Welcome Back Items Online Soon

Visit our website in the beginning of August for links to the:

- Family Handbook
- Monthly Calendar
- Orientation Schedule
- Grandparents’ & Friends’ Days invitation order form
- and more!!!

www.postoakschool.org/postoak/Welcome_Back.asp

Also watch your mailbox for the calendar and the Family Handbook Quickview.

Registration for Fall ASEP

Registration is coming soon for fall ASEP classes. Next week, you can visit our website to read about the many offerings for students this semester.

Once registration opens, you will be able to sign up via My BackPack. Registration will close August 14.

On the Cover

Congratulations to The Post Oak School’s newest alumni. Families and friends gathered to celebrate, including graduates from the class of 2016 (bottom center and right). See more photos on page 7.

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for updates, photos, and more:

www.facebook.com/thepostoakschool and postoakhighschool
www.instagram.com/postoakhighschool/
twitter.com/postoakschool and twitter.com/postoakhhs

2017–2018
Post Oak
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Post Oak Alumni Updates

‘80s

PAYAL CHANA
Happy summer everyone! I am enjoying this time with my kids. We took a cruise to Honduras and Mexico at the beginning of June, and now (3) is in summer school at Post Oak. This gives me time to spend with (6) and help with the family diamond jewelry business. We will be joining our cousins in the south of Spain later this month. When in Houston we love to go to Colonial Park pool!

MARK CHRISTOPHER
Attended through third grade
This past January, Mark Christopher and his wife doubled the size of their family by welcoming twins, Alina and Lorenzo. They live in New York, where Mark heads up the America’s operation for Blackpeak, an international investigation and risk advisory firm.

‘90s

CARLIN PUTMAN
8th grade class of 1991
Carlin Putman, a native Houstonian, graduated from Middle School at Post Oak, class of 1991. She then attended Bellaire High School and graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor of business degree in marketing. Since graduation from UT, Carlin has spent her entire 17-year career with AIG. She started in 2000 as a junior meeting planner and ultimately worked her way up to director of meetings and events, a role she held for ten years. For the past three years, she has focused her efforts managing, streamlining, and improving AIG’s internal meetings and events approval, management, and oversight processes. This new, part-time role allows her to focus more of her time and efforts on her two wonderful children, (6) and (5), both of whom are very proud Post Oak students. In addition to her professional and family roles, Carlin founded Page-One Meetings and Events through which she focuses on, and performs, non-profit work for several charities in the Houston area including HOPE International and Tourette of Texas. Carlin and her husband Damon are both active supporters and donors of UT and its athletic programs and enjoy spending time watching Longhorn sports and traveling with their family.

BROOKE GUERRERO
8th grade class of 1995
I’ve been at my current job for three-and-a-half years, and graduated from grad school in 2015 (MS) and 2012 (MBA).

‘00s

LAUREN FONDREN
8th grade class of 2001
I graduated from Middlebury College in 2009 with a degree in theater (directing). While at school, I also studied Arabic and spent a year living in Alexandria, Egypt. After graduating, I moved around a bit, then got a job with the State Department as a Foreign Service Officer. I was assigned to the U.S. Consulate in Ciudad Juarez, where I lived from 2012 to 2014. I also did a temporary, month-long assignment at the embassy in Cairo, Egypt. In 2014, I decided I didn’t like working for the State Department and quit! I got engaged to another Foreign Service Officer who was still on the job and went with him on his next tour to Dusseldorf, Germany. We lived there from 2014 to 2016. I got married in Isla Mujeres, Mexico, in April 2016. Post Oak alums Amelinda (Melanson) Hendrickx and Erika Mathre-Peters were there! Then in September I moved...
back to New York City and am currently enrolled in Columbia’s MFA film program. I’m directing a short film in Texas this summer, which I’m very excited about. My partner has since also quit the Foreign Service, and he’s plying his trade as a cinematographer, so we’ve made a full pivot towards the arts!

BRITTANY FONDREN
8th grade class of 2003
I have started a new business as a freelance grant and content writer here in Houston. I do anything from writing grants to designing websites. I actually built my own business website (www.brittanyfondren.com), which was a lot of fun. I am writing a script for a comedy podcast about a fictional small town and how they are dealing with the big cities in the country being attacked by supervillains and “defended” by superheroes. I am also writing a book about two bookends possessed by the spirits of twin children killed in a flood and the stories of the families that they live with. Finally, I am studying for the GRE to go back to grad school to get my MFA in creative writing. I don't have a husband or kids yet, but I did get a new dog!

