Growth and development is our specialty. It is our mission. It is the work we do with children, adolescents, and young adults. We also aim for growth and development in our professional practice as a faculty and a school. We aim to meet the highest professional standards, to affiliate ourselves with top-of-the-line professional organizations, and to create a faculty culture of career-long growth and improvement.

This year has been rich in activity to demonstrate that commitment. Yes, it is a year of change, as I conclude my twenty-one year tenure as head of school. It is a clear indication of Post Oak’s position in the Montessori world that the President of the Montessori Administrators Association, Maura Joyce, answered the call to succeed me. Even as that head-search process was continued on page 2.
ISAS Parent Constituent Survey Results

A while back, we asked all members of our parent community to participate in an online survey intended to measure the extent to which parent-school communication is effective and parent expectations are met. This survey was administered as part of our ongoing accreditation process with the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS). With our sincere thanks to everyone who participated, we are pleased to share the following results.

The majority of survey questions (60 of 90 questions) elicited favorable responses from at least 95% of participants and are therefore considered salient strengths of the school. The school received very high marks on topics ranging from its mission in full swing, faculty were in the midst of a self-study, responding to the standards of excellence as defined by the Montessori Peer Review Council (MPRC) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS).

That self-study began with individual reflection by each faculty member, followed by an assessment of strengths and needs by each academic department in the school. Parents and faculty were also invited to respond to anonymous surveys asking them to evaluate their experience at the school (Results are included with this article.). One month ago an MPRC visiting team of heads of school, division directors, and master teachers from across the country, having read our self-study, visited Post Oak to observe the school and to confer with faculty. In March 2017 that process will be repeated with a team from ISAS.

This week we received the final report from the MPRC team. Here is a summary of their commendations and recommendations:

COMMENDATIONS
“The Post Oak School operates in an intentional manner around its mission statement. The work of all of the staff, the atmosphere of its environments, and the dedication of the parents show a great commitment to Montessori education in its most authentic form.”

The team made particular note of the classroom environments, the strength of the faculty, the parent education offerings, the support for professional development, the climate of collegiality and respect among both children and adults, and the high expectations of the children and the commitment to accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS
“The Visiting Team found that Post Oak had appropriately identified areas of need through the stated recommendations and questions in the self-study document. In a meeting with the Head of School and Division Directors, there was a general consensus that the following recommendations are worthy of prioritization.”

The team identified the challenge of bridging the two campuses; made recommendations about communication and coordination between faculty departments; offered suggestions about communication between school and home as well as internal communication within the school; and offered thoughts about how best to support students with special needs.

If you are interested in reading the full 30+ page report, it is available here.

The completed self-study document and the visiting team report will prove immensely valuable to Maura Joyce in her first year as head of school. It was also ideal that Maura participated in the site visit as an observer, which helped to deepen her understanding of Post Oak.

Two other items of note:

Thanks to all parents who helped in many ways with the self-study and the site visit.

You will have an opportunity later this spring to meet Maura on one of her visits to the campus. Details will be forthcoming.

© John Long and The Post Oak School
SAVE THE DATES

for

JOHN LONG’S RETIREMENT PARTIES
{21 YEARS AT THE POST OAK SCHOOL}

FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2016
THE POST OAK SCHOOL
4600 BISSONNET STREET
3 TO 6 P.M.
ALL AGES WELCOME

SATURDAY, MAY 21, 2016
SILVER STREET STUDIO
2000 EDWARDS STREET
6:30 TO 11 P.M.
ADULTS ONLY
ISAS Parent Constituent Survey Results
continued from page 2

statement to its ability to communicate with parents, to the qualifications of its faculty. Selected commendations include:

OUR MISSION:
- 98% of parents feel they have an understanding of the school’s mission.
- 96% of parents believe the character of the school reflects the mission statement, and 97% believe the school’s program is grounded in the mission.

OUR COMMUNITY:
- 99% believe that the school is a safe, secure place.
- 99% of parents feel that the school is welcoming and inclusive for students.
- 95% believe the school values and seeks a student body that is ethnically, religiously, and socio-economically diverse.
- 97% feel that the school community is ethical in its programs and actions, and that the moral development of students is positively affected by the school’s programs and actions.
- 98% believe the school works well with the community at large and is well-respected.
- 97% feel that the school holds itself to high standards.

