Montessori 2.0?

by John Long, Head of School

Silicon Valley, first the breeding ground for tech innovation, has now turned its creative energy toward education reform. Tech entrepreneurs are starting their own schools or backing education start-ups financially. One tech entrepreneur says we must “break out of this kind of Prussian-factory model of education.”

(Yes, believe it or not, what we call “traditional school” in 21st century America was actually borrowed from industrial Prussia during the mid-19th century.)

Lest you think this means public schools, it does not. Most private schools in America are also

continued on page 2
“traditional schools.” As another techie turned educator said when he was looking at schools for his children, “The (private school) education I would have paid for wouldn’t be suited to the economy that we live in today with flexible employment that prizes entrepreneurial and creative thinking.”

San Francisco’s Altschool has raised more than $133 million from venture capitalists. What educational model has created such serious buzz? Max Ventilla is the former head of personalization at Google and the founder of Altschool, which he describes as “Montessori 2.0.”

Another example comes from Sal Khan, founder of internet-based Khan Academy, who recently opened a brick and mortar lab school featuring student-centered, personalized learning in multi-aged classrooms where older students mentor younger ones. How does he describe it? “Montessori 2.0.”

It is truly exciting to see serious educational experimentation at work, and affirming to hear these leading innovators benchmarking their work against Montessori’s still-revolutionary educational principles. I will be interested to see what tools Montessori schools can borrow from these young Turks, and at the same time, invite them to seriously study the original and authentic educational system they reference. For though Montessori 2.0 generates much buzz in a culture fascinated by novelty, Dr. Montessori spent 50 years actively refining her experimental work and the result is a maturity of practice and depth of understanding that is foundational to Post Oak and other top-line, authentic Montessori schools.

These new educational reformers observe curiosity and creativity in their students, just as we do. They predict that children educated in their schools will become entrepreneurial. We have a longer history of practice and no need to make predictions; we can point to the founders of Google, Amazon, and Wikipedia as prominent members of the “Montessori Mafia.” Or as Andrew McAfee said in the pages of Harvard Business Review, “Montessori Builds Innovators.”

And the maturity of our practice has revealed insights the new reformers have yet to consider. Their focus on outcomes for the individual child is perfectly understandable. That is what most prospective parents are looking for when they visit Post Oak for the first time. But from the very beginning of her work with children, Dr. Montessori saw through a lens of a wider angle. Yes, we aim to help each individual child develop personal interests and skills. We also help them develop interpersonal skills and an awareness of others. They not only learn teamwork and collaboration, skills necessary for success in the world of work, but also empathy and concern for others, characteristics that will serve them well in both their personal and public lives. Montessori children develop high levels of personal responsibility and social responsibility, and because of these outcomes, Dr. Montessori was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

NPR ran a story last week entitled, “A little bit of Montessori 2.0” about these new schools. Coincidentally, the local paper in Marin County, where many successful tech entrepreneurs live, ran a story about the 100th anniversary of the San Francisco World’s Fair and a public demonstration of a Montessori classroom where children learned more than academic skills.

“The star attraction of the Panama-Pacific Exposition, held in the area surrounding the still-standing Palace of Fine Arts, was Maria Montessori’s “Glass House” classroom, where young children learned experientially, not only academics, but also communication, friendship, and love for one another.”

At the exposition, most of the walls in the Casa dei Bambini were made of glass, so that fairgoers could watch the children teaching themselves reading and mathematics, as well as peace and harmony.

On the day after the Casa opened, the San Francisco Chronicle wrote, “The success of the Montessori theory was almost demonstrated with the initial session. The youngsters plunged into the work as though they had been coached previously. The children appeared to be oblivious to the watching crowds.”

© John Long and The Post Oak School
Our sincere thanks to the 84% of Post Oak families who have contributed $283,000 toward our $300,000 goal.

*We need to reach our financial goal and 100% parent participation.*

**CONGRATULATIONS**
to the classes reaching 100% parent participation:

- Maya Pinto
- Emily Hansen
- Simran Sood
- Miriam Winton

9th Grade

Several classes are very close to reaching 100%. Please send in your contribution today to support the school and get your class to 100% participation.

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**SEVERAL CLASSES ARE VERY CLOSE TO 100%!**

The development office will continue calling the remaining families asking for support. Please show your support of The Post Oak School by making your Annual Fund contribution today online, via pledge, securities, or check.

