

The BASIS Diploma

The BASIS Diploma prepares students to fully participate in the dynamic, exciting and unpredictable world of the 21st century. Students who earn this diploma grow in our classrooms to love learning and the pursuit of deeper understanding. They experience the delight of mastering fields of complex knowledge and of developing the habits of disciplined, critical enquiry. Above all they have the best possible educational foundation to be independent and resourceful problem solvers and to face future challenges. It is their choice what career opportunities they pursue and intellectual decisions they make in the future. It is our job to fully prepare them to succeed in those choices.

The scope and sequence of the BASIS Diploma is determined by these practices.

We define opportunity for our students in **GLOBAL** terms. In the 21st century we can no longer conceive of opportunity for the next generation as confined to a city, a state or even a nation. Hence, we commit to teaching our students to the highest global standards so that they can win admission to the best universities in the world and compete in a global professional marketplace.

Founded by two economists, from our earliest days our schools have been committed to the smart, network-wide use of student performance data. We hold ourselves **ACCOUNTABLE** to use the insights this data provides to sustain and improve learning outcomes for our students.

We teach our students to achieve **MASTERY** of the foundational academic disciplines and competencies, for it is that mastery which will empower their future lives and careers. In our classrooms they face extraordinary challenges, and they grow accustomed to the unwavering support of the faculty.

We have a course of study that is **CONNECTED** from the student's academic start in Preschool to its finish with Senior Projects. Our curriculum is carefully calibrated so that in every discipline and at every grade level, students are appropriately challenged and excited by their learning, and each year builds as a preparation for the challenges to come.

Our approach to the use of **TECHNOLOGY** in education is highly focused: we use technology to help us solve problems of scale, to help create the connective tissue that joins a network of schools into an integrated system with data-driven quality control and the sharing of best practices, and to ensure that curricular decisions and innovations are driven by our master teachers, not a top-down centralized bureaucracy.

In terms of the integration of technology in the classroom itself, we believe that technology is one of many tools available to teachers to engage and inspire students to take ownership of their learning experience. However, devices cannot replace the dynamic, **CO-CREATIVE** classroom interaction between teacher and student. We have developed our own tablet-based electronic learning platform to enhance, not replace the role of the teacher. Our belief is that technological competency with industry-standard hardware and software is a key skill necessary to thrive in our modern academic, professional and personal lives.

We create a learning culture in which diverse **PERSPECTIVES** are challenged and tested in an environment of informed thought and collegiality. Our students must be prepared to productively and decently navigate the uncertainty of the 21st century landscape with a profound humility. By engaging with a variety of global perspectives, our students are empowered to make their own decisions about how they will navigate their world. As a learning community, we do not hide from the conflict and struggle that ensues. We revel in it as a vital component in the maturation of our students and the evolution of their most deeply held convictions.

BASIS Curriculum Schools does not write curriculum; we manage it. What does that mean? It means that we choose the subjects to be taught and set the standards for the scope and sequence of instruction in that subject. Teachers who are new to BASIS Curriculum Schools quickly discover that ours is a system that balances the accountability of common high standards across the network with the pedagogic autonomy to develop innovative ways to meet these standards. BASIS Curriculum Schools will never hand a teacher a fully written curriculum for a course, but we will provide structured guidance in the form of common standards, common exams based on those standards, and a network of “Subject Advisors”—mentor teachers sprinkled throughout our schools—to assist and support.

The creative tension between the autonomy that our expert teachers value so highly, and the common aspects of shared accountability that enables BASIS Curriculum Schools to maintain academic quality control across the network, is the nexus at the heart of our classroom learning culture. We are able to preserve this level of autonomy for our teachers by agreeing upon these common principles.

We believe:

- 1) Children can achieve more than we have commonly been told. With hard work, dedication and the support of teachers and parents, 3rd graders can think critically, 6th graders can learn Physics, and High School students can read Critical Theory and Philosophy.
- 2) Instructional time is precious. Every minute of every class should be filled.
- 3) Mastering the basics is the precondition for going beyond them. Students learn to listen for the music of Shakespeare's iambic pentameter and to decipher the crucial details in an historical primary source, but they must also be able to parse the grammar of a sentence and craft concise and persuasive prose.
- 4) Homework, as long as it is an extension of what is being learned in the classroom, is valuable. Practice helps students achieve mastery.
- 5) High-stakes, summative tests that assess content mastery and learning skills (BASIS Curriculum Schools Comprehensive Exams and the College Board Advanced Placement Exams for example) are foundational for learning.
- 6) The evaluation of teacher performance must be based both on classroom instruction and on student learning results on high-stakes assessments.