COMMUNICATION:
- 99% of parents believe that the means for individual communication between parents and the school are well-articulated and effective.
- 97% feel that communication from the school to parents (collectively) is timely and informative.
- 98% feel that communication from faculty and administrators is courteous and constructive.
- 98% feel that school personnel are accessible and available to address student concerns, and 97% feel that they are accessible and available to address parent concerns.
- 99% feel that communication regarding opportunities for parent involvement in the school (parent association, booster club, etc.) is timely and comprehensive.

PARENT COMMUNITY:
- 96% of parents feel welcome and included.
- 98% feel that the school shows appreciation for parent support.

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STORYTIME
with Cory
A new theme each time, including...
farm animals, spring, & food
March 30, April 6, and April 13
at 2 p.m. in the Post Oak Library

For parents and children in Young Children’s Community & Half-Day Primary
There are also two planned storytimes at the annual Book Fair, Bookapalooza, April 17 at Brazos Bookstore. Stay tuned for more fun activities!
As we approach spring, we are embracing a re-imagined and re-branded version of our beloved Post Oak book fair “Bookapalooza” starting with our new venue at the beautiful and thoughtfully curated Brazos Bookstore. What Barnes and Noble Bookstore had in toys and extra space, the Brazos Bookstore makes up for in charm, inspiration, and that personal connection local, homegrown bookstores can offer. We are simplifying in many ways but enhancing in others with our primary focus remaining the joy, adventure, and empowerment books bring to all of our lives.

And what’s more fun than going to a book store? Going to a book store with a child! I remember the sense of new adventure and the promise a crisp new book would bring to me as a child when I went to my school book fair, so sharing this experience with my children and watching them form their own fond memories is incredibly fulfilling. As parents we can feel proud that each purchase at Brazos offers 20 percent of the proceeds directly to The Post Oak School. And while we flip through the bins of books that our teachers have selected, we get to feel a personal connection as our donations directly serve the needs of our children’s classroom. Like many things at The Post Oak School, this event is evolving and changing to better fit the character of our school.

We are excited to offer activities tailored to the interests of each age group from YCC to High School creating more participation from our older students than in years past.

A book makes every day better, whether it’s a rainy day or a day at the beach. And the only thing better than reading a good book is sharing one with someone you love.

We look forward to celebrating knowledge, creativity, and community with you all on Sunday, April 17 at our 2016 Bookapalooza!

Valerie Volpi and Pragnya Patel, 2016 Bookapalooza Chairs

About Brazos Bookstore

In 1974, Karl Kilian opened Brazos Bookstore to encourage the growth and development of the emerging Houston literary scene with a clear focus on personalized service, community engagement and passionate curation. Larry McMurtry, Edward Albee, and Donald Barthelme were all regular customers during their times in Houston.

As a hub for the most creative, intelligent and engaged readers in Houston, we offer programs and curate our shelves to inspire and expand the horizons of our curious readers. We aim to connect readers with the best contemporary and classic literature, books for children, non-fiction, art and architecture monographs. We also support writers and readers through partnerships with Inprint!, the University of Houston Creative Writing Program, and the Academy of American Poets.
History Fair

This February, students in Upper Elementary put the finishing touches on their presentations and set up in the gym for this year’s History Fair. Pictured are some of the exhibits along with their presenters giving presentations to faculty, staff, and visitors from Primary and Lower Elementary classrooms.

Look for more photos in the Parent Community galleries online.
ReelAbilities at Post Oak High School

by [Name]

Last Thursday, the High School watched a film about Enrique Oliu. Enrique is a Spanish language sports commentator who just also happens to be blind. The movie taught me not to let a disability define who you are and that anything is possible. When people meet other people they can't help but make a quick judgment about them. For Enrique, it was the fact that he was blind. Surely someone who is blind can't be a sports commentator or at least a good one, and yet, Enrique was amazing. His abilities and talents in sports are truly inspirational. He came to visit the school so we could ask him any questions and I got to sit right in front of him. I asked a few questions and we just talked and laughed. He told us that personality and true heart is all he sees in people. He lives in a prejudgment free world. I would love to spend time in that mindset and experience that. After asking a few questions and talking with him, he announced I was his favorite and that I am a beautiful person. I thought watching the movie was going to be the best part of the day, but that quickly changed. Just from him talking about baseball, one can truly hear his passion in it. I only hope that everyone does the thing they truly love and doesn't let anything or anyone get in the way of their dreams. He never let the fact that he couldn't see stop him. He memorizes every statistic and information about the players, he listens to the way the ball hits the bat, how the crowd is reacting, and what his other anchor and the English-speaking commentators are saying. He processes all this information and makes commentary right as things are happening. Why should we let people's disadvantages and disabilities define them? Why do we make those first impression judgments? I don't want to live in a world like that, and Enrique was just a sign that it doesn't have to be that way. You can overcome anything, I strongly encourage you to watch this film.

