

"To be honest, Maura, I did not really notice a leadership change," the parent said to me at an event this past April. Little did she know it was the most profound compliment I could have received at the end of my first year as head at Post Oak.
What a difference a year makes.





Walking onto the Bissonnet Campus a year ago on my first day as head of school, I was escorted to a folding table, chair, computer, and a stack of file boxes labeled "Head of School." This was in a Primary classroom; in adjacent classrooms, the Business Office, Development team, division directors, Admissions, and IT were all in close quarters and working out of boxes. Down the road, at the Museum District Campus, things were just as tight. The Houston Montessori Institute (HMI) teacher training course was underway, and the Middle School and High School directors were squeezed into their own makeshift offices, patiently awaiting the completion of the new High School building while conducting their usual summer business.

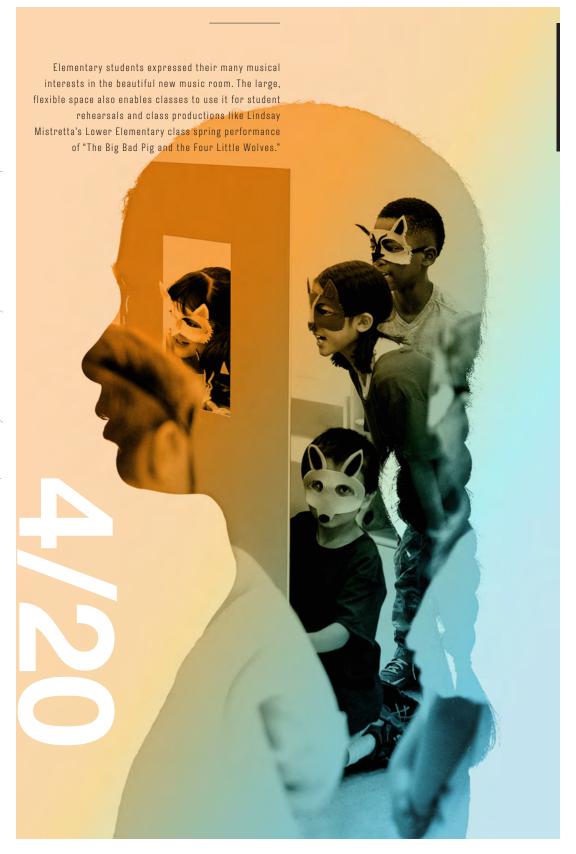
Four days into the new job, while taking a tour of the renovations at Bissonnet and the construction of the new High School, I thought, "Oh, dear. My first communication to Post Oak parents will be an email saying that the start of school will be delayed because construction is not complete." It was going to be an interesting summer.

# Everyone could see there was so much change going on.

To everyone's delight (and relief), school began on schedule, classrooms and offices were ready for occupancy, and students walked into their new spaces with awe-inspired faces. It was quite a feat to get all construction completed over the summer, but it was not Post Oak's only challenge. The Middle School program, housed at Bissonnet for 20+ years, moved over to the Museum District to join their adolescent peers. The logistics around everything from buses and after-school care to physical fitness classes and community service took a lot of trial and error and out-of-the-box thinking. All faculty on both campuses adjusted quickly to make Post Oak ready for the students, and it had been a daunting task.

And there was more. Post Oak had a busy year ahead. The Big Work Capital Campaign had concluded and there was the celebration of our major donors in August, and the Grand Opening of the Museum District Campus in October, not to mention the volunteer work that was happening as planning for the

Work in Middle School inspires intellectual curiosity through practical, hands-on, and real-world activities.



Biennial Gala was in full force. If that wasn't enough, the 10-year reaccreditation visit for Post Oak as a member of the Independent School Association of the Southwest (ISAS) was scheduled for March.

It was a flurry of activity, but a great opportunity for a new head of school to dive in head first. Building relationships with students, parents, and staff was eased by the busy schedule, meetings, and events lined up at the beginning of the year. It was a total immersion into all aspects of this dynamic community. The reaccreditation process gave me the opportunity to listen to faculty, administration, and staff as they told me about our strengths and where we can improve. The Gala gave me the opportunity to witness the work of our truly dedicated parent volunteers and the big-heartedness of our community. Parent education events allowed me to connect with the current families about the Montessori vision of education. I was fortunate enough to meet and thank in person all those whose generosity made the new High School building and renovations a reality.

