

FALL 2025

# ROOTS

THE POST OAK SCHOOL MAGAZINE



World History

Smithsonian

Seymour Simon  
VOLCANOES

## OUR MISSION

The Post Oak School is a diverse and welcoming Montessori community that honors and guides lifelong learners as they create their own bold pathways in leading purposeful lives.

## HEAD OF SCHOOL

Maura Joyce P '20

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## PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2025

The magazine is published annually for current families; grandparents; alumni and their families; and friends.

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### *Special Note:*

P after a name designates that person as a Post Oak parent and indicates their child's graduation year.

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*The*  
POST OAK  
SCHOOL

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Welcome to the fourth issue of *Roots*,  
The Post Oak School's annual magazine.

Post Oak students and their families belong to a group of individuals who come together on their learning journeys for the good of others. If you have a story to share about your time at Post Oak or your child's experience here, we'd love to hear it.

Please email us at [MarCom@PostOakSchool.org](mailto:MarCom@PostOakSchool.org).

—The Post Oak School Marketing & Communications Team





# A HOPE AND A PROMISE

BY MAURA JOYCE, MEd  
HEAD OF SCHOOL, P '20

One of my favorite Elementary Montessori lessons is *the fundamental human needs*. It is a series of charts that describes both the physical and spiritual needs of humans. The lesson emphasizes that beyond food, water, and shelter, humans need love, purpose, and **hope**.

Hope is at the center of the work we do at Post Oak. Every day we choose to believe in the possibility of a better tomorrow...and then we get to watch children create it.

Often, we use the word “hope” to express a wish: *I hope it does not rain*. We do not control the weather, and there is nothing we can do to affect the outcome. Other times, we use hope to express our optimism, but optimism is a feeling, and we do not have *full* control over our feelings.

There is a science of hope. It has been studied extensively in recent decades by psychologists who define hope as a mindset that *the future can be better and that we have the power to make it better*. Therefore, hope can be learned, practiced, and spread. Unlike wishful thinking and optimism, it requires several things: a clear understanding of where we are, a goal, agency to make a change, and a pathway or strategy towards that goal.

At Post Oak, hope connects the growth and development of our students along our learning arc—from age one through their senior year. Our intentional environments are set up for children to be in charge of the path forward to reach their goals. They are led by adults who are trained to see the potential in each student and help them realize it.



On any given day, I am able to observe:

- Our youngest toddlers progress from first-day tears to waving goodbye with confidence.
- Primary students joyfully guide their younger classmates down the hallway.
- Elementary students plant a garden of flowers and vegetables.
- Middle School students debate the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- High School students discuss real-world issues with maturity, curiosity, and compassion—even when they don't all agree.

This is what hope looks like in action. Students have the opportunity to work from discomfort to confidence, discover and wonder, create and plan for the future, and engage in hard conversations along their path to a better world. Hope is woven into the fabric of who we are at Post Oak, as Maria Montessori's words are brought to life each day in our school: *The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind.* 🌱



Scan this QR code to read more about the Science of Hope.

# POST OAK STUDENTS HONORED FOR CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Recognized by the City of Houston for transforming Bell Park into a vibrant community space and inspiring others through service and stewardship.

Post Oak High School students were honored by the City of Houston for their work to beautify Bell Park. Councilwoman Abbie Kamin declared May 10, 2025, “The Post Oak School Student Volunteers Day.”

The commendation praised students for:

- Enhancing the natural beauty and welcoming environment of Bell Park;
- Building partnerships between the neighborhood and the City of Houston;
- Demonstrating the power of youth engagement in civic life;
- Serving as a model for environmental stewardship and community-driven action.

Just a block from our Museum District Campus, Bell Park is a 1.15-acre green space with a pond, pathways, plantings, seating, and majestic oak trees. Two years ago, Post Oak students began volunteering weekly—starting with weeding and cleanup, then taking on creative projects like painting utility boxes with bluebonnets.

Along the way, they planted flowers, hosted service days, and collaborated with neighbors and city officials. As one student shared, “It was such a gratifying and amazing experience for me!”

This recognition celebrates not only their hard work but also the spirit of civic responsibility that defines Post Oak students. 🌱



Students from the Class of 2025, along with their advisor, Comer Wadzeck, were commended by the City of Houston for their role in beautifying Bell Park.



# GARDEN CLUB

By  
Ridley  
Armenta  
Class of 2028

Garden Club isn't just about plants. It is about friends, hard work, growth, and sustainability. Through our shared love of gardening, we grow both vegetables and meaningful friendships. Together, we watch something we've worked so hard for grow and thrive under our care.

A typical Garden Club day is full of exuberance and teamwork. We begin with a team huddle, where we lay out our game plans and identify what the plants need most for the day. After the group huddle, we check the garden beds, assess the condition of the plants, water them if they're thirsty, and provide them with all the necessary care. Depending on the season, we might spend the afternoon weeding, replanting seedlings, or harvesting fresh crops.