by [Name]

The documentary called ¡Henry O! highlights Enrique, or Henry Oliu, as a Spanish language sports commentator for the Tampa Bay Rays. The High School watched this film on Thursday, February 18 when we participated with Reel Abilities Film and Art Festival. It was interesting to see a man who is calling out many of the plays that happen on the field, knows all the statistics of the players by heart, and is constantly commenting on a game that he never sees—Enrique is blind. Enrique, who lost the little sight he had at age eight, would grow up and enter a career that would seem almost impossible for someone with his disability to be in. It started with Enrique in his birthplace of Nicaragua as he made his way to the States for an education that was better suited to help his disability. Throughout the film, the scenes projected how much Enrique loved sports and how he worked to be in the industry that he loved. The film shows Enrique surrounded by family, friends, and doing something that he loved. This documentary is an inspiring story that focused on the positives and that if you put enough effort and have interest in what you want to achieve you will be able to do it. After we watched the film we were able to ask questions to Enrique Oliu himself. I had a great time between watching the film and meeting Enrique "Henry" Oliu.

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On Thursday, February 18, the High School students watched the film ¡Henry O! for the ReelAbilities Houston Film and Art Festival. The film was about a sports commentator named Enrique Oliu, Henry O, who commentates for a Spanish-speaking radio channel for the Tampa Bay Rays and many other sporting events. Enrique was originally born in Nicaragua before moving to the States with his aunt. He was also born with very poor eyesight and went completely blind at age eight. After we had watched the film, we had a chance to talk to Enrique and ask him a few questions before we went on with the day. The questions ranged from things like, “who's your favorite commentator,” or “do you still remember what your mom looks like.” But what really stuck out to me was that in the film he talked about the profound effect his father had on his life. His dad treated him like a completely normal boy; he didn’t let his son’s disability hinder him from his potential. I think the main reason why it really stood out to me is because I also have a disability in the fact that my right ear has been completely deaf since birth, which has been a really big part of my daily life, and even though I have the gift of being able to have some hearing, I can not imagine not having any of my sight. I also think what his father did was such a cool thing because I know the feeling of just wanting to be a normal kid with nothing wrong and how good it feels to be treated like a perfectly normal person. All of his friends think of him as just a normal guy. I overall really enjoyed the visit and it made me feel as though anything is possible no matter what your circumstances.

ReelAbilities

continued from page 8
Young Children’s Community
Parent Education Dates

Thursday, April 7 at 2 p.m.
Language Development
facilitated by Emily Hansen

Thursday, April 21 at 2 p.m.
Social/Emotional Development with Our Very Young Children
facilitated by Deidre Brooks, Sue Guerrero, and Emily Hansen

ISAS Parent Constituent Survey Results
continued from page 4

• 98% have a high degree of trust in the school.

• 95% say that their expectations of the school are met.

• 99% would recommend the school to a friend or colleague.

ACADEMICS:
• 99% agree that teachers are qualified, competent, professional, and every single participant (100%) feels that the teachers are dedicated to student success.

• 98% feel the academic program achieves positive results for their children

• 96% feel that the school stays abreast of current trends in education.

Respondents were asked to provide three words that best describe the school. The most frequent responses are: “Nurturing,” “Caring,” “Community,” “Supportive,” “Diverse,” and “Inclusive.”

Despite the overwhelmingly positive responses to this survey, we are mindful that there are always areas for improvement. In their written responses to open-ended questions, many parents praised the progress the school has made with respect to extracurricular activities, athletics and the performing arts, and several expressed a desire that this progress continue. Parents also expressed interest in seeing additional educational programming on topics such as toileting in the Young Children’s Community, sex education in Middle School and High School, and dealing with learning difficulties at all ages.

As we continue this process of self-study for ISAS re-accreditation, we are grateful to have your ongoing engagement and support.
Art Exhibit

The Senior IB Art Exhibit, The Stimulating Seven, drew an enthusiastic turnout to this one-night-only event at the Glassell Junior School.

“I would like to thank the seniors for all of their efforts and imaginings over the past two years. It has been a tremendous pleasure to work alongside this group and witness them grow as artists. Congratulations class of 2016!”

