

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [X] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Alexander Rose-Henig
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name BASIS DC Public Charter School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 410 8th Street, NW
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Washington State DC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 20004-2103

County _____

Telephone (202) 803-6490 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.basised.com/washington-dc/ E-mail alexander.rose-henig@basised.com

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* John Hillis E-mail john.hillis@basised.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name BASIS DC Public Charter School Tel. (480) 289-2088

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Dr. Craig Barrett
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 17 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 10 High schools
 - 3 K-12 schools

30 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

- Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	73	62	135
6	49	79	128
7	57	61	118
8	27	44	71
9	34	37	71
10	23	26	49
11	27	26	53
12 or higher	20	19	39
Total Students	310	354	664

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 7 % Asian
 - 26 % Black or African American
 - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 46 % White
 - 11 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 3%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	644
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Amharic, American Sign Language, Arabic, Bulgarian, Burmese, Chinese, Czech, English, French, Georgian, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Nepalese, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovakian, Spanish, Swedish, Tigrinya, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
12 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %

Total number students who qualify: 87

8. Students receiving special education services: 5 %

33 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism | <u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>11</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	6
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	53
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 13:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	98%	100%	100%	100%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	52
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	98%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	2%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

The mission of BASIS DC, like all BASIS Charter Schools, is to empower students to achieve at globally competitive levels with a transformative K–12 academic program.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

BASIS DC operated under three main phases of gradual and continuous reopening. Phase 1 was an entirely virtual model. Phase 2 included a primarily virtual model with in-person support for some students. Phase 3 opened the School under a “families choose” model that allows for either full distance learning instruction or full in-person instruction for each family, per their choice; they were also able to switch from one to the other during the academic year, when grading periods ended/began. BASIS DC created this plan with three main goals in mind: maintaining high expectations, ensuring equity and access, and supporting family engagement.

When School started on August 24, 2021, we opened with 100% distance learning (phase 1 model). On October 5, 2021, we moved to phase 2 – distance learning instruction with an in-person support model. We were proud at this time to be one of the only open schools in the state. In March, 2021, we transitioned to the “Families Choose in 2020-21” model, which allows families to choose between 100% distance learning at home or 100% in-person learning on campus, five days a week. BASIS DC has had over 100 students in person five days a week, learning from their regular classroom teachers, starting in March and lasting until the school year ends in June. Again, we are proud to be one of the first and only schools in the state to be fully open to any in-person learning for a substantial period of the 2020-21 school year.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

BASIS DC is a public charter school that participates in the state-wide lottery for all schools. An independent agency runs this lottery system within the State Education Agency. It is called MySchoolDC. According to MySchoolDC, "The My School DC common lottery is a single, random lottery that determines placement for new students at all participating schools. Student-school matches are based on the number of available spaces at each School; sibling, in-boundary, and other lottery preferences; how each student ranked their school choices; and each student's random lottery number."

PART III - SUMMARY

One of America's most enduring traditions has been education as an equalizer. BASIS was founded to raise academic standards, expectations, student achievement, and academic accountability for any and all students. No matter a child's economic background, geographic location, culture, or ethnicity, quality education accessible to all students breaks down the barriers of poverty and the self-fulfilling prophecy of low expectations; it prepares students to compete in a global economy.

The first step in fomenting and improving upon this tradition is to encourage innovation in education. BASIS DC demonstrates daily that educational excellence can and should be the standard by fulfilling diverse student expectations and needs. Our students are at the core of everything we do at BASIS DC. Our student demographic, along with any other measure, indicates we are one of the top ten most diverse schools in Washington, D.C. We serve students from every zip code and every neighborhood in the District.

Of course, offering an exceptional education to a highly diverse student body is only the first step. BASIS DC demonstrates equity in education, providing opportunities for all students to reach their highest academic potential. BASIS DC is most proud of our students' strong academic performance, ranking us among the top schools in the District, including ranking as the #1 open-enrollment high school in the District of Columbia by U.S. News & World Report. But BASIS DC is also invested in helping students develop a lifelong love of learning, and creating within students a deeper appreciation of how the pursuit of knowledge enriches their lives. This leads to truly astounding college outcomes, too, including 100% student acceptance into four-year colleges and universities and an average graduating BASIS student earning around \$150,000 in merit-based financial aid.