One of the most memorable events was harvesting the sweet potatoes. We gathered more than a hundred pounds of them! Once harvested, we prepped the potatoes by letting them cure out in the sun for fourteen days to sweeten them up. After the curing process, our team washed, cut, and cooked all the potatoes to make delicious, crispy sweet potato fries, making our hard work feel all the more rewarding!

What I love most about this community is all the hard work everyone brings. In the short time I have been at Post Oak, the Garden Club has made me feel so welcome. The friendships I've formed here are incredible, and working side by side has brought us even closer together.

Another important aspect of the Garden Club is our partnership with Urban Harvest is a Houston-wide organization dedicated to transforming and educating communities toward sustainability. All of our seeds and plants come from the amazing people at Urban Harvest. They inspire us to care for the environment and give back to our community.

Garden Club isn't just about growing plants, it's about growing together! 🌱



# FOR THE LOVE OF

# HumanKind

BY EVAN WILDSTEIN, P '41  
ADVANCEMENT DIRECTOR



I want you to take a brief journey with your imagination. Visualize Houston without its 600+ parks and green spaces. Without its thriving arts and cultural scene. Without its critical nonprofit ecosystem. Now, imagine closer to home. Visualize the Post Oak School—both campuses. Imagine teachers without expert Montessori training. Imagine families without financial aid. Imagine the Bissonnet Campus without the back-field turf or safety fence. Imagine the Museum District Campus not being there at all.

If you've been in Houston—or at Post Oak—any time at all, you probably *can't* imagine all of that, let alone *any* of that. And do you know why? Because it's all part of the fabric of Houston. A fabric made largely possible by one specific thing.

Philanthropy.

*Philanthropy* comes from the Greek words *philein* (“to love”) and *anthropos* (“humankind”). It is an act of giving that stems from one's love for humanity. Here at Post Oak, you may think of philanthropy simply as your annual donation to the Post Oak Fund. Or your support of the gala. For those gifts, the school can never express enough gratitude.

However, philanthropy is also a gift of time, talent, and other resources. Post Oak parents and families contribute their energy to their child's classes as room parents, during monthly POPA Brew & Do gatherings, volunteering for community service, supporting class and campus gardening efforts, and countless other acts. Whether they have one hour per week or one hour per school year, they show up. Because they believe in this institution.

There's a history and science to this—one that's unique to the United States. In the mid-nineteenth century, French political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville said of Americans, “I have seen Americans making great and sincere sacrifices for the key common good and a hundred times I have noticed that, when needs be, they almost always gave each other faithful support.” He was on to something. More recent research<sup>1</sup> confirms altruism is fantastic—for the receiver and the giver.



“Post Oak prepares students for their future, not our past.

We teach them how to learn.”

Maura Joyce, MEd  
Head of School, P '20

Giving is an output that significantly influences outcomes. On more than one occasion, I have heard our Head of School, Maura Joyce, say something profound and simple: “Post Oak prepares students for their future, not our past. We teach them how to learn.” As a staff member and parent, I completely understand this. And when I speak with the hundreds of parents, grandparents, and others who traverse both campuses, they all share Maura’s sentiment. And it is the fundamental reason they are philanthropic with Post Oak, in all the different ways.

That spirit is infectious and deeply embodied by Post Oak students, too. Since I arrived at the school in 2024, I’ve had the great pleasure of speaking with Upper Elementary classes about the idea of philanthropy. Those students jump at the chance to share their love of humankind by creating small, yet comprehensive, fundraising projects to support vital nonprofit organizations in Houston and beyond—like Galveston Bay Foundation, Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, and others.

When I asked a particular group of students why they chose to support Galveston Bay Foundation, I was enamored with their response. “The Foundation takes care of animals and marine life in Galveston. And if all that is better and safer, then we will be better and safer.”

It seems the Post Oak student apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.

This is the essence of what makes Post Oak—and Houston—so remarkable. It’s a community where philanthropy is more than an act. It’s a shared belief in shaping a better future. As we look ahead, the lessons our

students are learning now—about generosity, connection, influence, and learning how to learn—will guide them as they become the changemakers of tomorrow.

That’s the beauty of philanthropy. It not only sustains the present, but builds the future. I invite you to keep imagining, giving, and growing with us. For the love of humankind.

Here are a few ways families share their spirit of generosity in support of Post Oak students.

Make a gift to the Post Oak Fund! It’s fully tax-deductible, sure, but that’s not why the community supports the school. They make these gifts because they believe in the spirit of our mission to honor and guide lifelong learners as they create their own bold pathways.

Celebrate with other families at the Gala! Every other year, hundreds of families gather at Hotel ZaZa to dance and raise funds for the school. The 2026 event, Popacabana, will take place on March 21, and promises to be a terrific night for all.