### And the students.

Amidst all the changes and activity, students entered each school day to find their learning environment ready for them, their teachers eager to share something new, and their friends ready to greet them. They engaged in their life at Post Oak peacefully and productively as they always have, because the authentic Montessori program remained fully intact. At its core, Post Oak was still Post Oak despite construction, changing logistics, and a new head of school. For students, it was business as usual, and the comfort and security of their classroom and learning environments allowed them to carry on their exploration and discovery, their growth and development, without interruption. As it has been for 54 years, the focus of The Post Oak School continues to be the children. No change in personnel or paint color can change that.

There is much to look forward to: the board's strategic planning work to envision the next five years; focusing on the children and programs to further our mission; sustaining excellent outcomes; and enhancing our culture and community to benefit each student. All of this makes me truly excited about the future of The Post Oak School. – Maura Joyce, Head of School

| We are all more engaged in an activity when we enjoy it. Post Oak puts this into practice every day.













# **Our Volunteer Community**

A checklist summarizing the beginning of the 2016–2017 school year was impressive (and a little overwhelming): building construction was almost complete; renovated environments needed finishing touches; a new head of school was taking the reins; our ten-year reaccreditation review was in progress; and several major events were in the works. In spite of all these changes, students moved with ease into the new environments, gracefully adjusting into the school year.

Even with so much activity, Post Oak's volunteer community was ready. The year started with a Big Work Major Donors' Evening of Thanks along with a

Grand Opening at our Museum District Campus. Both events celebrated the commitment of our community and the excitement of new construction. The Parent Association kicked off the year with the annual POPA Dinner in September at the Junior League, which had a record-breaking crowd. In October, Family Fun Day entertained students from YCC through High School and was another allcommunity hit; Grandparents Days brought in relatives and friends to both campuses to view and experience Montessori in action; and, our annual Book Fair filled Brazos Bookstore with students of all ages and then filled the shelves of our libraries with new books. The grand event of the year was our Biennial Gala, with the theme "The Great Gatsby." Post Oak parents, Jennifer Chavis and Stelli Parsapour were our high-spirited co-chairs, committed to making this soirée "one great party!" Months of preparation went into the countless details of this event. Toddlers up through twelfth graders created incredible works of art that were bid on at the live (and raucous) auction that night. Multiple committees worked on underwriting, decorations, auction, and more, which led to an incredibly successful event both in funds collected—more than \$600,000, a record breaker—and in the unanimous sentiment that it was one heck of a party!

All of this volunteer effort built community and raised funds to support the school in a variety of ways. Our Biennial Gala, Annual Fund, and major gift contributions brought in unrestricted gifts that allowed the school to do things like increase our financial aid allocation; help with the purchase of the new 71-seat passenger bus; install new rooftop HVAC units; help cover the cost of a new roof on the Bissonnet Campus; install gardens for Elementary and Middle School; purchase new equipment for our High School tinkerlab; provide woodworking tools for our Middle School; increase our professional development budget; and install much needed window blinds at the High School.

On behalf of faculty and administration, I offer sincere thanks for the generous support and strong commitment that this community has given The Post Oak School. We are all in service together to the students of Post Oak.















# 2016-2017 Financial Report

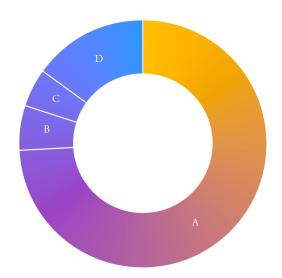
### Operating Income

A. 75% Tuition and Fees

B. 6% Fundraising, Net

C. 5% All Other Operating

D. 15% Net Assets Released from Restriction



## Operating Expenses

A. 59% Salaries and Benefits

B. 10% Financial Aid

C. 10% Other Program Expenses

D. 14% Plant Expenses

E. 7% General Administration



The financial stability of the Post Oak School continued to grow during the 2016–2017 school year. With the help of the Capital Campaign, the Post Oak High School building was completed and held its first year of school. The School experienced an overall increase in enrollment to 492 in 2016–2017 from 474 students the previous year. The overall financial success for the 2016–2017 School year was driven by positive budget variances in the operating budget and an extremely successful Gala and annual fund. The School maintains a strong working capital position throughout the year due to the prompt collection of tuition and fees in advance of the need for funds to operate the School. The School continued to build cash reserves during 2016–2017 and kept with its commitment to the Post Oak School Endowment by transfering \$40,612 into the fund at the end of the school year. The market value of the endowment was \$2,194,016 at June 30, 2017.