WILLIAM WAWRO
8th grade class of 2003
I’m working at a post production company in Los Angeles that makes trailers and commercials for movies. I’ve just got back from Washington D.C., where my short film, ESCAPE, was screened at the G.I. Film Festival, which was a great honor. I was the writer, director, editor, and producer, and had the help of some friends to make this piece. I’m very proud of the final short and happy to share it with the world. It was extremely well received in Washington D.C., and we’re looking forward to hearing back from a few other festivals. ESCAPE: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lt2cudgkTUs&feature=youtu.be

JENNIE KAMIN
8th grade class of 2004
I just graduated the Columbia School of Journalism with my master’s degree and am now working at CBS on a project. We’re launching a new documentary series.

LARA BRENNER
8th grade class of 2005
Lara is finishing up a master’s degree in wildlife biology at Missoula University, Montana, studying the behavior of cougars and the attitude of people to cougars. She attended Carleton College in Minnesota for her undergrad.

JOSHUA BRENNER
8th grade class of 2009
Joshua has just graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, Plan 2, with a BA and BS in biology. He is going to graduate school to work on a PhD in neuroscience at The University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) in August.

10s
SARAH AL-SHAIKH
8th grade class of 2010
I will be a senior at St. Edward’s University in Austin next year, and I’m majoring in global studies with my region of focus being the Middle East. St. Edward’s has provided me with a lot of great opportunities! The most recent one being my service experience to Bangalore, India, where ten other students and I worked at an orphanage for two weeks. It was truly one of the best experiences of my life! As of now, I’m just really looking forward to my study abroad experience this coming fall in Morocco. I’ll be there for just that semester; then I’ll come back to Austin to finish off my undergraduate studies.
AMELIA ESKERIDGE
8th grade class of 2010
I’m going to be a senior at Southern Methodist University, and I’m studying management science and Spanish. This summer I’m working for Citi in their Technology Infrastructure Analysis program, and I’m loving it! I’m in an a capella group on campus, and I’m a tour guide and a resident assistant (RA).

FABIANA SCIONTI
8th grade class of 2010
I am majoring in mechanical engineering at Boston University. I was always interested in learning more about finance and considering an MBA, so I completed an internship last summer in New York City at Ernst & Young within the Advisory department working with investment banks as our clients. I found that to be very interesting, so I learned more about finance and decided to go abroad to Milan, Italy, at Bocconi and took some additional courses in that realm. During my junior year, I found an internship at Goldman Sachs, which is where I’m currently interning with the Risk Division of the firm, hopefully leading to full time and eventually maybe an MBA. I got accepted into a Harvard Business School event called HBS Peek Weekend, which I’ll attend in June 2017, that gives you a brief intro on what the MBA is like and the case method. I had the chance to travel to many different countries while abroad, and learned Italian!

BENJAMIN BRENNER
8th grade class of 2011
Right now, I am attending Purdue University with a major in biomedical engineering. This summer, I am working in a lab in the Purdue Veterinary Pathology department where my project involves tracking the migration of T-cells using confocal microscopy.

DANIEL BRENNER
8th grade class of 2011
I have just finished my second year at Case Western Reserve University as a biomedical engineering major in a track called biomechanics. I do research in a lab there that specializes in engineering collagen scaffolds on which to grow tenocytes and other tendon-specific cells. My project involves the idea that mesenchymal stem cells are more likely to differentiate into cells with tendon markers on collagen sheets whose threads have been electrochemically aligned. I also take photographs for the school newspaper.

AMY PASCOE
8th grade class of 2011
I just finished my sophomore year at Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota. I’m majoring in history with two minors in German and philosophy. Next semester, I am going to be living in our ‘German House,’ a type of residential living on campus that is an immersive language experience. So hopefully, my German will improve before I go abroad in the spring! I will be in Europe for six months: two in Berlin and four in Vienna, learning the language and studying modern European history.

THOMAS RASOR
8th grade class of 2011
I will enter my junior year at Oklahoma State University, where I am majoring in economics.

CARTER GREEN
8th grade class of 2012
I attended Kinkaid for high school, and I’ve just finished up my first year at the Rhode Island School of Design.