Volunteer your time! Whether it’s gardening, supporting the library, or helping at events like Family Fun Day, Grand Friends Day, Book Fair, and more, Post Oak families show up and make big things happen. 🌱



Scan this QR code to read more from Science Direct about altruism.

# Federico Sanchez

Class of 2026

Federico Sanchez began his education at Post Oak when he was eighteen months old. Now eighteen years old and in his senior year of high school, he recently spoke at The Post Oak Experience (a parent education event) about his life here.

Ambassador

From my earliest days in the Young Children's Community, I was taught to navigate my surroundings with independence and confidence. The skills I learned then—such as pouring my own water and moving through a classroom—were aspects of daily life. However, they marked the beginning of my learning to navigate my surroundings—an essential life skill.

In Primary and Elementary school, my educational experience went far beyond fact-memorization and reading comprehension. At those stages, I developed a sense of self, practiced empathy, and learned to share spaces with others. For me, Elementary school was the most significant period of self-discovery. The lessons I gained from both teachers and peers continue to shape who I am—and will stay with me long after I graduate.

Middle School at Post Oak, although only two years in duration, was a period of synthesizing what I learned in the previous decade. Academic rigor was complemented by a focus on community service, leadership, and learning beyond the classroom—ultimately, preparing me for the final stage.

Finally, there's High School. My schedule is filled with plenty of homework, extracurricular activities, and international travel during special terms. These experiences, of course, prepare me for college, but more importantly, they prepare me to adapt anywhere.

“Driven by curiosity and not competition, we're exploring paths in High School that reflect our authentic passions.”

Through internships—such as my experience with the City of Houston—and student leadership, Post Oakers continuously immerse ourselves in both new and unfamiliar environments, preparing us for independent lives in college and beyond.

Many schools were built on a factory model from the Industrial Revolution. You enter high school at

the age of fourteen, and after four years, you emerge as a polished version of yourself. At Post Oak, there's no recipe for production or a single mold.

If I judged the Post Oak by those cookie-cutter standards, I'd call it a pretty bad factory. My time here has made me realize that this school develops



very unique individuals. And, this individuality has been my favorite part: motivated by personal interests, we're improving the communities we love. Driven by curiosity and not competition, we're exploring paths in High School that reflect our authentic passions.

The largest catalyst in my educational journey, however, has been exposure to diverse perspectives. Whether in frequent discussions or learning with and from my peers, diverse perspectives are an intrinsic element of the student experience. In a world where empathy often feels rare and disagreement is feared, Post Oak students model it daily—actively listening, debating respectfully, and pushing each other to think critically.

I know these lessons will propel me far beyond these walls. I am grateful to leave Post Oak not as a polished product of a factory, but as a person shaped by curiosity, independence, and a community that celebrates difference. ☺

# The Power

## of Secure Relationships in Supporting Early Childhood Development

BY EMILY HANSEN  
EARLY CHILDHOOD OUTREACH SPECIALIST, P '25, '28



“Love is more than the electricity which lightens our darkness, more than the etheric waves that transmit our voices across space, more than any of the energies that man has discovered and learned to use. Of all things, love is the most potent.”

Dr. Maria Montessori  
*The Absorbent Mind*

Humans are social beings. Meaningful relationships and feelings of connectedness shape our experiences, influence our feelings about ourselves, and impact our overall sense of belonging, mental well-being, and joy. For the youngest children, trusting relationships provide security, influence how their brains are wired, how they cope with stress, and how they learn. This article will explore the effects of secure relationships on early childhood learning and how these important connections impact every aspect of development.

Dr. Maria Montessori emphasized the role of the prepared environment in the child's process of self-construction and adaptation. From all of the experiences in the environment, the child builds the architecture of their brain and develops their personality. This environment includes both physical and psychological aspects. Montessori saw the adult's role as a guide and support, someone who could observe and understand the child's needs and then prepare an environment to meet them. The relationship between the child and adult would be one of mutual respect and warmth. The psychological, or human, environment must be as intentionally and thoughtfully prepared as the physical space.

A warm, nurturing environment, where children feel safe and fully accepted, is imperative for optimal development. When secure relationships are prioritized, children will thrive. Children must feel safe and loved to learn and reach their fullest potential. When the human environment meets children's fundamental psychological and relational needs, they can fully benefit from their interactions in the physical environment and their social experiences there. Let's look at how nurturing relationships affect the way the brain wires and how these connections support cognitive development and social and emotional learning.

According to the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, human connection and interaction are the "active ingredients" in a child's environment. They are the only aspects of the environment that are responsive and adaptable, changing based on the child's cues, communication, states of mind, and their interests and needs in the moment.

Relationships give the child valuable feedback about the world in which they live, shaping the child's understanding and perception of their place in it. Experts in child development and neuroscience emphasize the importance of "serve-and-return" interactions between a child and their caregivers.