We achieve all of this through three key principles (1) raising academic standards, (2) ensuring world-class teaching quality, and (3) providing robust student and community support.

First, BASIS DC raises academic standards by creating a culture that makes high academic achievement and intellectual engagement the norm. This begins with our BASIS Charter School Curriculum, which is taught at all of our schools, nationwide, and which is an organic article. A new, improved curriculum is created each year through a collaboration between our expert teachers and our network's educational leaders. Teachers design their syllabi based on their review of relevant subject syllabi from the previous school year and requirements defined by the key subject exams (including Pre-comprehensive, Comprehensive, Final, AP, State Assessments exams, and others). Teachers also participate in designing key exams, while the academic leadership audits the syllabi and formulates final versions of key exams.

This process assures continuity of the BASIS Charter School Curriculum and determines any revisions that may be necessary, perhaps due to changes in the state of knowledge, the structure of our program, DC Educational Standards, or Student structure such as grade and group structure, or demographics. This flexibility keeps student understanding and achievement central, and in the very bones of what we teach and when we teach it.

We often say that our students are participants, not spectators, through the entirety of their academic careers. Keeping our students central to their own education is also why we require and heavily weight high-stakes exams that deeply impact a student's final grade. This combination of curricular flexibility and high-impact aspirational standards keeps student learning foremost in everything we do. It also keeps students accountable for their learning, and raises everyone's academic standards.

Second, BASIS ensures our teachers are of the highest academic caliber and have deep subject matter knowledge. Our teachers hail from a broad spectrum of highly regarded colleges and universities and hold various degrees; over half hold a Master's Degree or higher.

Furthermore, BASIS DC strives to create a culture of ongoing professional development in which teachers are accountable for improvement. As soon as we hire teachers, they begin to receive support in various ways, including our teacher induction and mentoring program. The goal is to expose BASIS DC teachers to

various instructional strategies and methods to allow them, as professionals, to determine which approach works best for them. Our teachers also have the flexibility and autonomy to curate the best way to utilize our curriculum for their students. Throughout the school year, BASIS DC teachers partner with the Director of Planning and Instruction, who serves as their primary Instructional Coach and builds upon knowledge of classroom management techniques, teaching methods, and pedagogical research that was reviewed in our annual summer training, and helps teachers implement best practices in real-time. By hiring subject expert teachers, giving them autonomy and flexibility, and supporting them, BASIS DC ensures world-class teaching quality.

Lastly, achieving equitable outcomes for all students requires robust student and community support. It is vital that all students have access to our academically advanced program. Even during COVID-19 closures and the gauntlet of reopening, we maintained a high student engagement level in clubs, activities, and support. At least one club or activity meets every day of the week, such as “Mmm...Monday Cooking” club and “Trivia Thursday.” One of our most popular clubs was the virtual knitting club!

Of course, student success also includes robust support including differentiated instruction and the use of varied evidence-based instructional strategies by general education teachers, as specifically monitored and evaluated through observation and feedback cycles; weekly hour-long student hours held by every general education teacher so that students can get individual support on content as needed or desired; peer tutoring; a social-emotional curricular component overseen by our school counseling team and parent newsletters; social-emotional supports to help stem the impact of anxiety and depression in teens; and more! Through whole-school offerings as well as targeted student support, BASIS DC ensures equitable outcomes for our entire grades 5-12 student body.

BASIS DC supports equitably one of the most diverse student populations in the District by raising academic standards, ensuring world-class teaching quality, and providing robust student and community support. This support and the astounding outcomes it helps produce reinforces confidence in the American traditions of education as an equalizer.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

BASIS DC aims to empower students to achieve at globally competitive levels with a transformative academic program. We do this by building an academic foundation that is both vast and deep through a value system rooted in diverse perspectives, genuine empathy, and satisfaction that stems from personal passions and healthy habits. We know that BASIS DC students will change the world, just as their education changed them.