EMILY RANDALL
12th grade class of 2016
Last Friday, I finished a five-week research project in the College of Wooster Tree Ring Lab working on tree cores from Glacier Bay, Alaska. I also wrote up a report to send to the National Parks Service there, and I’m working with data continued on page 6
World Finals for Odyssey Team

The Post Oak Odyssey of the Mind fifth grade team spent Memorial Day weekend at Michigan State University to compete at World Finals! Over 850 teams from all over the world attended the event. Our team made an impressive showing, placing eighth out of 70 teams. In addition to competing, the group started the trip in Chicago with an improv workshop at The Second City. Over the three-day competition, they spent time with their buddy team from Poland and spent hours pin trading with kids from all across the world. It was an amazing and rewarding experience.

For more than thirty years, Odyssey of the Mind has encouraged students how to think in different ways by providing open-ended problems that appeal to a wide-range of interests. Students learn how to identify challenges and to think creatively to solve these problems.  

Did we miss you? Send your news to luciacerritos@postoakschool.org or visit the link on our website.
Congrats Post Oak Class of 2017!

At the end of May, we celebrated the second graduating class of High School seniors. Friends and families filled Hamman Hall at Rice University to acknowledge the work the eight students accomplished while undertaking their Post Oak and IB studies. We wish them much joy as they continue to explore, learn, and share their passions.
Eighth Graders
Moving Up

Middle School students and their families gathered at the Museum District Campus at the end of May to celebrate the eighth graders as they transition to high school. We’re excited to follow them and see the good work they will do in their studies and beyond. Congratulations all! ☹️
Staff News

FOUR NEW OPPORTUNITIES, FOUR STAFF CHANGES

- High School economics teacher Ben Preston and his family will be heading “back home” to New Zealand. Ben has been with the High School for several years in a part-time capacity, and his presence has been tremendous.

- Associate admissions director and former Primary teacher, Tamara Basham, is relocating with her family to Oregon, where she has accepted the position of head of school at Corvallis Montessori School. Tamara and her husband have long wanted to return to the Northwest, and this wonderful opportunity was just what they were looking for.

- Primary Assistant Kathy Guani Nava has accepted a Primary teaching position at St. Catherine’s Montessori here in Houston. Having completed her AMI training this week and after a wonderful year being mentored by Tamara Townsend, Kathy is ready for this new challenge.

- Post Oak’s AP/AR specialist, Alicia Mouton, will also be moving on from Post Oak. Alicia is obtaining her real estate license and will be taking a new job working for a broker.

Students, families, and staff will miss Ben, Tamara, Kathy, and Alicia. We wish them the best in their new adventures. Post Oak is a better place because of their work—we appreciate all the talent and energy they have contributed to our community.

Post Oak is currently interviewing qualified candidates for all four of these positions, and we will keep you updated on our progress.

AS PROMISED & PLANNED

Post Oak is pleased to welcome Kate Lagus to the staff as our very first school nurse. Kate has a bachelor of science in nursing and also has completed the AMI Primary training course work. A Montessori child herself, Kate’s children have attended Montessori schools since they were toddlers and she is excited to be joining the Post Oak team.

Congratulations HMI Graduates

Houston Montessori Institute (HMI) celebrated the graduation of its second class on July 12. After three summers of rigorous work and dedication, all 10 trainees earned an AMI Primary Diploma. Congratulations, graduates! We are excited for the opportunities that come your way.
Spring Survey Results

by Maura Joyce, Head of School

For a school head, summer is a busy time, even though there is a smaller number of students and staff members on campus. It is a time to plan for the upcoming year and to readjust to a few inevitable “surprises” that you were not expecting (see Staff News on page 9). But I do get time to reflect and think, and this summer, I had some great help from all of you. The spring survey that many of you participated in was a useful part of my summer reading. Thank you! I was pleased that there were 195 respondents, which shows the high level of care you have for the school. We are still crunching the numbers regarding the percentage of parents who feel one way or another about the different questions we asked. But the real story was in the comments and suggestions that you took the time to write. This summer the administrative team and I have had a series of meetings to discuss current policies and processes and how we can update or improve them. Also this summer, the Board of Trustees is engaging in a strategic planning process to envision the next five years of Post Oak’s future. Your input and comments provide us with some data points to use as we take on these tasks.

Two highlights of the survey for me were the questions around communication and your responses to what you think the focus should be as we look towards the future. Parent survey data about communication was shared with the division directors and Development Office. It spurred great discussion and fueled strategies to address some of the themes and patterns that emerged. Going into too much detail right now would not be helpful, as we are still synthesizing the data and marinating ideas. I did, however, want to share with you that we’ve heard you and we are actively addressing ways to improve.