The Student in the Classroom: The Academic Journey from Preschool to Senior Projects

EARLY YEARS: PRESCHOOL–KINDERGARTEN, *DISCOVERY AND FOUNDATION*

Preschool and Kindergarten are both taught in self-contained classrooms. During these years, each classroom has an assigned Lead Teacher and a Teaching Fellow who has at least a Bachelor's degree and who aspires to become a Lead Teacher. The Lead Teacher is responsible for most of the instruction. However, in specialized disciplines such as Mandarin and Engineering, a Subject Expert Teacher replaces the Lead Teacher.

The Preschool learning environment is carefully designed to encourage a child's natural curiosity to question, to create, and to discover. We focus on nurturing a rich, enjoyable, and intentional learning experience. Early Learning Teachers specifically facilitate opportunities for children to interact with materials in a thoughtful and intentional manner and encourage children to use their imagination and creativity to ask questions, and to use their own reasoning to organically learn from, and make connections to, the world around them.

Following on the heels of this program, Kindergarten lays the foundation for success in school during the years to come. This success is based not only on the acquisition of foundational concepts and skills, but also on the adoption of scholarly habits and the immersion in a culture which values learning above all other endeavors.

PRIMARY YEARS: GRADES 1–3, *TEACHING TO LEARN*

Starting in grade 1, BASIS Curriculum students are no longer in a self-contained classroom. In every discipline a Subject Expert (SET) who specializes in that discipline (Humanities, Math, Science, Engineering, Art, Mandarin, etc.) teaches the students. Across all disciplines, the Learning Expert (LET), who focuses on effective pedagogy, co-teaches with the Subject Expert (SET).

The role of the Learning Expert Teacher (LET) is to make sure that students understand what they are being taught, and that every individual student is working to the absolute best of his/her personal ability. The LET travels with his/her students throughout the school day and is always there to aid in the scholastic development of students. LETs provide a high level of progress monitoring, parent communication and enrichment to all students and their families.

The synergy of the SET and LET facilitates a relatively rapid transition from instruction in foundational skills and knowledge to independent thinking and active learning in the primary grades. Heavy emphasis is placed on making connections between disciplines through the reiteration of key concepts throughout the curriculum, fostering the move from the acquisition to application of knowledge.

BRIDGE YEARS: GRADES 4–5, *FROM CONCRETE TO ABSTRACT THINKING*

In grades 4 and 5, students graduate from the two-teacher model and are taught exclusively by SETs, most of whom have advanced degrees in the field they teach. This builds on the independence fostered in the Primary Years and allows students more independence in—but also more responsibility for—their education.

As the name indicates, the Bridge Years transport students from the foundational years to an intermediate program focused on mastering basics necessary for a college-preparatory curriculum. In particular, instruction focuses on attaching abstract thinking to concrete thinking: students transition from reading comprehension to interpretation, from data collection to data analysis, and from mathematical calculation to mathematical reasoning. Courses unique to the Bridge Years include Latin, Classics, and Physical Geography.

THE INTERMEDIATE YEARS: GRADES 6–8, *KNOWLEDGE AS A TOOL*

During these years BASIS Curriculum students complete a rigorous schedule of pre-Advanced Placement courses in all core disciplines, including the three sciences (Physics, Chemistry and Biology), Economics, and a course in Logic.

It is in these Intermediate Years that our students come to understand knowledge as a tool. They begin to glimpse what mastery of the fundamental concepts skills and material in these various disciplines will afford them. They learn that amassing skills and facts is a step toward the more creative thinking required of the college-level coursework they will tackle in High School.

THE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS: GRADES 9–12, *THINKING FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING*

Beginning with the demonstration of mastery in AP survey courses in English, Math, Science and Social Science, BASIS Curriculum High School students further develop their ability to think independently and creatively in Post-AP courses and independent research projects.

The High School program culminates in a 3-month, off-site, independent project that is proposed and constructed by the students, under the guidance of both an internal faculty adviser and an external, professional specialist in the field of the student's choosing. The Senior Project is the most evolved phase of the BASIS Diploma and allows students to demonstrate independent scholarship, individual accountability, disciplinary mastery, and a facility with problem solving. BASIS Curriculum graduates thus leave the High School program prepared to be leaders in college and beyond.