Put more simply, we want all of our students to stay through grade 12, set them on the path to the college(s) of their dreams, graduate from that college, and go forth to change the world.

We happen to be very good at reaching that goal. BASIS DC graduates have also earned a cumulative \$24,036,500 in merit-based financial aid so far. Our graduates get into many types of schools: small liberal arts colleges, top HBCUs, Culinary and Technical schools, Art schools, and of course, “The Ivy League.”

With college as the end goal in mind, our curriculum is essentially designed backwards from grade 12, when students take a dedicated college counseling class, fifty minutes a day, five days a week. They also get to take amazing classes called Capstones: university-level classes where the focus is on student-led research. Students can dig into classes like “Forensics,” “99 Ways to Die, Epidemiology in the Modern Age,” or “Literature of the Dark and Fantastic.” Students can also participate in our Senior Research Project, a truly independent study in which they conduct their own research through an internship. Past students have traveled to Iceland to do research on education, mapped the craters of Mars at a NASA lab, and built their own art installations at museums. While every senior experience is different, they share the common goal of helping students develop their “story” and stand out in the college application process.

To give seniors the freedom to take these classes, all BASIS DC students finish their entire regular course load by the end of grade 11, including at least seven AP classes, at least six AP exams (with a passing score, three or above, on at least one), and at least three credits more than the DC minimum graduation standards. Our high school students and teachers joke that high school at BASIS DC is “basically college.”

They are not wrong! Our curricular model is based on the idea that we provide “early college” level learning in high school and “early high school” learning in grades 6-8. High School students practice the inference making, critical thinking, and writing skills necessary for college, while middle school students are more focused on the foundational facts and skills needed for later success. That means, in the early years, BASIS DC will add more grammar, homework, and structured study techniques than many other schools. Of course, this purposeful, as we are building a deep love for knowledge in students; we want them to love learning not just as a means to an end, by in and of itself. This does not mean grade 5 is only about memorization or rote learning. Students will study postmodern cubist art, apply Hammurabi’s Code to modern-day American criminal law, and write poems about countries and capitals (to name a fraction of the application-based learning that occurs daily). Rather, our enhanced focus on facts and skills is about laying the foundation for something much greater!

The basic outline of our curriculum is as follows:

Grade 5 includes Arithmetic B (an early version of Pre-algebra), English 5, Classics, Latin, Art, Music, PE, Physical Geography, and Introduction to Science (a survey class that covers Biology, chemistry, and Physics).

In grades 6-8, students take increasingly difficult versions of all of the following courses: biology, chemistry, physics, foreign language of the student’s choice, mathematics (beginning with pre-algebra and ending with Algebra II and geometry), English, history (World History I and II, as well as U.S. History), an elective of their choosing, and logic or economics (depending on the year).

In high School, students must achieve the following credits: 4.5+ credits of social science, 4+ credits of

English, 4+ elective credits, 3+ foreign language, 6+ math credits, and 4+ science credits. Including at least one AP class per core domain (math, English, science, and social science), and six total AP exams.

To succeed in this fast-paced curriculum, we recognize that student accountability is key. We believe students should be at the center of their own education. Starting in grade 6, students have end-of-year tests in every core subject. These Key Examinations serve three purposes: (1) To evaluate the extent to which students master and retain the material taught during the school year. In the case of comprehensive exams, the students who do not master material at the basic level will get a chance to repeat the test (or grade). (2) To evaluate how students perform compared to other BASIS Charter School students across the network, including in previous years. (3) To assess how students perform compared to external and international standards, as it is our goal to ensure that our students can compete globally.

BASIS performs exhaustive data analysis on student results, and uses data to drive decision-making in the classroom so teachers have accurate measures of what is and what is not working with their students. These analyses include overall comparisons, subject comparisons, and item-level analysis.