# Operating Income Statement

Income	2016	6–2017 Total
Tuition and Fees	\$	10,444,742
Fundraising, Net		828,807
All Other Operating		730,982
Net Assets Released from Restriction		2,043,611
TOTAL REVENUE	\$	14,048,142
Expenses		
Salaries and Benefits	\$	6,839,182
Financial Aid		1,161,492
Other Program Expenses		1,156,258
Plant Expenses	 	1,557,210
General Administration		823,787
Transfer to Endowment		40,612
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$	11,578,541

# Operating Balance Sheet

Fund Balance

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE

Net Assets

Assets	2016–2017 To	tal
Cash and Investments	\$ 6,333,	818
Receivables	103,2	294
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	134,9	364
Fixed Assets	17,004,3	392
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 23,576,4	67
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ 129,7	754
Accrued Salaries and Benefits	293,5	508
Deferred Income	2,280,8	303
Other Accrued Expenses	53,5	502
Notes Payable	7,446,	,174
Due to Temporary Restricted Funds	199,7	727
Fair Value of Derivative Agreement	178,4	189
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 10,581,9	56

23,576,467



# Post Oak Alumni Updates

## '80s

#### **Payal Chana**

This past summer, Payal Chana traveled with her family to Honduras, Mexico, and Spain, and she worked with her husband, Dev, in the family diamond jewelry business. The Chanas are a legacy family at Post Oak, where their daughter, Dia (3), is a Primary student.

#### **Mark Christopher**

ATTENDED THROUGH 3RD GRADE

Last January, Mark Christopher and his wife welcomed 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

Since graduation from The University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor of business degree in marketing, Carlin has enjoyed a 17-year career with AIG. For the past three years, she focused her efforts streamlining and improving AIG's internal meetings and events approval, management, and oversight processes. This new, part-time role allows her to focus more time on her two children, Brady (6) and Taylor (5), both of whom are proud Post Oak students. In addition to professional and family roles, Carlin founded Page-One Meetings and Events, which provides non-profit work for charities in Houston.

## '00s

#### Lauren Fondren

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2001

Lauren graduated from Middlebury College in 2009 with a degree in theater (directing). While in school, she studied Arabic and spent a year living in Alexandria, Egypt. After graduation, she worked with the State Department as a Foreign Service Officer, and she was assigned to the U.S. Consulate in Ciudad Juarez, where she lived from 2012 to 2014. She also completed a temporary assignment at the embassy in Cairo, Egypt. She left the State Department in 2014 after getting engaged to another Foreign Service Officer. From 2014 to 2016, she and her partner lived in Dusseldorf, Germany, during her partner's tour of duty. She married in April 2016, with Post Oak alums Amelinda (Melanson) Hendrickx and Erika Mathre-Peters in attendance. In September 2016, Lauren moved to New York City, where she is enrolled in Columbia's MFA film program.

#### **Brittany Fondren**

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2003

Brittany Fondren started a new business in Houston as a freelance grant and content writer, in which she does anything from writing grants to designing websites (www.brittanyfondren.com). Brittany is currently 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. She is 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. She is studying for her GRE and plans to attend grad school to earn an MFA in creative writing.

#### William Wawro

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2003

William Wawro works at a post-production company in Los Angeles that makes trailers and commercials for movies. He recently traveled to Washington, D.C. where his short film, ESCAPE, was screened at the G.I. Film Festival. ESCAPE was written, directed, edited,

and produced by William with the help of friends. The film was well received, and he looks forward to hearing from other festivals. He is proud of the short and is happy to share it with the world. To view the film, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= lt2cudqkTUs&feature=youtu.be

#### Jennie Kamin

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2004

Jennie Kamin recently graduated from the Columbia School of Journalism with a master's degree. She is currently working at CBS on a project to launch a new documentary series.

#### Lara Brenner

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2005

Lara Brenner is completing a master's degree in wildlife biology at Missoula University, Montana, studying the behavior of cougars. She attended Carleton College for her undergraduate degree.

#### Joshua Brenner

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2009

Joshua Brenner recently graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, Plan 2, with a BA and BS in Biology. This fall, he started graduate school at the University of California, San Francisco, where he is working on a PhD in neuroscience.

### '10s

#### Sarah Al-Shaikh

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2010

Sarah Al-Shaikh is a senior at St. Edward's University in Austin, where she is majoring in global studies with a focus on the Middle East. While at St. Edward's, Sarah completed a service experience in Bangalore, India, where she and ten students worked at an orphanage. Sarah cites this as one of the best experiences of her life. She is currently completing a study abroad experience in Morocco, after which she will return to Austin to complete her studies.

