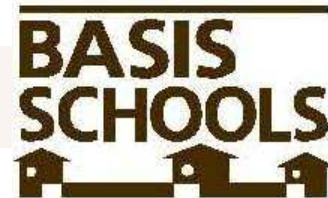


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## **BASIS Tucson named among top ten US high schools**

Tucson—The state's most recognizable school is topping national rankings once again. BASIS Tucson, a charter school housed in a converted bank across from El Con Mall on Broadway Blvd, ranked in the top ten on *US News and World Report's* 2009 list of America's Best High Schools, making it Arizona's top ranked school again this year. BASIS has been rated a "Gold Medal" school and has placed in *US News's* top 20 since the ranking's inception, placing 16<sup>th</sup> in 2007, 13<sup>th</sup> in 2008 and climbing to 9<sup>th</sup> in 2009. In fact, BASIS is one of only two schools in Arizona designated as a "Gold Medal" school this year. BASIS Tucson has also placed in *Newsweek's* top ten ranking of the best public high school for college readiness since 2006, grabbing the #1 spot in 2008.

BASIS is the feature of a recently released documentary entitled "2 Million Minutes: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Solution," which presents the school as a solution to the woes of the American educational system. Executive producer, Robert Compton began filming his documentary series "2 Million Minutes" after traveling through India and China and concluding that American students are held to much less rigorous standards than their international peers – a circumstance that could render them, and the United States, less able to compete in the global marketplace. According to Mr. Compton, BASIS "...is academically as rigorous as anything I have seen in the world; more rigorous than Finland, more rigorous than the best in India and China."

BASIS Tucson's top ten ranking in *US News* puts it ahead of all other Arizona public schools, including magnet schools such as Tucson's University High School (UHS) which placed 21<sup>st</sup>. Unlike magnet schools, which are comprised of gifted students chosen through stringent entrance examinations, BASIS Tucson is an open-enrollment charter school. All students can attend BASIS as long as there is space available, and if more students are interested than the school can accommodate a lottery is performed to decide who will gain admissions. This fact demonstrates that the BASIS method enables non-gifted and gifted students alike to make the most of their potential.

The BASIS philosophy is a simple one – set high standards for *all* students, give teachers as much autonomy as possible in designing their curriculum and syllabi, and hold teachers and students accountable for their results through assessment and data analysis. The school rewards teachers for learning gains made by their students through merit based salary supplements and bonuses.

BASIS Tucson serves students in grades 5 – 12. The curriculum for the Upper School grades is centered on the College Board's AP courses and exams. Students can begin taking AP courses and exams in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and must take at least 1 AP exam in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 2 in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and 3 in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. The high school program requires students to take at least 8 AP courses and 6 AP exams, but many students choose to take up to 10 or 11.

BASIS prepares students for the rigors of this high school program in the middle school grades. By bringing high-level content standards down to lower grade levels, BASIS teachers ensure students are exposed to these concepts early and often and have mastered the material by the time they enroll in Honors and AP level courses in high school. BASIS students take Latin and Classics in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade they begin taking biology, chemistry, and physics as separate subjects, like they do in many European countries, in 7<sup>th</sup> grade they take Algebra 1, and in 8<sup>th</sup> grade they take an economics course which is roughly comparable to an introductory college level course.

Beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, all students are required to pass comprehensive exams in all core subjects to move on to the next grade level. These exams are specific assessment tools used to evaluate the extent to which students master and retain the material taught during the school year and to evaluate how BASIS students perform compared to external and international standards.

By setting high standards for *all* students, giving teachers control over curriculum design, and holding teachers and students accountable for their results, BASIS has achieved incredible results. To learn more about this model for educational reform, visit [www.basistucson.org](http://www.basistucson.org) or contact BASIS Tucson Schools Director, Carolyn McGarvey.

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