Due to the high-stakes nature of our testing and academic requirements, BASIS DC requires students to have a structured daily schedule in which they are expected to participate in learning for a particular class during a designated hour. Virtual classes include a combination of direct instruction, pre-recorded content, independent work, and guided practice. The amount of each varies based on the materials to be covered that day. The amount of daily work associated with these courses will be equivalent to the minutes of standard in-person instruction. In grades 5-8, additional minutes for courses with a less reduced structured daily schedule (such as electives) comes from project-based activities that the students will be able to carry out in non-structured time but that require effort equivalent to a standard class time. In grades 9-12, students are expected to participate in the standard 50-minute period blocks of instruction for every course offered at BASIS DC.

The combination of high academic standards, a structured daily schedule, thoughtful adaptation to distance learning, and a curriculum designed backward from college admission means that 100% of our students have been accepted into a four-year college or university despite the challenges of COVID!

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

The curriculum at BASIS DC is designed to prepare students for college and beyond. Our academic requirements ensure that students are immediately exposed to courses in all academic categories, prompting them to take on material with which they are unfamiliar and, often, uncomfortable, and finding ways to master it (including help from available and enthusiastic faculty, counselor support, and administrative guidance). Our curriculum also demands that students take Advanced Placement classes in various fields, further challenging our students and, collaterally, ensuring that they can take and pass rigorous exams. Our Capstone classes, offered senior year, mirror the rigor and form of college-level seminars and hone the research skills our students have practiced throughout their time at BASIS DC. Finally, the opportunity to do senior projects caps off the experience at BASIS DC, enabling students to find, arrange, and participate in independent research opportunities. Not only does this enable students to work in-depth in a field about which they are passionate, but it also walks them through the steps of securing, maintaining, and thriving in a position, much like they will do after college while job searching. They learn what they need to be successful in a workplace before ever seeking a professional position.

But our students do not simply learn in the classroom. BASIS DC offers opportunities for students to grow as a leader, as an artist, as an athlete, and as a person, too. Our Student Leadership group provides opportunities to develop leadership skills. Our project week programs let students work creatively in art studios, kitchens, and nature. Our atmosphere encourages our students to think beyond the classroom, and evidence of that success is the number of students who own and operate their own successful small businesses. BASIS DC is a place where students are given the opportunity, the challenge, and the materials necessary to grow in and out of our classrooms.

1b. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The curriculum at BASIS DC is a traditional, rigorous, STEM-infused, liberal arts curriculum in which required classes go beyond traditional ELA/math/science. Students at BASIS DC have opportunities to take a wide range of elective classes that dive deep into worldly interests.

Starting in grade 5, students take Art, Music, and PE as required classes, which serve as the foundation of a robust selection of elective tracks that build students' essential skills and knowledge as they get older. These classes are always tied to some critical skill or topic in the core content classes in the school. For example, as grade 5 students learn about waves in their Introduction to Science class, they are also learning about waves in music class. That pattern of crosscutting concepts and skills between elective and core classes, which begins in grade 5, continues through future electives.

Starting in grade 6, students pick from five different options, each of which is tied to the AP World History and Geography I class. Students can select from classes like creative writing, drama, music, and art, with the content of each class relating the projects and topics to the time periods and regions students discuss in AP World History and Geography I. For example, as students learn about the role of papyrus in the Egyptian Empire in art, they may do a unit on paper and bookmaking. Similarly, as students learn about the Japanese shogunate, they may do a unit on Japanese opera in drama. Students in grade 6 also continue to take PE.

Starting in grade 7 and continuing thereafter, options for electives widen, with each class still tied to the grade level's core skills. Students selections include robotics (tied to the logic skills also taken in grade 7) or an acting class covering early American playwrights (tied to the AP U.S. History class).

As students get older and their interests develop, the range of elective classes grows, and topics become their own areas of expertise. Students can pick from a range of elective classes, including photography, AP Computer Science, AP Economics, AP Art, or African American Studies (and many more).