The BASIS Diploma

Math and Science, Humanities, Interdisciplinary Studies, Language, Fine Arts, Physical Education

MATH AND SCIENCE

Our Math and Science program is internationally acclaimed for its rigor, depth and breadth. Following our tenet that all children can achieve more than they have commonly been told, BASIS Curriculum Schools requires all students to take high school math earlier than is commonly offered, and to begin taking Chemistry, Physics and Biology as separate courses in grade 6. Every student who graduates from BASIS Curriculum Schools will have taken all three Sciences at the Honors level, and at least one AP science course, one AP math course, and AP exams in each.

A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT SAXON MATHEMATICS

All BASIS Curriculum Schools use the Saxon Math Curriculum as the foundation for math instruction through Calculus. Our philosophy is that students learn best when broader topics are introduced in smaller segments with ample time to practice new additions. Saxon's spiraling topics and homework problems allow students to get the practice they need, but also strengthen fundamental skills. It is important to note, though, that BASIS Curriculum Schools uses the Saxon curriculum in a unique manner.

First, we do not follow the grade-level sequence suggested by Saxon. Beginning with Saxon Math Grade 1 in Kindergarten, the curriculum pushes students to master material that is at least one grade level ahead of the Saxon standard sequence in order to introduce students to more abstract math earlier than students in a more traditional school. Lessons and homework problems build upon topics taught in previous lessons and courses, progressively increasing in complexity and difficulty. Second, we insist that teachers follow the system laid out in the Saxon series, without modification. Although we accelerate the Saxon sequence in the early years, we do not skip topics or alter homework assignments within the texts. Third, we provide a broader mathematical context for the explanations in Saxon texts: teachers ensure that students learn multiple terms and explanations for concepts as they are introduced in the series. Finally, we cultivate a classroom environment that is student-centered: the majority of class time is devoted to correcting and completing homework under the guidance of our expert teachers.

MATH AND SCIENCE IN THE EARLY YEARS

The Kindergarten Math Foundation block uses Saxon Math Grade 1, which focuses on number handwriting, number recognition, word problems, word sentences, patterns, geometry, money, tallies, graphing, time, fractions, skip counting, number grouping, addition, subtraction, fact families, one-to-one correspondence, and problem solving. Science instruction is included in the Civics, History & Science Foundation block, and is expanded upon in an afternoon block focused specifically on Engineering & Technology, which explicitly synthesizes and augments the material taught in the morning Math and Science blocks.

MATH AND SCIENCE IN THE PRIMARY YEARS

In Grades 1–3, Math and Science are intertwined in a course called “Math & Science.” As in the rest of the BASIS Curriculum, the material spirals as students progress, and the connections students are asked to make across subjects cultivate critical thinking skills.

The purpose of the combined “Math & Science” course is to convey relevant connections between the two subjects. This cross-disciplinary approach teaches our students that math is a powerful tool to understand and change the world. While significant time is devoted to the instruction of Mathematics, the connections between the two are highlighted during science labs in which students may be asked to collect, record, and interpret data; apply measurement skills; and use graphs to organize and present information. Practical, hands-on applications of math concepts and skills increase topic retention and comprehension. Critical thinking skills are also improved as students are asked to integrate concepts from varied disciplines.

The Engineering and Technology courses provided at BASIS Curriculum Schools for Grades K–4 introduce students to a variety of engineering discourses and techniques through a focus on the engineering design process. Students develop problem solving, logic, and relationships skills through unique and meaningful projects that incorporate mathematics skills. Solutions created by the students are analyzed, reported and communicated using a variety of media. Students engage in hands-on, real-world projects, to gain an appreciation for social and political needs and technologies.

MATH AND SCIENCE IN THE BRIDGE, INTERMEDIATE AND HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

In Grades 4–12 Science and Mathematics are separate courses.

A. Mathematics in the Bridge, Intermediate and High School Years

In the BASIS Curriculum Schools K–12 Program, students begin to take math as a separate course starting in grade 4, during which they complete the Saxon Course 1 textbook. In grades 5–8 all BASIS Curriculum students study algebra and geometry topics in courses from Math 8/7 and Pre-Algebra to Algebra 2. During grades 9–11, students move from Pre-Calculus through AP Calculus, mastering applications of functions, differentiation, integration, and topics that extend past those required for the AP Calculus exams. Following Calculus, students take a variety of rigorous Post-AP courses that are equivalent to University level math classes.