Through back-and-forth interactions, the child's brain creates new meaning, deepens understanding, and solidifies neural pathways. Serve-and-return interactions are crucial from the moment of birth and continue to play a vital role throughout early childhood. Enjoyable, responsive relationships with caregivers also give children important information about themselves, helping to form their sense of identity. Through meaningful human connection, children receive the message that who they are, and what they do, think, and say are important.



When children have secure relationships with their parents and caregivers, they develop healthy stress response systems, which help them navigate challenges and return to a state that is open and receptive to learning. The human brain constantly gains knowledge about the world through the senses, scanning for potential threats, and responding to internal bodily needs. Stable relationships provide the sturdy framework from which cognition can grow. The nervous system and brain state dictate what the person must focus on. If we detect safety, we are open and receptive to learning. If we detect a threat, we go into survival mode and a protective state of mind and body. Positive relationships provide the safety that the brain and nervous system need to feel regulated and be able to learn and grow optimally. Children with predictable, stable relationships are free to explore, discover new things, and grow in their independence.

Young children are in the process of developing an understanding of their emotions and the emotions of others. Through close, trusting relationships, children have a model of how to express and move through instances of emotion. Emotional regulation is not something we learn in isolation. When sent to a "calm down" space, put in a time-out, or asked to self-regulate alone, children learn to stuff or hide their feelings to gain the acceptance of others. For healthy emotional development to unfold, children need connection

and empathy to know that their emotions are normal, acceptable, and part of being human. Through relationships, children learn how to identify, express, and process any emotions that arise. Interactions with trusted adults give meaning to the child's new and sometimes overwhelming emotional experiences. To cultivate self-regulation, children must experience repeated co-regulation with calm, nurturing adults.

The human environment and all the relationships a child has shape their social development. Through their relationships, children learn what it means to be human in their particular family, time, place, and culture. They will learn how people communicate, how love is demonstrated, how we help one another, and how to work through challenges. Dr. Bruce Perry put it simply in his book, *What Happened to You*, when he said, "How we were loved at the beginning of our lives is how we will love others."

The importance of the human environment and the relationships a child forms in the first years of life cannot be overstated. Whether you are a parent, caregiver, or Montessori guide, I encourage you to prioritize connection, social-emotional well-being, and warm, responsive care. Here are a few ways to build secure relationships with children:

- Engage in serve-and-return interactions often
- Share enjoyment—have fun together, delight in the children, and be attentive to their interests
- Validate children's emotions and experiences
- Practice co-regulation in challenging moments
- Respond warmly to children's bids for affection

Children's social interactions are just as important as the physical materials they explore. The quality of our human connections directly affects the quality of our lives. For the youngest children, the relationships they form have a lifelong impact on how their brains are wired, their overall well-being, and their capacity to learn. Maya Angelou says it beautifully, "I have learned that people will forget what you said, they will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel." 🐦



*Emily's article originally appeared in Association Montessori Internationale's online blog and can be accessed via this QR code. It is reprinted with permission.*

# A Voice FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



With more than twenty years of experience in Montessori education, Emily Hansen brings deep expertise and passion to her work at Post Oak. She joined Post Oak in 2004, serving as a lead guide first in Primary and then in our Young Children's Community. An entire generation of children has grown up in her care!

Emily recently moved into a new leadership position as our first-ever Early Childhood Outreach Specialist. In this role, as she promotes and supports Post Oak's early childhood program, she is a voice and hands-on guide for early childhood development. Emily offers adult-child classes, works with families applying for admission to our school, and supports the early childhood program faculty—both in the classroom and by providing training.

Emily holds an MEd in Montessori Education from Loyola University and is an AMI Trainer at the 0–3 level. She also is a proud Post Oak parent of a high school student and an alumna.

# CELEBRATING ACADEMIC SUCCESS: POST OAK ASSESSMENT RESULTS

BY KEVIN McLEAN  
ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

At Post Oak, we know that Montessori education isn't driven by test scores—and that's something we're proud of. Our focus is on nurturing independence, curiosity, and character, not teaching to a test. That said, we also recognize that families want to understand how their children's academic growth compares to that of their peers in traditional schools. The answer? The average Post Oak student scores significantly higher than the national average for both public and independent school students. So yes, we are a school—but we're so much more. We're shaping thoughtful, capable, and compassionate human beings prepared for life beyond the classroom.

