A.1 Educational Philosophy

BASIS seeks to provide an accelerated liberal arts education at internationally competitive levels for all students. We operate on the principle that math, science, and the humanities are not disparate but complementary ways of communicating. We believe that advanced coursework is for all students, not just the "gifted." Our curriculum, consistent with the highest international academic standards, is designed to help students develop academic and organizational skills that will be essential to their success throughout life. Most importantly, we try to provide students with a deep knowledge base and a passion for learning, which will motivate them to reach their highest academic potential and prepare them for the demands of college and the workforce.

BASIS's educational philosophy rests on several key tenets:

1. Creating and reinforcing a belief that learning is exciting, rewarding, and worthwhile

The BASIS school culture makes high academic achievement and intellectual engagement the norm and supports students to enable them to realize their own great academic potential. The goal of all BASIS faculty is to give students the overall sense that learning is exciting, rewarding, and worthwhile—and not just now, but for a lifetime. The entire teaching faculty play an instrumental role in this high-achieving community, whether they are Subject Expert Teachers with academic degrees in the discipline they teach and a passion for their subject matter or Learning Expert Teachers with strong pedagogical skills and expertise in differentiation who work to ensure that students understand and master the material in all of their courses.

Not only does an overwhelming body of research demonstrate that an excellent teacher is the single biggest in school factor to a student's academic success, BASIS has developed a model of teaching and academic supports that help students achieve at the highest levels and engage in subject matter with enthusiasm. By employing a SET/LET model, BASIS is able to bring the subject expertise passion that we have found so successful in the upper grades down to the earliest grade levels. For example, in the BASIS Tucson K-6 school, the 3rd grade Math/Science SET has a Master's degree in Physics and an undergraduate degree in Math and Physics. The 3rd and 4th grade Music Teacher has a Master's in Musical Performance and Choral Conducting and a BA in Music with minor in Molecular Biology. Students at BASIS Mesa K-6 will benefit from the deep teacher-recruiting pipeline that will bring in faculty of this same caliber. This unique model allows BASIS to engage incredibly passionate teachers who would not otherwise teach at the elementary school level.

2. Teaching Personal Responsibility

Another cornerstone of the BASIS educational philosophy is that students will be successful in every measure of life if they develop an individual sense of responsibility for their success. While support and engagement from parents can play a vital role in students' success, students who rely on micromanagement and supervision from their parents are more likely to struggle in college than students who develop skills to hold themselves accountable for setting and meeting their own academic goals. BASIS strikes the correct balance by encouraging parents to support their children's education while still allowing students, through guided autonomy, to build the skills and personal responsibility they will need to succeed in college and beyond. This autonomy is built up gradually and over a number of years.

BASIS actively teaches students to be well organized and empowers them to take responsibility for their education. One of the primary methods of developing student responsibility for their academic program is by teaching strong organizational skills. These skills, when learned early with consistent reinforcement throughout the BASIS program are one of the fundamental tenants of a strong early education program that prepares students for later grades. The Communication Journal is the primary method of communication between parents, teachers, and staff with regard to a student's academic performance or classroom behavior. Students must bring the CJ to every class, every day. It is the most important tool for students to manage their assignments and to take responsibility for their own learning.

Instead of posting homework assignments online, BASIS teachers announce assignments during class. This teaches students to pay close attention in class, to take responsibility for knowing due dates rather than relying on their parents, to make sure they understand their assignments, and to complete homework on time. Students are assessed regularly to check understanding, and starting in 6th grade, students are required to pass comprehensive examinations in each core subject in order to progress to the next grade level. Comprehensive exams ensure that students are prepared to move onward to more advanced material. Knowing they will be held accountable for information disseminated in class and via homework, students take their education seriously and quickly learn to "own it." As students progress through the grade levels, they become models for younger students and help create a culture of positive and purposeful peer support.

3. Teaching Good Study Habits and Providing Support

The academic program at BASIS Charter Schools is among the most accelerated in the country. Student success, therefore, is inextricably linked to good study habits. BASIS believes that these skills must be taught and practiced. Students in the lower school grades learn how to take notes, manage their time, and organize their work. This starts in kindergarten, where students first keep communication journals to track their assignments each day. Teachers actively oversee the progress of their students and identify those who they believe might benefit from additional support. Any student may attend tutoring sessions with their teachers or participate in peer tutoring if they would like increased one-on-one time to help reach their academic goals.

4. Building Work Ethic

BASIS aims to teach students that success is the result of hard work. Whether a student is at the top of the class or struggling to keep pace with the demands of the BASIS curriculum, every BASIS student is encouraged to improve and to reach for his or her highest individual academic potential.

The BASIS philosophy underscores that every student can be successful at BASIS. Not only do our teachers have an excellent work ethic and yearn to pass that along to their students, but they dedicate time and energy to ensuring all students have every opportunity to receive support they might need. We know that all students do not learn in the same way. So, in addition to differentiating instruction in the classroom, teachers hold study hour and help student build individual academic goals that they can achieve and set themselves on a path to success.

<u>Relation to target population</u>

The families who choose to send their students to BASIS are those seeking the best education in the world. The success of the existing BASIS Mesa school has shown that demand for this type of education is particularly high in the BASIS Mesa K-6 area. The BASIS program provides students from these families

with the tools necessary to reach that goal—the four tenets listed above—and achieve at an internationally competitive level. Our results clearly demonstrate the BASIS educational philosophy's effectiveness for nearly any child meeting those simple criteria.

In conclusion, the BASIS philosophy for our K-6 students is simple: We offer students a world-class liberal arts education in order to prepare them to flourish in the rigorous BASIS Upper School program, or wherever they choose to go for their education after leaving BASIS Mesa K-6. The philosophy described above has been successful in our 12 existing schools across the country, and there is no doubt that the high academic standards and the emphasis on student accountability that are the foundation of the BASIS philosophy have helped our students achieve unparalleled academic excellence.