The BASIS Curriculum Mathematics sequence in grades 4/5–12 is designed to facilitate success in the BASIS Curriculum Science sequence, and to prepare students for success at the University level.

B. Science in the Bridge Years

The grade 4 “Introduction to Science” courses at BASIS Curriculum Schools are focused on building the fundamental skills necessary for being successful in the rigorous science curriculum that follows. Specific attention is given to understanding and properly using the scientific method and developing individual scientific inquiry. Because the course includes study of the basic principles of Biology, Chemistry and Physics, students that succeed in the “Introduction to Science” course are

well prepared for success in those three sciences, which are taught as separate courses as the program progresses. Skills practiced throughout the course include: critical thinking, data collection, data analysis, collaboration, and communication.

Students continue on to “Intermediate Science” in grade 5. The “Intermediate Science” course deepens students’ knowledge and understanding of foundational concepts in Chemistry, Physics and Biology, and introduces concepts from the content of 6th grade courses in these subjects offered in the Concise Program.

Physical Geography is taught in grade 5. In this course, students both apply the skills learned in their Introduction to Science or Intermediate Science courses and learn the processes of the Earth system and of the interactions between humans and the Earth in order to build a greater understanding of the world around them. Included are studies of the four spheres of Earth—geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere—as well as studies of maps and the people, places, and cultures embodied on the map.

SCIENCE IN THE INTERMEDIATE AND HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

BASIS Curriculum students begin taking Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate courses in the Intermediate years. Instructors who specialize in these specific fields teach these courses. Students are prepared to enroll in an AP science course in 9th grade.

Once in High School, all BASIS Curriculum Science courses are College Board-approved Advanced Placement Courses or post-AP courses. All students graduating from BASIS Curriculum Schools must take and pass all three Sciences at the Honors (or Pre-AP) level, and, in addition, must take at least one Science to the AP Level. The most advanced students are given the option of completing one of those Honors science requirements in grade 8.

BIOLOGY

BASIS Curriculum Biology courses focus on the overarching themes of evolution, maintenance of homeostasis and interactions of organisms in order to make sense of the living world. We emphasize the most basic unit of life, the cell, and progress to the level of organismal processes, structures and interactions. Throughout the sequence of courses, students gain an understanding of the principles of evolution that have ultimately led to the diversity of organisms that populate the earth today. To reach these objectives and to ultimately prepare students for the AP biology exam and beyond, each course communicates foundational knowledge, encouraging application and conceptual synthesis, with the goal of promoting critical thinking, experimental design and data analysis.

The ultimate goal is, of course, to move beyond the AP curriculum into coursework that explores subtopics within the field of Biology.

Post-AP Biology classes focus on a variety of topics within the larger discipline, including, but not limited to Marine Biology, Anatomy & Physiology, Genetic, and Bio-Ethics.

CHEMISTRY

The purpose of the study of Chemistry at BASIS Curriculum Schools is to teach students that the work of the chemist has an impact on every aspect of contemporary life and is fundamental to the understanding of matter. In Chemistry, students study the nature of atoms and molecules and the way they react together to produce useful products. They will also study both organic and inorganic materials, looking at their properties, synthesis, reactions, analysis and uses.

Students learn, experiment and develop an in-depth knowledge of the discipline through hands-on work in the laboratory,

focused in particular in the areas of matter, stoichiometry, types of reactions, gas laws, bonding, kinetics, equilibrium and nuclear chemistry.

Students who continue on to Post-AP Chemistry classes encounter such topics as Organic Chemistry, Inorganic Chemistry, and Catalase.

PHYSICS

Physics courses at BASIS Curriculum Schools are designed to bring students an understanding of the physical world around them. Our coursework introduces students to conceptual ideas surrounding mechanics, energy and electromagnetism. As students progress through the program, these conceptual ideas are tied to the mathematical language of physics and students are taught to communicate and share these ideas. By the time students reach AP coursework, they are prepared to independently apply these conceptual ideas and learn to ask questions in a guided inquiry laboratory environment.