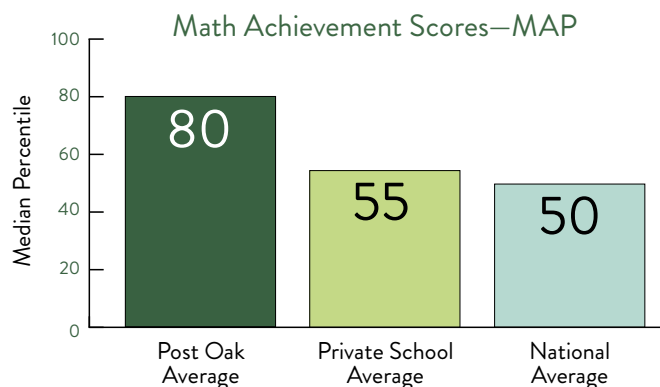
## Why Testing Matters at Post Oak

Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) testing begins in third grade, when students are developing essential skills such as logical reasoning, sustained attention, and problem-solving. These emerging abilities, combined with advancing executive functions, allow students to engage effectively with the test's adaptive format—providing reliable, meaningful insights into their learning progress.

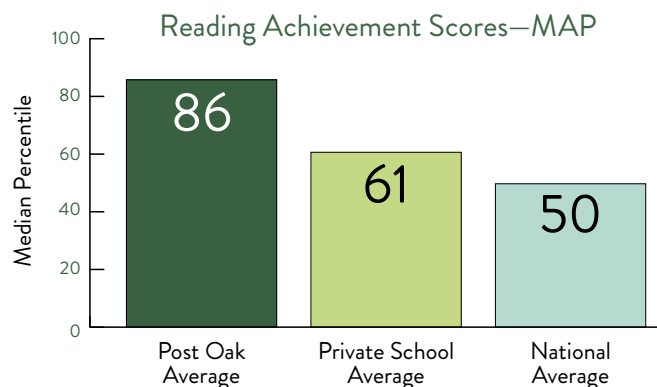
## Outstanding Academic Results

We're thrilled to share the results of our Fall 2025 Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments. These results confirm that Post Oak's rigorous Montessori curriculum equips students to excel academically, think critically, and solve problems with confidence.

## Elementary (Grades 3–6): Math and Reading Highlights

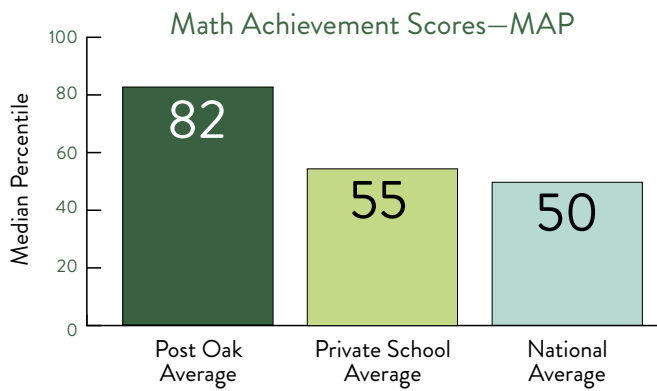


**MATH:** Median score at the **80th percentile**, reflecting strong problem-solving skills and conceptual understanding.

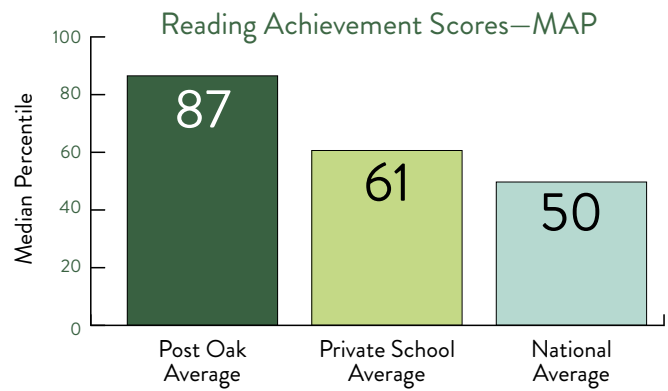


**READING:** Median score at the **86th percentile**, showcasing advanced comprehension and a love for reading aligned with Montessori values.

## Middle School (Grades 7–8): Math and Reading Highlights

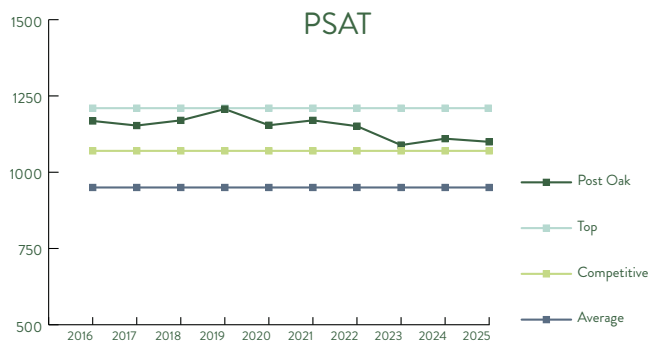


**MATH:** Median score at the **82nd percentile**, demonstrating readiness for high school-level work.



**READING:** Median score at the **87th percentile**, indicating advanced critical thinking and analytical reading skills.

