing stories and Q&A

TO RESERVE YOUR SPACE:
Send a check payable to Phylis with desired dates.
Phylis R. Tomlinson, LPC, LMFT, ATR-BC
4010 Bluebonnet, #109
Houston, TX 77025
H/O: 713.668.6558
PhylisTomlinson@gmail.com

Next planned 6-week series: September 2014

In the last article, the Green Team suggested that you could start your spring planting at the end of February.
If you, like me, went ahead and planted your seedlings on that beautiful, sunny, warm Saturday, March 1, only to wake up to a 27°F morning, and a bunch of dead plants, I apologize. This year has been an anomaly as far as the intensity and duration of bitter cold weather. So, after conferring with our garden specialist again, we have come up with a new slogan for Houston spring planting:

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KALE PESTO

1 large garlic clove (garlic lovers, 2+)
½ cup pine nuts
2 cups kale (just the leafy part)
½ cup olive oil
¾ tablespoon salt
1 large garlic clove (garlic lovers, 2+)
½ cup grated parmesan
½ tablespoon salt

Combine ingredients in food processor or small blender and use just as you would any other pesto—on pasta, pizza, on a sandwich, or scramble with eggs!

“YOU CAN DO HARD THINGS”

reprinted from “Kingsolver on Montessori: You Can Do Hard Things” in the Montessori Observer
March 1, 2014

Barbara Kingsolver (Animal, Vegetable, Miracle, Flight Behavior, among many others) does a wide-ranging interview in this month’s Sun Magazine touching on writing, climate change, food, and more. The interviewer asks about perseverance:

How do you nurture people to work hard enough to move all that dirt? How do you do that with your own children?

And all of a sudden there’s this:

“There’s something I have said so often to my children that now they chant it back to me: “You can do hard things.” I sent my kids to a Montessori preschool, and thank heavens I did, because most of what I learned about parenting came from those wonderful Montessori teachers. They straightened me out about self-esteem. There’s this myth that self-esteem comes from making everything easy for your children and making sure they never fail. If they never encounter hardship or conflict, the logic goes, they’ll never feel bad about themselves. Well, that’s ridiculous. That’s not even a human life.

Kids learn self-esteem from mastering difficult tasks. It’s as simple as that. The Montessori teachers told me to put my two-year-old on a stool and give her the bread, give her the peanut butter, give her the knife — a blunt knife — and let her make that sandwich and get peanut butter all over the place, because when she’s done, she’ll feel like a million bucks. I thought that was brilliant. Raising children became mostly a matter of enabling them and standing back and watching. When a task was difficult, that’s when I would tell them, “You can do hard things.” Both of them have told me they still say to themselves, “I can do hard things.” It helps them feel good about who they are, not just after they’ve finished, but while they’re engaged in the process.”

Thanks, Barbara! ✌

Paleo or the Love and Logic Way®

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 issu?...
THE CELEBRATION CONTINUES...

Continuing the Post Oak School’s 50th Anniversary celebration, we are excited to announce that the count is up to 51 community service acts AND COUNTING! Please visit our website to log your service today!

Thanks to the giving and generous spirit of the Post Oak community, we have already exceeded our goal of 50 good deeds done this school year!
1. Middle School students present the funds from their bake sale to the Red Cross.
2. A Primary student takes a turn with the binomial cube.
3. The checkerboard is used to practice multiplication in Lower Elementary.
4. An Upper Elementary student crafts a grammar wheel.
5. Students enjoy the sunshine and the bells on the Infant Community playground.
6. A jubilant moment in Anita Taj’s class play.
7. Pouring helps with hand-eye coordination in Primary.
8. Upper Elementary students perform physics experiments with anything— even their shoes!
9. Even High School students have their jobs when it’s time to re-organize the space.
10. A Lower Elementary student is determined to get a precise measurement.
11. “Getting an” in Primary PF.
MARCH 16-22

Mon 3/17-Fri 3/21
SPRING BREAK
Classes not in session:
only students with expanded year contracts attend

MARCH 23-29

Mon 3/24
High School A-Term begins
Passover begins at sundown

Wed 3/26
Class Pictures

Thu 3/27
Infant Community Parent Education
7:00 p.m.
MMUN Social Event
6:30 p.m.

Fri 3/28
CONFERENCE DAY
Classes not in session:
only students with expanded year contracts attend
Infant Community in session

Check out our calendar online or download a copy at www.postoakschool.org

Don’t Forget!
CLASS PICTURES
Wed., March 26

Our 2014 Bearkats are BACK!

2014 VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

April 1st • 4:15
April 16th • 4:15
April 23rd • 4:15
April 29th • 4:15

ALL GAMES ARE AGAINST ST. STEPHEN’S AND WILL BE PLAYED HERE AT THE POST OAK SCHOOL.

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ABOUT THE POST

The Post is distributed via email every other Friday of the regular school year. You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or view the PDF version online.

Submit letters, articles, or photos in electronic form by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before publication to Communications Coordinator Elisa Schmidt (elisaschmidt@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.

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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