HUMANITIES: History and English

At BASIS Curriculum Schools, the study of Humanities begins with a strong foundation in reading, writing, and historical awareness, but goes far beyond mere literacy as the program progresses. BASIS Curriculum Schools graduates leave with a deep and broad understanding of historical periods and cultural differences, as well as with the skills to analyze and critique any and all types of representational media.

HUMANITIES IN THE EARLY YEARS

Kindergarten contains two foundational Humanities blocks: “Language and Literacy” and “Civics, History and Science Foundation.” The “Language and Literacy” block follows a rigorous program of teaching phonics, whole language, writing, grammar, reading strategies, and reading. The “Civics, History and Science Foundation” extends this instruction and introduces topics that will be reintroduced at a deeper level later in their BASIS Curriculum journey.

HUMANITIES IN THE PRIMARY YEARS

In Grades 1–3 English and History are intertwined in a course called “Humanities.”

In the BASIS Curriculum Humanities courses, students grow from learning to read to reading to learn. The main focus of Humanities courses is literacy, with a secondary focus on social studies, which determines the themes around which literacy instruction is based. This course includes 20 minutes per day devoted entirely to reading. Students develop and strengthen the essential tools for reading and writing, which include reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary enrichment, and phonics and grammar skills. In addition, they learn to compare historical events, connect those events with their geographic locations, and compare the aspects of various forms of government to gain a more complete perspective of the world in which we live.

HUMANITIES IN THE BRIDGE, INTERMEDIATE AND HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

In Grades 4–12 English and History are separate courses.

A. English

All BASIS Curriculum English courses are designed to engage students in the careful reading and critical analysis of all types of textual media (classic literature, contemporary and regional literature, non-fiction, journalism, films and television

productions). Students read, discuss, analyze, and write about influential literary and non-literary texts to determine how meaning is created through the interplay of language and form—both in the work of the authors they read and in their own writing. Our goal is to inspire students to learn to love literature and to value it for the access it provides to a deeper knowledge of themselves and their world. The skills necessary for passing an AP English exam are treated as foundational, with the ultimate goal that our students will graduate completely at ease with college-level reading, analysis, and writing.

English study begins in grade 4 with a foundational education in grammar, which serves to support a complex approach to reading and writing as essential tools for effective communication. During the Bridge Years, the instruction in grammar is supported with a separate course in Latin.

Instruction in grammatical conventions and fundamental reading and writing skills is explicit in grades 4–8, but becomes incorporated into a more holistic approach to higher level literacy as students mature and gain the skills to succeed in AP and post-AP English courses in grades 9 and above.

B. History

The BASIS Curriculum Schools History program prepares students to become well-rounded in their ability to develop meaningful historical arguments and to be able to express themselves effectively, both verbally and in writing. Additionally, students graduate empowered with the wisdom, skills, and conceptual knowledge necessary to become responsible citizens capable of understanding and participating in the important debates of our society.

History begins in grade 4 with instruction in the appropriate use of primary and secondary sources, chronological reasoning, comparison and contrast of different cultures, political systems and geography, and historical interpretation and synthesis.

The BASIS Curriculum History sequence is explicitly built on a spiraling model: beginning with a study of Ancient History in Classics, students move through a curriculum that deepens their knowledge of World History as they progress from grade to grade, preparing students to finish grade 8 ready for the AP World History exam. Students then apply these foundational historical skills in a variety of AP history and government courses in grades 9 and above.

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

In keeping with our commitment to fostering critical thinking skills, BASIS Curriculum Schools incorporates interdisciplinary coursework throughout our curriculum. We believe that teaching students to make connections across disciplines, to ask questions and seek solutions and answers across traditional disciplinary boundaries, produces creative and independent thinkers and prepares our students for life and work in the 21st century.

While all BASIS Curriculum coursework includes some level of instruction in interdisciplinary thinking, our program also includes some specific classes in which time is devoted explicitly to the instruction in this area.

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN THE PRIMARY YEARS

In grades 1–4, BASIS Curriculum students take a project-based course called Connections. The Connections class meets once per week and gives students the opportunity to demonstrate ingenuity, teamwork, and mental agility. In this class, students work together to complete highly challenging projects that help them understand the relationships between all of the different subjects they are studying.

As they collaborate to complete their challenge, students foster interpersonal relationships in a fun and self-driven environment. The challenges are all linked to narrative scenarios that help the students understand how the content connects to the world around them.