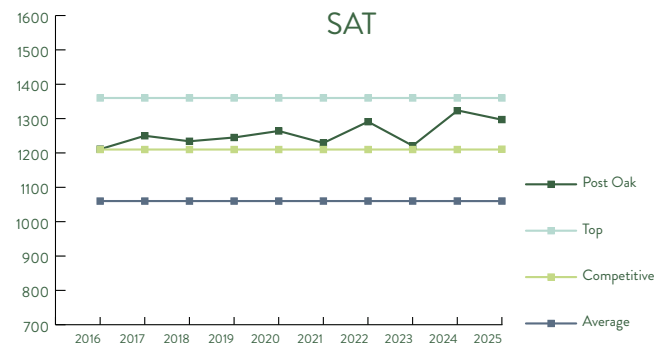
## Early High School (Grades 9–10): PSAT and SAT



**PSAT:** The average PSAT score for Post Oak Students from 2016–2025 is 1152.

The average Post Oak student places at the **85th percentile** in the National Representative Percentile ranking.

*National average data from Research.CollegeBoard.org*



**SAT:** The average SAT score for Post Oak Students from 2016–2025 is 1253.

The average Post Oak student places at the **86th percentile** in the National Representative Percentile ranking.

*National average data from Research.CollegeBoard.org*

## The Post Oak Advantage: IB + Montessori

Our commitment to academic excellence extends through High School, where every student in grades 11 and 12—not just a select few—engages in the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum. This rigorous program serves as the baseline for all Post Oak students, ensuring they graduate with a globally recognized academic foundation. The strength of the IB program is instantly recognized by college admissions offices, and when those departments see that an applicant has both IB and Montessori experience, they are eager to talk. Combined with our students’

consistently high performance on college entrance exams, this dual advantage sets Post Oak graduates apart and opens doors to exceptional opportunities.

## How We Use MAP Insights

MAP data provides teachers with detailed, individualized insights—identifying mastered concepts and areas for growth. This allows us to personalize instruction, ensuring students are supported where needed and challenged to reach new heights.

## Beyond Test Scores

While we celebrate these strong academic results, a Montessori education is about more than numbers. At Post Oak, we nurture independence, critical thinking, collaboration, and a lifelong love of learning. Through hands-on, real-world experiences, students deepen understanding, foster curiosity, and prepare for purposeful lives. We find joy in learning and pursue excellence every day.

## IB for All: A Global Standard Meets Montessori Excellence

At Post Oak, every student in grades 11 and 12 participates in the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum—not just a select few. This rigorous, globally recognized program is the foundation of our high school experience. When college admissions officers see an applicant with both IB and Montessori credentials, they take notice. It's a combination that signals academic strength, independence, and a readiness to thrive in higher education and beyond.







# CELEBRATING A DECADE OF GRADUATES:

## POST OAK'S CLASS OF 2025 SHINES BRIGHT!

Introducing Post Oak School's newest alumni, the Class of 2025! Their commencement took place on Friday, May 23, at Rice University's Hamman Hall.

We are deeply grateful to John Long, former Head of School, whose vision shaped what a Montessori high school in the Museum District could become. He presided over our very first commencement and, in honor of our tenth graduating class, returned to deliver an inspiring address.

Joining him on the dais were Head of School Maura Joyce, High School Director James Quillin, and Board of Trustees Chair Whitney Walsh, each sharing words of wisdom and encouragement with the graduates. The ceremony concluded with a heartfelt speech from Owen Siegel, selected by his peers as class representative.

Now, these twenty-two graduates have embarked on their college journeys, equipped with the knowledge, confidence, and experiences gained at Post Oak. Collectively, the Class of 2025 earned an impressive \$4.86 million in merit scholarship offers—a testament to their dedication and achievement.

We can't wait to see the incredible paths they will forge as lifelong learners and leaders! 🎓





# Congratulations, Class of 2025!

## Where Are They Now?

- Beloit College
- Colorado College
- Connecticut College
- Drexel University
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Prescott
- Fordham University
- Kansas State University
- Pepperdine University
- Rice University
- Savannah College of Art and Design
- Texas A&M University
- Texas Christian University
- Texas Tech University
- University of California, Irvine
- University of Houston
- University of Maryland, College Park
- University of Minnesota Twin Cities
- The University of Texas at Austin
- The University of Texas at San Antonio
- Western Carolina University

# Alumni Updates

Each year we reach out to our alums, asking them to share news from life after Post Oak. We're grateful to members of the National Honor Society who connected with our alumni far and wide. Alums, if you have news to share, please visit [PostOakSchool.org/Alumni](https://PostOakSchool.org/Alumni). We'd love to hear from you!

## 2020–2025

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### Camila Yengle '25



Since I've graduated, I've been enjoying my time in Austin attending UT Austin!