Your insight into priorities for the school going forward resonated deeply with me. First and foremost, some of your written ideas and concerns validated what has already been identified at the Board level. Other items I had not thought about and so added them to my list. I have read this section several times and continue to identify those things to include in our strategic work at the Board, administrative, and program level.

We plan to continue to create surveys for the community to share feedback. This is not the only way to communicate what you notice, what you’re concerned about, or just what is on your mind. I welcome you to come in and meet with me—I love to hear each family’s story about their time at Post Oak. I may have made it through my first year, but I am still new, and each shared experience is a learning opportunity for me.

I am looking forward to seeing you and your wonderful children next month! Enjoy the rest of your summer.

Did You Hear the News? Coffee Is Good for You!

New Parent Welcome Coffee
at the Bissonnet Campus for YCC, PRI, EL parents
September 1
8:45–10 a.m.

Volunteer Coffee
September 8
8:45 a.m.
Off campus—watch Post Highlights for details

POPA Coffee/Work Days
start October 4
8:45 a.m.–noon
Updates from Summer School

by Miriam Winton, Auxiliary Programs Director

Although the majority of our classrooms have been packed up and most of the faculty and students are away, Post Oak’s summer program has been busily humming along since early June. Without the restrictions of any construction on campus this year, we have summer offerings for every level on the Bissonnet Campus and even a few for High School students on our Museum District Campus.

The full day Young Children’s Community (YCC) classroom is open and serving a mix of children from both the half day and full day YCC classes. Meeting and working with new friends provides ample opportunities for our youngest children to practice and refine their social skills. At the Primary level, two classrooms are running at full capacity, one in English and one in Spanish. This is the ninth consecutive summer that Post Oak has been able to offer a Primary Spanish immersion class, and it continues to be a very popular choice. The highlight of the week for children at both the YCC and Primary levels is splash day on Friday mornings. They always look forward to running through the sprinklers, stomping and splashing in the wading pools and puddles, and decorating the playground sidewalks with colorful chalk drawings. And of course, the children also look forward to watermelon and popsicle treats!

An eager and enthusiastic group of incoming first graders have filled the summer transition class. The room is abuzz with excitement as the students explore their new Elementary environment and establish new friendships. We resumed our regular summer camp classes for Elementary students in grades 2 through 6, offering a wide variety of activities including, art, baking, international cooking, art history, sewing, upcycling, tennis, chess, fencing, hula hooping, kitchen chemistry, Greek mythology, and the science of bridges. When asked about what they were enjoying in summer classes, students responded: playing tennis; sewing a teddy bear; making pizza; cooking and making things like strawberry shortcake for the first time; learning to serve the ball in tennis; doing cool things in art; making smoothies; painting activities in art; sewing a bear, a pillow, and a blanket; making rice pudding; and learning to cut an onion correctly. Summer camp fun continues until the end of July.

In early June, High School students had the opportunity to brush up on their skills in Math Boot Camp, and at the end of July, a College Essay Writing Boot Camp is also being offered at the Museum District Campus.

On June 30, the annual Post Oak Fourth of July parade took place around the Bissonnet Campus athletic field. Parents, friends, and relatives looked on as our Elementary transition class led the Primary and YCC children in the parade. Patriotic marching music blasted from speakers as the little ones, decked out in red, white, and blue, made their way around the field several times. Once the parade concluded, everyone gathered on the playground to enjoy watermelon and popsicles to beat the heat. It was another successful Independence Day celebration!

Happy Summer! • See more photos on pages 12, 14, and 15!
Fourth of July Parade!
Post Oak Board Brief

NEWS FROM OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By Adam Forman, Post Oak Parent, Emeritus Board Member

Did You Hear? To little fanfare (other than possibly this article), The Post Oak School was re-accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest, or ISAS. ISAS accreditation (or, in our case, re-accreditation, after having first been accredited in 2006) is an exceptional accomplishment that reflects well on our school and our community. Thank you, Post Oak community, for all of your efforts in this endeavor, and congratulations!

What is ISAS and what does it mean to be ISAS accredited? Does ISAS re-accreditation impact our being a Montessori mission-based school? What kind of work went into becoming re-accredited by ISAS?