Truly, at BASIS DC, students of all ages are learning critical skills and becoming masters through our curricular offerings which are simply not available at many other schools. Of course, with COVID, many of our more traditional elective classes had to be re-thought. What was once a choral music class had to be re-imagined as music theory and percussion class, and art supplies had to be mailed, each unit, to each family's home. However, the pandemic did not stop the deep passion for learning in the BASIS DC community. Step into the virtual forensics class and you will see students solving a murder mystery; step into virtual AP Student Art, and you will be impressed by the deep and thoughtful portfolios of students whose lives were hampered but not halted by COVID.

3. Academic Supports:

BASIS DC aims to teach students that success is the result of hard work. Regardless of academic standing, every BASIS DC student is supported and encouraged to improve and to reach for his or her highest academic potential.

Teaching students to take responsibility starts from day one. Teachers focus on helping grade 5 students build organizational skills, proper note-taking techniques, and good study habits. But as our students progress from one grade level to the next, they become models for younger students and help reinforce the culture of personal responsibility and positive peer support.

The two baseline supports that are available to all students are “student hours” and the “CJ.” BASIS DC students can usually be found in tutoring sessions with their teachers during “Student Hours,” at all hours of the day. It is not entirely uncommon for teachers to stay well into the evening hours supporting their students’ academic goals. This is true virtually as well as in person. In addition, the “CJ” (Or, Communication Journal) is a planner that teaches students the basics of

organization and time management. But it is more than a place to record class assignments; it is one of the ways the school communicates with families about their child's academic and behavioral progress. Counterintuitively, the CJ has become even more important in virtual school. With an overwhelming number of notifications, beeps, and dings, students love the clarity that comes with planning out their assignments for the week in a pen-and-paper agenda book.

During the pandemic, our Academic Support Program also continued as "normal." One of the central tenets of our School's educational philosophy is to create independently motivated students. The Academic Support Program is one of the general education tools BASIS DC uses to support the growth of academic independence in students. Academic Support Advisors work closely with students to instruct them in the effective use of resources and help organize and train students to seek academic help from teachers.

In addition, BASIS DC implemented several interventions for students' social-emotional and mental health needs during continuous learning and school recovery. Our teachers embedded social-emotional and wellness checks within daily lessons, and provided opportunities for social-emotional connection both in-person and online through the implementation, including opportunities for students to interact with each other in a digital video format. The mental health team created tele-health options, too; students could call and schedule sessions with school counselors. Families received a phone call weekly during fully virtual instruction and monthly during phase 2 (virtual instruction and in-person support) from a "contact" teacher to check on well-being and educational attainment.

Importantly, BASIS DC also has a robust Response to Intervention Program that is designed to identify and support all students who might be performing below grade level in any key domain area (reading, writing, mathematics, Social-Emotional Development, or attendance). Support through this program include but are not limited to: online FastBridge programming in math and literacy; small-group interventions in reading, math, and executive functioning with trained interventionists; increased flexibility in classroom-based assessment accommodations, such as the allowance of extended time and/or special materials; Check-in/Check-out; social skills groups, BIPs, attendance plans, etc.

BASIS DC provides a robust set of support for students who do not make growth through our intervention programs or are otherwise in need of specially designed instruction. Our special education team includes a full-time school psychologist, full-time school social worker, multiple special education teachers and paraprofessionals, a Special Education Coordinator, and Director of Student Support Services. This team works closely with general education teachers and families to ensure access to our rigorous curriculum for all learners.

BASIS DC does not currently have a discrepancy of over 10% between student populations on last year's internal assessments, SAT exams, or AP exams. No state-wide assessments were provided by the State Education Agency last year.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, BASIS DC continues to provide students with an environment that promotes learning. Through distance learning, hybrid learning, and in-person instruction, students experience high-quality, fast paced interactive lessons that allow them to be both engaged and challenged. We incorporate various types of interaction into our lessons to promote engagement, such as the use of break-out rooms, group work, video, pre-recorded lessons, and the use of additional online resources that foster collaboration with teachers and peers. To further help students gauge the concepts being taught during the school day, teachers offer additional live sessions and students hours for those interested in extra support and interaction.