### Vee Atkinson '23



I am in my third year at Colgate University, pursuing a major in political science. Thus far, I currently am a co-leader for the Habitat for Humanity Club, a Senator

for student government, a volunteer bike mechanic at a local bike shop, and a radio show host at WRCU. I have participated in Colgate's Sophomore Residential Seminar program, which was an education class focused on the experience of immigrant students and the lived experiences of refugees. This program further took me to Cairo, Egypt, to learn about the experiences of refugees coming from Sudan, particularly Sudanese children. This past summer I took an Extended Studies trip to China, traveling to Beijing, Shanghai, and Huangshan to learn about China's culture of visual art, from the ancient Qingming scroll to propaganda art during the Cultural Revolution. This was related to my minor in Mandarin Chinese. Next semester, I am going to NYC, Nepal, Jordan, and Chile through SIT Abroad to study movements, power, and resistance.

### Andy Walsh '23



As a current junior at the University of Oklahoma, I am still benefiting from the high-quality education I received during my time at Post Oak. In addition to excelling in my classes, I have had the opportunity to participate in multiple campus organizations. This past semester, I served as the Director of Investments for

the OU Investment Club. I share my love for OU by working for the Office of Admissions and Recruitment as a campus tour guide, and I was recently elected president of my social fraternity, Beta Upsilon Chi or “Brothers Under Christ.” Outside of Norman, I had the opportunity to intern at Truist Bank in Dallas, TX, last summer, and am excited to join JPMorganChase in Houston this summer as an intern within their corporate and investment bank. I am continually grateful for my experience at Post Oak and for the encouragement I received to pursue my goals beyond standard classwork during my time as a student.



### Henry Quillin '22

I spent this summer in San Francisco working for Snowflake as a software engineer intern. In August, I was accepted into Y Combinator, where I raised \$500k in seed funding to build a developer-tools startup. Our focus is helping engineers collaborate more effectively with AI coding assistants, speeding up development and improving code quality. I took this semester off from UT to work on the company full-time in SF with my team, and I'm really excited about what's ahead.

### Sutton Walsh '22

I'm officially halfway through my senior year at Rice University and will be graduating next May with majors in Business Finance and Sport Management. This past summer, I studied abroad in Portugal, where I experienced life beyond my usual three-mile radius in Houston (featuring street sardines, surfing, and plenty of pastel de nata). I'm still competing for Rice Women's Cross Country & Track and gearing up for my final season this spring before officially retiring from DI athletics (marathon era loading). This January,



I'll be leading a mission trip with Owls for Christ to Kerrville, TX, where we'll be doing reconstruction work and running sports camps. Throughout the year, I'll be busy with my final series of classes, interning with the Rice Athletics Owl Club Fund, and staying involved with Rice Sport Analytics and Rice Women in Business. I've loved living off campus in a house with my teammates and can regularly be found journaling, consuming iced coffee, and hosting game nights. TBD on post-grad plans—but excited for what's next!

### Francesco Argentina '20



After attending and graduating from Texas Christian University with a bachelor's in Business Administration, Francesco began working as a financial control analyst at Q Investments in Ft. Worth. Outside of his demanding job, Francesco trains and competes in jiu-jitsu and has made it to the podium in a number of competitions. Francesco makes the drive to Houston now and again to see his parents and connect with his Post Oak peers.

## Carly Gregg '20

After graduating from Post Oak in 2020, I attended the University of Texas at Austin, from which I graduated in 2024 with a BS in Neuroscience and Certificate in Spanish for medical professions. I then moved to Bethesda, Maryland, to work as a post baccalaureate researcher in a neuroscience lab at the National Institutes of Health. I applied to medical schools this year and will be starting classes in July.



*The Post Oak School  
congratulates the  
Class of 2025,  
and welcomes them  
to our alumni roster!*



Chiara Rosamaria Abel  
Khadijah Adalia Ahmed  
Gustavo Francisco Alvarez  
Andersen Grace Reese Barger  
Imaar Chauthani  
Robert Baker Croyle  
Caroline Marie Davis  
Carson Luke Dunaway  
Elizabeth Addison Elmore  
Max Keuter King  
Sienna Loren Kissack  
Alexander Ellenzweig McGill  
Gloria Belem Morales  
Sophia Rose O'Heron  
Elijah Saldaña-Kowalchuk  
Nathan Leroy Savarese  
Owen Samuel Siegel  
Claire Elizabeth Thacker  
Ira Jay Williams  
Matthew Fon Wynne  
Rose Yard  
Camila Isabel Yengle

## 2010–2019

### James Perkins '17



After graduating from Post Oak, I spent a year at Marlboro College in southern Vermont. I then spent several years traveling between Europe and the U.S., studying at two Danish folk schools, backpacking, and writing. Now, I'm back in Houston, continuing my writing while helping my mother care for her home.

### Garrett Shaw '18



Garrett recently graduated from Georgetown Law and moved to Austin, where he is a corporate lawyer at Latham & Watkins, working primarily with early-stage startup technology companies and venture capital investors.



Alumni recently gathered for a social at the High School.