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN THE INTERMEDIATE YEARS

In the Intermediate Years, BASIS Curriculum students take two Interdisciplinary courses: Logic (grade 7) and Economics (grade 8).

The aim of the grade 7 Logic course at BASIS Curriculum Schools is to develop metacognitive abilities so that students are empowered to govern their lives and engage effectively in their classrooms and communities. The pedagogy of our Logic course is focused on multi-modal, project-based, student-centered learning. This focus helps student academic maturation by developing the intellectual and interpersonal skills needed to succeed in the upper school.

Logic students become familiar with the basic features of classical logic, receive an orientation to the fundamentals of argumentation, and learn effective methods for resolving disagreements. Furthermore, they examine and practice the principles of symbolic logic, evaluate and construct different types of arguments focusing primarily on Aristotelian syllogisms, discern the differences between inductive and deductive reasoning, and realize the proper use of logic as a reasonable way of resolving real-world issues and problems.

In grade 8, BASIS Curriculum students take an introductory course in Economics. The goal of this course is to present the economic system in which we live in such a way that students understand both its power and its limitations. In order to help them reach this understanding, the course is primarily focused on economic theory: students are introduced to theories of supply and demand, market behavior, and the ways in which monetary tools and prices function. The course prepares students for later success in the AP Micro and Macro Economics class, as well as the array of AP History and Government classes offered in the High School Years.

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN THE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

The BASIS Curriculum High School Program offers students a variety of courses that are explicitly Interdisciplinary, including Post-AP courses, the AP Capstone Program, Senior Capstone courses, and the Senior Project.

Students who successfully complete an AP Course are eligible to enroll in post-AP coursework in the same subject. These courses, which are topic-based, mirror upper-level college courses that draw from current scholarship. They range from Organic Chemistry to Film Theory to Bio Ethics, and introduce students to the debates and discussions in Academia that cross disciplinary lines.

Similarly, students who successfully complete all grades 9–11 course and exam requirements (minimum of 6 AP exams, passing at least one with a 3) are eligible to take Senior Capstone Courses in 4 subject areas: Humanities, Science, Foreign Language, and Math. These courses are seminar-style courses modeled on upper level college courses. In preparation for a rigorous post-secondary curriculum, Senior Capstone Courses provide instruction in independent subject-specific research skills, extended writing assignments, and group presentations. Like post-AP courses, specific thematic foci are determined by the instructor's area of specialty. Past Senior Capstone course titles include: Literary Theory, The History of Food, Latin Epigraphy, Game Theory, and Differential Equations.

BASIS Curriculum Schools is also a participant in the College Board AP Capstone Program (not to be confused with our Senior Capstone Courses). This program, which was specifically designed by the College Board to respond to a need for a more rigorous measure of high school instruction in scholarly inquiry, research, collaboration and writing. The AP Capstone program is comprised of two classes—AP Seminar and AP Research—which must be taken sequentially. The AP Seminar Course is focused on a yearlong theme that forms the basis for interdisciplinary research projects, discussion,

and written reports. In AP Research, students apply what they have learned in AP Seminar to conduct an independent interdisciplinary research project that may or may not take them off campus.

Finally, BASIS Curriculum seniors may also choose to complete a Senior Project that is not related to the AP Capstone Program. This is an independent project that takes students off campus to combine personal interests with an internship. Through the Senior Project, BASIS Curriculum Schools supports its seniors' nascent sense of investigation and research. Projects are usually interdisciplinary in nature, ranging from combinations of Chemistry and Culinary Arts to Physics and Biology.

Language

BASIS Curriculum students study a second language from Kindergarten through grade 12. Students begin with Mandarin in the Early and Primary Years, continue on to Latin in the Bridge Years, and conclude with the mastery of Latin, Mandarin, French, or Spanish in the Intermediate and High School years. The instruction of second languages serves several functions.

LANGUAGE IN THE EARLY AND PRIMARY YEARS

From PreK–grade 4, BASIS Curriculum students are introduced to Mandarin as a complement to studies in other disciplines. It is widely accepted that learning a second language aids in development of creativity, mental flexibility, and critical and free-thinking skills. However, the study of Mandarin in particular has recently proved to not only develop new pathways in the left temporal lobe of a native English-speaker's brain, but it generates the use of the right temporal lobe as well. Given the emphasis on ordering, grouping, and distinguishing similarities and differences in character writing and intonation, Mandarin also helps students expand mathematical abilities.