Because distance learning has at times been a formidable hurdle for some students, BASIS DC has taken the initiative to ensure that all of our students get the extra support they need. For instance, when students are absent from a live session, they are immediately called into the class by the teacher and provided a follow-up communication before the end of the day. In addition, families receive monthly wellness calls, Bi-Weekly Parent Informational Posts, bi-weekly grade updates, and check-in/check-out sessions with our Academic Advisors for those who qualify.

BASIS DC believes in developing robust, globally competitive students and, therefore, offers students many sports and after-school clubs and activities. Many of these opportunities have been adapted to the virtual setting to allow students the chance to participate even in these trying times.

Beyond providing students with our academic program, BASIS DC promotes social and emotional growth. Through the Break Free from Depression Curriculum, students are given the tools to identify symptoms and signs of depression in themselves and their peers, and the knowledge to find help. We stand by our consistent student support through challenges that may arise for each of them, and we will continue to engage and motivate students while providing them with all necessary tools that assist and grow their social and emotional health and awareness.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

BASIS DC continues to work hard to develop a learning community among our students, their families, and our faculty and staff. The work we require of students is rigorous, though it is brought to students with joy, support, and expertise. Thus, engaging parents around our expectations to ensure alignment between what we do, how we do it, and the families we serve is a consistent priority. As with our academic program, we try to replicate the manner in which we engage parents in the District, while being mindful that not all families want to engage with the school in the same way. To that end, we endeavor to connect with parents in a wide variety of ways so that communication flows freely.

Here are just a few events and practices that are examples of the many ways in which parents and community stakeholders are involved at BASIS DC:

Boosters Meetings: One of the most critical ways in which BASIS DC involves all families is through communication and engagement with our parent partners known as our Parent Boosters Organization. The Head of School, Head of Operations, and the Boosters work hand in hand to ensure that messages are communicated in a timely manner and that school management is in tune with our parents. Typically held on a monthly basis, Boosters meetings allow parents the opportunity to receive in-person “state of the school” addresses, and volunteer for upcoming events.

Workshops: BASIS DC hosts many opportunities for parents to engage with our staff through informational workshops. For example, prior to our pre-comprehensive exams in February, parents were invited to attend a Pre-Comp Prep Night during which teachers reviewed study strategies, highlighted important topics, and clarified the test design and question types.

Arts Showcases and Performances: Music, art, and drama students showcase their work at least twice a year. The talent show is also always a big hit! Our Senior Research Project students also present their work to the greater BASIS DC community every spring.

ParentSquare and The Solar Flare: Families get regular communication through our electronic communication system—we use ParentSquare – including critical operating information and announcements, opportunities for student and family engagement (extracurricular activities, special events, community offerings, and city services), and highlights of student achievements. In the Solar Flare, produced by the College Counseling Office, the BASIS DC community learns of college visits, scholarship opportunities, and summer programs.

Virtual Town Halls: During the spring school closures, BASIS DC held a virtual town hall every month to ensure that students and families had the latest information and situational awareness and to foster a continued connection with the school community.

Wellness calls: Families received a phone call weekly during fully virtual instruction and monthly during phase 2 (virtual instruction plus in-person support) from a “contact” teacher to check on well-being and educational attainment.

Local government meetings: the Head of School attended at least five local “neighborhood commissioner” meetings to check in with local government leaders and business owners to ensure that BASIS DC is an active member of our city-wide community.

Class updates: each teacher created a bi-weekly class newsletter to keep students and families informed of class progress. Similarly, students and families received bi-weekly grade updates to support student academic progress.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

BASIS DC builds a community of educators in which everyone feels connected to our school mission and supported through a strategic action plan starting with survey data. School planning around staff culture includes a regular cycle of action and assessment. Each cycle includes small and measurable tasks such as training, outreach, appreciation, etc., and is informed by the most recent staff survey data. This year, for example, data showed teachers were craving high levels of diversity, equity, and inclusion training following the murder of George Floyd, so the school purchased and implemented training from local community providers. Staff morale surveys showed that our non-teaching staff was feeling less included and appreciated than our teachers, so BASIS DC began a weekly “lift up” meeting for the non-teaching staff that included a monthly bulletin of upcoming events and celebrations of staff accomplishments. These actionable cycles of feedback and response ensure staff feels heard and supported.