#### **Karis Baker**

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2010

Karis Baker is a junior majoring in psychology with a minor in biological sciences at the University of California, Irvine. She is working part-time as an ABA therapist, which involves working with children with autism or children who are on or suspected to be on the spectrum. At school, Karis is the secretary for the club lacrosse team, which competes in Division II.

### Amelia Eskeridge

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2010

Amelia Eskeridge is a senior at Southern Methodist University, where she is studying management science and Spanish. This summer, Amelia worked for Citi in their Technology Infrastructure Analysis program. She is a member of an a capella group on campus and serves as a tour guide and resident assistant.

#### **Fabiana Scionti**

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2010

Fabiana Scionti is majoring in mechanical engineering at Boston University. Her interests in finance and MBA programs led her to an internship in New York City at Ernst & Young within their Advisory department working with investment banks. This experience inspired her to travel abroad to Milan, Italy, and she took additional courses at Bocconi in that realm. She is an intern at Goldman Sachs in their Risk Division, and she attended Harvard Business School's HBS Peek Weekend, where she received an introduction to the MBA program and case method. She has had the opportunity to travel to many different countries while abroad and learn Italian.

### **Allison Wawro**

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2010

Allison Wawro is a senior biopsychology major at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Originally a physics major, Allison switched to biopsychology to combine her interests in hard and social sciences. This summer, she completed an internship at the Baylor College of Medicine Center for Medical Ethics and Health Policy.

#### **Benjamin Brenner**

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2011

Benjamin Brenner is a biomedical engineer major at Purdue University. This summer, he worked at a lab in the Purdue Veterinary Pathology department, where he tracked the migration of T-cells using confocal microscopy.

#### **Daniel Brenner**

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2011

Daniel Brenner is a junior at Case Western Reserve University, where he majors in biomedical engineering in the biomechanics track. His research focuses on engineering collagen scaffolds on which to grow tenocytes and other tendon-specific cells. His 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. Daniel is a photographer for the school newspaper.

### **Amy Pascoe**

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2011

Amy Pascoe is a junior at Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She is majoring in history with minors in German and philosophy. This semester, she is living in Macalester's "German House," a residential living experience on campus with an immersive language focus. She hopes to improve her German before studying abroad in Europe for six months in the spring, where she will spend two months in Berlin and four months in Vienna, learning the language and studying modern European history.

### **Thomas Rasor**

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2011

Thomas Rasor is a junior at Oklahoma State University, where he is majoring in economics.

#### **Carter Green**

8TH GRADE CLASS OF 2012

Carter Green attended The Kinkaid School after Post Oak. He is in his second year at the Rhode Island School of Design.

#### **Emily Randall**

12TH GRADE CLASS OF 2016

After interning at the Houston Museum of Natural Science while at Post Oak, Emily is continuing studies in geology at the College of Wooster. Last year, she received a scholarship in recognition for her freshman writing, which was chosen by all first-year seminar teachers. She was on the Dean's List both semesters with a 4.0 GPA.

She recently completed a five-week research project in the Tree Ring Lab working on tree cores from Glacier Bay, Alaska. She wrote a report to send to the National Park Service and hopes to publish her work. This summer, she visited Utah to do field work in the Ice Springs Volcanic Field to date a sequence of previously undated volcanic eruptions. She will be creating an abstract and poster to present at the annual Geological Society of America meeting in the fall. To read more about Emily's project and view pictures, visit: woostergeologists. scotblogs.wooster.edu















# College Admissions

The 2017 graduating class of Post Oak School was accepted to the following colleges and universities.

The group of seniors received more than \$2.1 million in merit and aid scholarships.

Academy of Art University The American University of Paris Auburn University Baylor University California College of the Arts Carleton College\* Colorado School of Mines Columbia College Chicago Eckerd College Emory University\* The Evergreen State College Goucher College Guilford College Hampshire College Hendrix College Ithaca College Louisiana State University Lynn University Marlboro College\* Montserrat College of Art Mount Holyoke College Pratt Institute Rhode Island School of Design\*

Rice University\* The University of Colorado, Boulder University of Denver University of Houston University of South Carolina Honors College The University of Texas at Austin\* Saint Mary's College of California Stephen F. Austin State University St. Lawrence University Texas Tech University\* Trinity University\* University of Puget Sound University of Southern California Wake Forest University

The mission of The Post Oak School is to prepare an outstanding Montessori environment that fosters collaboration, cooperation and peace, and to provide experiences that promote curiosity, inquiry and engagement. Designed according to the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual characteristics and needs of the learner, our methods guide and nurture each individual from infancy to adulthood. The school's approach is grounded in the principles of AMI Montessori education.

<sup>\*</sup>Deontes school attending