**GOLF TOURNAMENT**



**G**olf and Montessori share a focus on self-discipline, individuality, and valuing process over outcomes. In this way, Putting For Post Oak—the school’s occasional golf tournament—is a perfect tradition. Since 2021, parents, alumni, and friends have gathered for eighteen holes and camaraderie. The 2025 event at Houston Oaks was no exception.

With clear skies and stellar weather, fifteen teams enjoyed a beautiful day thanks to the hard work of co-chairs Carlin Putman and Darryll De Vera, who spent nearly a year planning a memorable experience for golfers and guests alike. Highlights included Darryll’s foursome taking first place, the Post Oak Alumni team earning “Most Fun,” and the debut of the lively Heckle Hole, where a few parents cheered and teased players. After a relaxed day on the course, everyone gathered for lunch and awards, celebrating the generosity of everyone who made the event possible.

Post Oak is deeply grateful to our lead host, Marcus Spagnoletti, and all the families and friends who supported the occasion: Holly and Michael Garner, Susanna and Clay Kartye, Mission Construction, PNC Bank, PromoPrint, Whitney and Marc Walsh, Sabina and Mani Walia, and Paul and Susan Torn Young, and Christi and Jordan Zweig. 🏌️



# Our Deepest Gratitude

The strength of Post Oak comes, in part, from a community that chooses to invest in possibility. Through gifts to the Post Oak Fund, participation in special events, and countless acts of generosity, families and friends help bring the Montessori vision to life. This meaningful giving turns what you imagine for your students into a daily reality. We offer our heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported the school during the 2024–2025 year.

—*Evan Wildstein, Advancement Director*

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and *Zach Smith*

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*Although we have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of our honor rolls, errors may occur. To report an error or omission, please contact:  
Evan Wildstein  
281-822-8024  
EvanWildstein@PostOakSchool.org*

*Donor lists current as of June 30, 2025*

THESE REPRESENT GIFTS MADE TO THE POST OAK SCHOOL FROM JULY 1, 2024–JUNE 30, 2025.

# Employee Spotlights

The Post Oak School recognizes employees at five-year intervals.

The following individuals have served our community well for as many as forty years and we are grateful for them! Please extend your congratulations and thanks to them the next time you see them on campus.

## FIVE YEARS

---

Claudia Arce  
Max Lowery  
Antonio Ventura  
Terry McNally

## TEN YEARS

---

Laura Johnson  
Ana Giralt

## FIFTEEN YEARS

---

Sandra De Leon  
Keri Nickerson  
Anita Taj Mahmood  
Matt Thompson

## A LEGACY OF SERVICE

Since 1985, Manuel Mejia has cared for The Post Oak School, making him our longest-serving employee. For four decades, his work has shaped the spaces where generations of students have learned and grown.

Manuel arrived from Guatemala just three years before joining Post Oak. Eager to establish himself, he began part-time work at Randalls, learning the basics of facility maintenance. When he joined Post Oak, the school was in transition—construction was underway on the Bissonnet Campus. Within days, Manuel was entrusted with the keys and the responsibility of caring for the school.

We are grateful for the ways Manuel continues to serve and care for all of us at The Post Oak School.





### About The Post Oak School

The Post Oak School is an educational leader—both among Houston’s top private schools and among the more than 5,000 Montessori schools across the country. Post Oak has operated continuously since 1963, and is a non-profit corporation. With a faculty and staff of 120 employees, we serve a culturally diverse student population of 495 and provide a comprehensive education founded on AMI Montessori principles.

Post Oak has two campuses to serve our four academic communities from early childhood through high school. The Bissonnet Campus (BC) is home to our Early Childhood (beginning at 14 months) and Elementary (grades 1–6) divisions. The Bissonnet Campus occupies a 3.44-acre lot on the corner of Bissonnet Street and Avenue B in Bellaire, a suburb of Houston, Texas.

The Museum District Campus (MDC) is home to our Adolescent division, serving Middle and High School students (grades 7–12), and is located at the corner of Montrose and Autrey Street in Houston’s Museum District. The Museum District is the perfect launching point for the interdisciplinary partnerships, internships, service learning, and travel experiences central to this school’s mission. The High School program culminates in two years of the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma program. ☞

*The Post Oak School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or nationality or ethnic origin with regard to hiring, admissions, or in the administration of any of its programs.*

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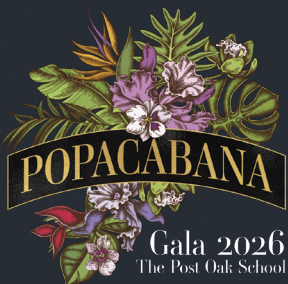
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***Gala 2026—Where the music is hot and the night is cool!***

Mark your calendars for March 21 at Hotel ZaZa—a dazzling evening of dancing, dining, and celebration awaits. Individual tickets are now available at [postoakschool.org/gala](https://postoakschool.org/gala).