BASIS DC also ensures the highest level of professional culture through a robust professional development program. BASIS DC teachers, leaders, and staff are required to participate in extensive professional development through summer workshops and week-long summer institutes. Instructional techniques, curriculum planning, resources, and student support strategies are addressed to ensure students succeed and educational gains are achieved. Workshops cover an array of instructional areas rounding out quality student interaction and engagement. Additionally, site training for teachers illustrates site-specific expectations. The Leadership Team leads site training. However, instructional staff also have subject mentors on content and pedagogy, which builds teachers' capacity and provides the opportunity for continuous development of meaningful teacher leadership.

All teachers participate in ongoing observations and feedback cycles. These observations are centered around short-term and long-term pedagogical goals, classroom best practices, and tier-one strategies for student support. During feedback cycles, instructional staff design rigorous lessons and strategies to encourage students' higher-order skills. Instructional staff also participate in weekly Professional Learning Communities, during which they dive into conversations about classroom practices and growing their own

pedagogy. Weekly staff meetings focusing on both vertical and horizontal alignment provide frequent discussions with grade-level and department teams. These include data reviews of academic performance and behavior. All trainings target improving our teachers' ability to implement the BASIS Charter School Curriculum and educational standards.

4. School Leadership:

BASIS DC has a single primary leadership team spearheaded by a partnership between a Head of School and Head of Operations. The two Head positions, in turn, support and supervise five school Directors: the Director of Student Affairs, the Director of Student Support Services, the Director of Planning and Instruction, the Director of Academic Programs, and the Director of Auxiliary Programs. This core team functions under a data/goal-driven philosophy of school leadership. To support our school leaders, we have a team of teachers and staff who work in advisory roles in addition to their regular teaching responsibilities. This team includes all school coordinators such as the attendance coordinator, the curriculum coordinator, etc., as well as key senior staff such as the college counselors, department chairs, and grade level leaders.

This group of expert educators functions through a data/goal driven philosophy of leadership. The core leadership (Directors and Head of School and Operations) team works each year to create and update the school's five-year vision. This vision is based on the fullest extent of data that the school has, including academic data, anecdotal data, survey data, etc. This five-year vision includes fifteen goals across five domains: Student Retention, Personnel Retention, Communication, Academics, and Equity. Examples of goals include "In two years—No "rising 12th graders" without a 3 on Advanced Placement (AP) Exams" or "Improve parent perceptions of communication around workload, classroom activities, and school decisions, as measured on annual parent surveys, by 5%." Further, for each goal, the team drafts a "one-year," "three-year" and "five-year" action plan that describes how the entire community will reach the target goal. Examples might include "create a meeting structure to conduct a weekly review of students who have not yet earned a three on an AP exam; during the meeting the team will consult with the AP teacher and create a progress monitoring tool to track progress."

When making school decisions, such as around learning loss recovery or reopening, for example, the core leadership team (Directors and Head of School and Operations) creates proposals that are tied to specific goals on the five-year vision. These proposals are edited and vetted through the larger school team to ensure school decisions' consistency and quality. This system also ensures that decisions remain student and goal-focused.

The core leadership team meets twice a week in action-oriented meetings to make urgent safety decisions and ensure timely progress on school events. The entire leadership team meets once a week to discuss upcoming decisions and policies. The entire team also meets three times a year for an "audit" to track progress on the school's five-year vision and the current year's action plans towards each goal.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

In this application, we at BASIS DC have shared that we are a school that demonstrates equity in education, providing opportunities for all students to reach their highest academic potential. In fact, we often say we are a school for anyone who wants the particular type of high-achieving, college prep academic program that we offer -- and is willing to work hard. As one of the most diverse schools in the District, it is vital that we educate our students and ourselves around equity and inclusion. It is also a joy to do so!