LANGUAGE IN THE BRIDGE YEARS

During the Bridge Years, second-language instruction shifts from the neurological to the etymological. Latin is required of all Bridge Year students as they transition to a curriculum of English and History as separate courses and start to understand the differences between scientific subjects. The instruction of Latin highlights the relationships between English and Latin grammar, syntax, literary and rhetorical devices, and lays a foundation for the acquisition of vocabulary in the Sciences, English, and romance languages (should students choose to study Spanish or French in the following years). Studying Latin also provides a deeper understanding of influential western civilizations.

During these years, students have the option of continuing to study Mandarin. The Mandarin courses during the Bridge Years are offered as additional, cocurricular, and optional courses that focus less on aiding in neurological development and more on gaining fluency in the language.

LANGUAGE IN THE INTERMEDIATE AND HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

Starting in grade 7, students embark on the study of second language with two goals in mind: 1) to gain fluency and expand global cultural awareness, and 2) to succeed on the AP exam(s) for that language. At this juncture, students may choose to continue study of Latin or Mandarin, or to begin study of Spanish or French.

During the Intermediate and High School years, all second language instruction involves training students in the following areas of communication: 1) spoken and written interpersonal communication, 2) spoken and written presentational communication, and 3) interpretation of audio, visual, audiovisual, and written materials. It is in this program that students gain a profound appreciation of the language they've chosen and its culture.

FINE ARTS

BASIS Curriculum Fine Arts courses inspire students to explore and develop creative and innovative ideas, preparing them for a variety of future interests, as well as encouraging a love for the arts. In all BASIS Curriculum Fine Arts courses, students explore diverse themes of historical and contemporary significance. Courses are taught thematically, exploring how artists and learners respond to the concepts of Communication, Community, Movement, Technology, and Self. The Fine Arts teach students to develop critical thinking skills, to explore different modes of self-expression, and to make meaningful aesthetic connections between their own experiences and the world.

FINE ARTS IN THE EARLY AND PRIMARY YEARS

In Early and Primary Years, all students take Music, Visual Arts, and Performance Arts. The purpose of the Fine Arts during these years is to expose the students to new ways of seeing the world, help them gain appreciation for the arts, and to develop critical thinking skills. In addition, the Fine Arts courses explore themes of cultural and historical relevance. These themes are connected to civic engagement and support the student's social and emotional development.

FINE ARTS IN THE BRIDGE YEARS

The goal for Fine Arts in the Bridge Years is to provide a broad understanding of Fine Arts history and to explore the connections between Visual Arts, Music, and Performing Arts. Students will identify and experience how art functions as language and documentation in the lives of people across generations and locations. Ultimately, the study of the Fine Arts in these years seeks to help students experience the historical and contemporary relevance of the fine arts.

Students in grade 5 take both Music and Visual Arts three times a week. This course prepares them for the choice they will make in the grade 6 Fine Arts Elective between a concentration in Visual Arts, Music, or Performing Arts. The grade 6 Fine Arts Elective is thematically focused on the interplay between Art History and Practice.

FINE ARTS IN THE INTERMEDIATE AND HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

BASIS Curriculum Fine Arts courses during these years teach visual literacy through a historical and contemporary lens that focuses on how art plays an essential part in politics, value systems, society and culture. Students learn the craft, techniques and processes of art making, laying the foundation for lifelong creative work and aesthetic appreciation.

In grades 7–12, Fine Arts is an elective course. The students in these courses explore advanced concepts focused on history, craft, and self-expression. These courses are addressed to students who have both academic and aesthetic interests in the arts. Students develop their knowledge of the theory, practice, and history of their chosen medium and deepen their ability to be imaginative and resourceful problem solvers and creators. Advanced students have the opportunity to enroll in a variety of AP and post-AP Fine Arts courses.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In BASIS Curriculum Sports and Physical Education courses, students learn the skills necessary to develop healthy bodies, lifestyles, and attitudes through physical activity, organized sports, fitness, and dance.

All BASIS Curriculum students are required to take Physical Education in the Early, Primary, and Bridge Years; in grades 7–12, Physical Education is offered as an elective. Many BASIS Curriculum Schools offer Martial Arts courses in the lower grades.