—Emily Sloan, Visual Arts Specialist

Bee Buzz

Congratulations to Upper Elementary student Olivia Hess for placing in the top 10 in the regional spelling bee. She took eighth place out of 43 spellers. She says the word she went out on was “samovar.” Olivia recommends studying the lists and when you come to a word you don’t know, repeat it often and look up the definition—they’ll give it to you at the bee, but it’s better if you already know it and practice. You’re going to go look up samovar now, aren’t you!? ✤
Our list is still growing!

CONGRATULATIONS
to classes reaching 100% parent participation:

- Rebecca Duran
- Emily Hansen
- Lindsay Mistretta
- Debbie Nickerson
- Errol Pinto
- Maya Pinto
- Simran Sood
- Anita Taj Mahmood
- Tamara Townsend
- Miriam Winton
- 9th Grade

Let’s Reach 100%!

Please send in your contribution today to support the school and get your class to 100% participation.

We are at 90% parent participation. The development office continues to reach out to the remaining families. 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. JOIN IN THE FUN AT THE LOYA’S PARTY!

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!
Coffee with the ELEMENTARY DIRECTOR

Wed., March 23 at 9 a.m.
in the Common Room

Join Jeff Schneider and Mirani Smith as they discuss Primary to Elementary Transition.

Conference Days

FRIDAYS, MARCH 4, APRIL 1, & APRIL 8

To register for a parent-teacher conference, please visit our website (http://www.postoakschool.org/postoak/Schedule_a_Parent-Teacher_Conference.asp) or a link can be found in the message center of MyBackPack.

Important Dates

2016 END OF YEAR

May 26  Last day of school and HS Commencement
May 27  In-service day
May 30  Memorial Day—school closed
May 31 & June 1  In-service days
June 6  Summer school & HMI begin

2016–2017 CALENDAR SUMMARY

Aug. 5  Summer school & HMI ends
Aug. 15  Faculty/staff return
Aug. 23  Middle & High School students return
Aug. 29–Sept. 2  First week for all YCC, PRI, and EL students
Sept. 5  Labor Day—school closed
Oct. 10  Columbus Day—school closed
          Employee retreat/in-service
Nov. 23–25  Thanksgiving Break—school closed
Dec. 16  Early dismissal
Dec. 19–30  Winter Break—school closed
Jan. 2  Teacher In-Service—school closed
Jan. 16  Martin Luther King Jr. Day—school closed
Feb. 20  Presidents’ Day—school closed
Mar. 13–17  Spring Break—only students with expanded-year contracts attend
April 14  Good Friday—school closed
May 26  Last day of school

POST OAK PARENT EDUCATION EVENTS
1. A YCC student uses a dressing frame to support care of self.
2. Building fine motor skills in YCC.
3. Primary PF students jump with joy.
4. Who’s ready for Bookapalooza?!
5. This Primary student creates muscle memory while working with sandpaper numbers.
6. Building words with the alphabet.
7. Working with precision and attention on the pink tower.
8. Lower EL students study fractions in a mathematics lesson.
9. Students collaborate on LE geography work.
10 & 11. Middle School students held debates with opposing viewpoints on atheism and morality.
CALENDAR

MARCH 6–12

Tu 3/8– Fri 3/11
UE & MS to MMUN in New York

Fri 3/11
Financial aid applications due

MARCH 13–19

Sun 3/13
Daylight Saving Time begins

Mo 3/14– Fri 3/18
Spring Break only students with expanded year contracts attend

MARCH 20–26

Sun 3/20
Palm Sunday
Spring Equinox

Mon 3/21
HS A-Term begins
Navroz/Naw-Ruz

Wed 3/23
Coffee with the EL Director
PRI to EL Transition
9 a.m.
The Post is distributed

Fri 3/25
Good Friday
School closed

NOTIC BOARD

Shopping for Spring?

There’s an easy way to help raise money for our school—when you go shopping! Whether buying groceries at Randalls or gifts, spring cleaning items, and school supplies at Target, your purchases can benefit Post Oak! Grandparents, alumni, and friends are all welcome to participate in the programs. We truly appreciate all your support! Happy shopping!


DATE CHANGES

The New Parent Reception has moved to Tuesday, April 19, and the Bearkats Celebration Banquet has moved to Tuesday, April 26.

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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To avoid the school’s email communications arriving in your junk mail folder, please add info@postoakschool.org to your safe sender list or address book/contacts.