From a staff perspective, we have three main methods of promoting equity in education. First, each teacher is required to develop an individual education track for his or her own cultural inclusivity. Each teacher is able to select professional development books centered on equity in education. Each teacher then meets in a professional learning community to discuss the book, chapter by chapter, and shares best practices around implementation in their classrooms. Second, our school has developed two teacher committees around inclusion. The first is a "supports"

committee that meets three times annually to audit our student support programming and ensure that we are providing student support in a robust and equitable manner. The second committee reviews our academic program itself, and also meets three times yearly to develop resources for classroom teachers, such as primary source documents, that are written by people of color and/or identify ways lesson plans can incorporate voices from all communities. Third, our educators spearheaded and are participating in a network-wide addition to our curriculum called “The New American Conversation.” When the project is complete, the New American Conversation will be a set of texts, excerpts of texts, and non-textual works ordered by K-12 grade level, that are suitable for seminar-style discussion and inclusion in BASIS Charter School classrooms. The guiding principle of this project is our belief that BASIS students will benefit tremendously by studying a curated set of texts that are selected to illuminate the American experience from different perspectives, including a broad diversity of authors and ideas that, while under-represented in a traditional canon, are essential to a modern understanding of the United States, and our varied communities.

Teaching the importance of equity and respect is just as significant to our students’ growth. At BASIS DC, we believe in the restorative method of problem-solving, and we know that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Our students in the younger grades participate in weekly dialogues using the restorative approach to discuss their own backgrounds, the importance of inclusion, mental health and wellbeing, and race and equity. These conversations implemented over the past five years have dramatically improved student relationships and built a community that is not only culturally competent, be actively equitable in repairing societal harms.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Talk to most parents in Washington D.C., and they will share a general frustration about what was learned this year and what was lost due to COVID. Students learned many important things: they learned lessons about grit and determination, coping with loss, including losing and changing jobs and losses of income, not to mention the death or infirmity of loved ones. Many students have learned positive lessons around reconnecting with their families or life outside of school. But, the common thread through all of these lessons is what was lost. Lost was the support of the school, the community organizer, the home-away-from-home. Lost was the academics, the healthy drive, and the competition to learn and self-improve. Talk to most DC parents, and they will tell you about the hole that daily, rigorous, school-based education left behind for their students.

However, if you talk to BASIS DC families, they will tell you a different story. Sure, they will speak to the hardships of the pandemic and the desire for more in-person instruction. But they will also tell you that our school was present, and that their students continued their day to day learning. Things were different, and at times difficult, they would tell you – but the focus never wavered. The single most important practice that held the BASIS DC community together throughout the pandemic is that same thing that makes BASIS unique – we never lower our standards, for ourselves or our students.

It is not easy to tell families, much less students and teachers, that you expect them to work just as hard during a pandemic as they do every other year – and, in fact, probably harder. So, what does it take to implement a notion as simple and direct as ‘we never lower our standards?’ It requires constant daily maintenance.

At BASIS DC, we still require students to take six AP exams to graduate, and we still require students to take their end-of-year comprehensive exams. We still require students to cover biology, and chemistry, and physics – all through the sixth grade. But those high expectations live in daily contradiction to our larger community's capacity to cope with loss and change. To successfully ensure that our students never stopped learning, we had to check in on students daily. We called families every week, and more of needed. We constantly asked survey questions around workload. We reviewed grades weekly, and we supported those in our community in greatest need with as many resources as possible. When the balance tipped in the direction of ‘overwhelmed’ we implemented things like “rocket booster days,” on which students only worked on makeup work or extra tutoring sessions. When the balance tipped in favor of ‘we’ve got this,’ we did double lessons or brought additional students and staff into the building.

This approach of holding ourselves and our community to the usual high expectations while simultaneously ‘temperature checking,’ reviewing data, and making small adjustments, means that BASIS DC families and our learning community by and large speak more about what we learned, than what we lost. Difficult as it was, and despite some loss, we’re proud of our perseverance – an attitude that’s in the very mission of our curriculum, our campus, and our network of BASIS Charter Schools.