ISAS is an association of independent schools in the southwest, which includes St. John’s, The Kinkaid School, St. Mark’s School of Texas (in Dallas), and The Hockaday School (in Dallas) to name a few—not bad company. An excerpt from ISAS’ mission states, “ISAS promotes, upholds and advances the highest educational and professional standards for the region’s independent schools. We offer our members an exceptionally rigorous, authentic and meaningful accreditation process...” Not surprisingly, to become ISAS accredited, an independent school in the southwest must be, as we are, operating in all facets at the highest levels, including mission consistency (Montessori), education (teachers), administration (school administration), and strategic direction (board of trustees). Additionally, and importantly, an ISAS school will have a supportive community—from parents, to teachers, to school administration, to the board of trustees, just as we have.

As not one of the above-mentioned schools is a Montessori school, is ISAS’ accreditation process pushing us to be more like them...trying to push us away from being a Montessori mission-based school? The answer is absolutely not. Rather, ISAS and its accreditation process are working to ensure that each member educational institution is operating at the highest level, consistent with its educational mission. That means, consistent with our mission, while being an accredited ISAS educational institution, we can still be developing students who are interested—interested in life, learning, and knowing how and why things work. We can still be developing students who demonstrate grace and courtesy in their interactions with others. We can still encourage students to be independent thinkers and, yet, be able to work collaboratively. We can still be graduating students who have developed intellectual stamina and grit. We can still prepare students to see the world out of their own eyes and with their own voice. We can still be The Post Oak School.

ISAS re-accreditation sounds pretty good, but does re-accreditation involve a lot of work? Are there any deliverables, or visits required? Yes, on all counts. As Maura described in the March issue of The Post, teachers, administrators, parents, and members of the board of trustees generated a comprehensive self-study that was over 100 pages long, covering topics ranging from school mission, to school community, to academic and student programs, to personnel and administration, to governance, and to finance and facilities management. Once submitted, we were subject to a three-day ISAS re-accreditation visit, during which ISAS team members interacted with students, parents, teachers, administrators and board members. The process was exhausting and rigorous, but productive and encouraging.

Why go through all of that? Why work to retain our ISAS accreditation? We are a community of independent thinkers working to do the right thing. We are a community who seeks an exemplary approach to all we do. My take—I don’t think that we as the Post Oak community would have it any other way. Again, thank you and congratulations on your ISAS re-accreditation! ☺️
It's fun in summer school! Read the article on page 11 for details!
NOTICE BOARD

### 2017–2018 Important Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 14</td>
<td>Faculty/staff return</td>
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<td>Aug. 22</td>
<td>Elementary, Middle, &amp; High School students return</td>
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<td>Aug. 28–Sept. 1</td>
<td>First week for all YCC, PRI students</td>
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<td>Sept. 4</td>
<td>Labor Day—school closed</td>
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<td>Oct. 9</td>
<td>Columbus Day—employee retreat/in-service—school closed</td>
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<td>Nov. 22–24</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break—school closed</td>
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<td>Dec. 21</td>
<td>Early dismissal</td>
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<td>Dec. 22–Jan. 5</td>
<td>Winter Break—school closed</td>
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<td>Jan. 8</td>
<td>Teacher in-service—school closed</td>
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<td>Jan. 15</td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—school closed</td>
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<td>Feb. 19</td>
<td>Presidents’ Day—school closed</td>
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<td>March 12–16</td>
<td>Spring Break—only students with expanded-year contracts attend</td>
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<td>March 30</td>
<td>Good Friday—school closed</td>
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<td>April 20</td>
<td>Teacher in-service—school closed</td>
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<td>May 25</td>
<td>Last day of school/early dismissal</td>
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<td>HS Commencement</td>
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### Save the Date

**POPA Dinner**

**Tues., Sept. 12, 2017**

6:30–9:30 p.m., Omni Hotel

*Pre-reception at 6:00 p.m. for new parents, faculty, board, & room parents*

### Shopping for Back to School?

There’s an easy way to help raise money for our school—when you go shopping! Whether buying groceries at Randalls, or gifts 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! ✨


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.

### About The Post

*The Post* appears every first Monday of the month during 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 to Communications Coordinator Elaine Schweizer (elaineschweizer@postoakschool.org) by 5:00 p.m. on the Monday one week prior to publication. Please direct all requests for permission to reprint articles to the communications coordinator.

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).

**Bissonnet Campus:** 4600 Bissonnet St., Bellaire, TX 77401 • Tel: 713-661-6688 • Fax: 713-661-4959

**Museum District Campus:** 1010 Autrey St., Houston, TX 77006 • Tel: 832-538-1988 • Fax: 832-538-1926

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