**THANK YOU!**

**YOUR MATCHING GIFT CAN MAKE YOU A LEADERSHIP CIRCLE MEMBER AND JOIN IN THE FUN AT THE PARTY!**

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**POST OAK FUND CHAIRS
LUCINDA & JAVIER LOYA
INVITE YOU TO THE**

**Leadership Circle Party**

Contributors to the Post Oak Annual Fund at the Leadership Circle level ($3,000) are invited to join Lucinda and Javier Loya at their home for the annual, fabulous Leadership Circle Party in April.

Don’t miss it!
WHAT’S HAPPENING NOW AT

The POST OAK HIGH SCHOOL
in the Museum District

COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

Babson College, Elon University, High Point University, Parsons School of Design—The New School, Texas Christian University

Austin College
Barnard College of Columbia University
Colorado State University
The Evergreen State College
Hanover College
Indiana University at Bloomington
Louisiana State University
Oklahoma State University
Southern Methodist University
Southwestern University
St. Edward’s University
Trinity University
The University of Alabama
University of Hawaii at Manoa
University of Mississippi
The University of Tennessee

We’ll keep you updated throughout the year as they come in.

IMPORTANT DATES

NACAC FAIR
Tues., February 9, 2016
The NACAC national college fair is at NRG stadium from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m.

COLLEGE VISITS
Tues., February 9, 2016
11:45 a.m., Brown University
Thurs., March 3, 2016
9:00 a.m., University of Houston
Tues., March 22, 2016
11:45 a.m., University of Texas

NEW

Our teachers are experts in their fields.
Come find out how.

OPEN HOUSES
Tuesday, January 12, 2016, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, February 10, 2016, 7 p.m.
Tuesday, April 5, 2016, 7 p.m.
Head Search Announcement

From an email sent to parents and employees before winter break.

Thursday, December 17, 2015

Dear Post Oak School Community,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Head Search Committee, we are thrilled to announce Maura Joyce as Post Oak’s Head of School, beginning in July 2016.

The Head Search Committee conducted an extensive multi-step search process led by nationally-renowned educational consultants, Triangle Associates, which began by screening more than twenty international applicants and resulted in on-site interviews by two finalists last week. With input from our parents, students, faculty and staff, the Board is confident that Ms. Joyce has the passion, skills and strategic vision to build on the excellence of the Post Oak organization and take our school forward in the years ahead.

Ms. Joyce brings a wealth of experience to the position with a proven track record of success. She is a lifelong educator with a deep commitment to Montessori education and student outcomes. For over 14 years Ms. Joyce has served as the Head of School at the Montessori in Redlands, an AMI school serving students 18 months through 6th grade. She has been responsible for many aspects of the school’s growth and stability, including significantly growing the school’s enrollment, creating fiscal stability, leading the selection of their current facility, and leading the school through three successful accreditation cycles with the Western Association of Colleges and Schools (WASC). Ms. Joyce is highly regarded throughout the AMI community and currently serves as President of the Montessori Administrators Association. Ms. Joyce earned her Master’s Degree in Education from the Loyola College of Maryland and her BA from Boston College. Of particular note, Post Oak Head of School John Long has been a long-time mentor, collaborator and peer of Ms. Joyce and feels strongly that she is the right person to succeed him.

School leadership matters, and the Head of School position is critical to our school’s success. We are fully confident that Ms. Joyce is the right leader for our community. Over the next few months, we will provide more information about how the community can participate in welcoming Ms. Joyce to her new home at The Post Oak School.

Thanks to everyone for participating in our Head of School search and providing valuable input during our process. It is one of Post Oak’s notable strengths to have such an engaged, close-knit community, and it was essential in the determination of our school’s next leader.

We wish you the very best during this holiday season.

Sincerely,

Bert Mellinger
Search Committee Chair

Melissa Coleman
Chair, Board of Trustees

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for mid-week updates, photos, and more:

www.facebook.com/thepostoakschool/
www.facebook.com/postoakhighschool/

twitter.com/postoakschool
twitter.com/postoakhs
Parenting the Love & Logic Way®
presented by Post Oak Counselor
Phylis R. Tomlinson, LPC, LMFT, ATR-BC

This series offers solutions for families with children from early childhood to beyond adolescence. Previous participants are encouraged to return to share experiences and reinforce skills. Care givers are also welcome.

Thursdays, Jan. 28, Feb. 4, 11, 18, Mar. 3, 10
9–10:30 a.m. at Post Oak
$20 per person for series, $15 for workbook

To register, send payment & email address to:
Phylis R. Tomlinson
4010 Blue Bonnet #109, Houston, TX 77025
phylistomlinson@gmail.com | 713.668.6558

Redirecting Children’s Behavior
with Deborah Fry, Ph.D., C.P.E.

This six week, fifteen-hour course teaches parents how to help children grow in a way that enhances self-esteem, teaches responsibility and promotes cooperation and self mastery.

Tuesdays, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23, & Mar. 1
6:30 to 9 p.m. at The Post Oak School
$245 for one; $345 per couple

Register online at www.deborah-fry.com

Brown Bag Lunch
with the Middle School & High School Directors
Thursday, Jan. 21
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Bissonnet Campus
Join us for lunch or coffee and hear about new happenings in the Middle School and High School.

Coffee with the ELEMENTARY DIRECTOR

There are two questions that will stump most college freshmen: What are you interested in? What do you care about? Not so with college-age Montessori students. *When do Montessori students begin to form their answers to these questions?*

Wed., Jan. 13 at 9 a.m.
in the Common Room

Please join Elementary Director Jeff Schneider and guest presenters, including some of our own Upper Elementary students, to talk about the Upper Elementary Difference.

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

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Raising a Future King the Montessori Way

People Magazine covers the prince’s first day at Montessori school and highlights some of the benefits he can experience including creative thinking, self-assessment, and community.

“One day, Prince George will be a symbol to unite an entire country — so he’ll need to understand what brings people together in the first place. And while he is on his way to understanding loving relationships..., a Montessori education, which focuses on creating a community in the classroom, will only cultivate that understanding. Montessori’s policy of helping children learn how to productively resolve conflicts on their own will surely be helpful with any family spats — or global crises!”

Poetry Slam

Middle School student Du’a Faquih was one of 12 students to participate in the first Winter Slam Poetry Camp here in Houston last December.


POST OAK PARENT EDUCATION EVENTS

Primary Parent Education Event

How Emotional Development Supports Cognitive Growth in Children

facilitated by Dr. Michelle Forrester

Tuesday, February 23 at 6:30 p.m.

Child care provided for primary and elementary age children, including a light dinner (pizza, fruits, and veggies) for the children.

Save the Date

Student Film Screening

Friday, January 29 at 7:30 p.m.

The High School will be screening student films from the Filmmaking J-Term at Rice Cinema. Stay tuned for more information.
CALENDAR

JANUARY 10–16

Mon 1/11  Spring ASEP begins

Tue 1/12  HS Admission Open House
          7 p.m. (Museum District campus)

Wed 1/13  Coffee with the EL Director
          9 a.m.

Fri 1/15  Application deadline for new students

JANUARY 17–23

Mon 1/18  MLK Jr. Day
          School closed

Thu 1/21  Brown bag lunch with the MS & HS Directors
          11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
          (Bissonnet Campus)

Fri 1/22  HS J-Term ends

NOTICE BOARD

Spring Conference Registration Is Available Online

To register please visit www.postoakschool.org and select the main menu heading “For Parents” and “Schedule/View a Parent-Teacher Conference” or a link can be found in the message center of MyBackPack.

Way to go, Bearkats!

UPCOMING BASKETBALL GAMES

6-7-8 GIRLS
1/13 vs Briarmeadow, 5:00 p.m.
1/14 vs Yellowstone, 5:30 p.m.
1/19 vs Briarmeadow, 5:00 p.m.

6-7-8 BOYS
1/8 vs. Woods, 5:00 p.m.
1/11 vs YTE, 6:30 p.m.
1/12 vs St. Stephens, 4:30 p.m.

HIGH SCHOOL
1/8 vs Woods, 6:00 p.m.
1/11 vs St. Stephens, 5:00 p.m.
1/12 vs St. Stephens, 5:15 p.m.

Stay tuned for even more in January!

ABOUT THE POST

The Post appears every other Friday 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.

The Post Oak School was founded in 1963 and accredited by both the International Baccalaureate® Programme (IBO) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS).

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