

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

### **Q. Why are you offering an online-only option? Won't each individual school have this?**

**A:** Some of our currently enrolled BASIS Independent School families requested the option to open an all-virtual BASIS Independent program for the 2020-21 school year to serve families who would prefer NOT to return to campus, even when campuses reopen as planned. After surveying our currently enrolled families, we determined that we could move forward with this option for students in grades 2-8.

Individual BASIS Independent Schools will operate based on the guidelines of state and county health officials, which will likely mean periods of blended learning (a mixture of in-person and online classes), along with periods of being fully online.

### **Q: Will the curriculum be the same as the BASIS Independent (Brooklyn, Fremont, Manhattan, McLean, Silicon Valley) curriculum?**

**A:** Yes. Please understand that by “curriculum,” we mean “the required scope and sequence of courses and the major objectives within each course.” Students at all BASIS Independent Schools share the BASIS Curriculum, which is the same irrespective of setting or format. The activities, instruction, assessments, etc. (including which courses are offered “live” and how often) may vary, but the education BIO students receive will be of the same high quality, with the same expert teachers, as at each brick and mortar campus. It will not be “less” than students’ home campuses. On the contrary, without needing to consider what local and state health authorities determine is safe for students’ proximity to each other, there will be zero time spent transitioning between hybrid and distance learning, which will maximize time spent learning. Ultimately, we all need students to be able to smoothly and confidently transfer back to their “home” campus and are working diligently with all our colleagues and our central Curriculum Team to ensure that this will be the case.

### **Q. What courses will my student take?**

**A:** Students in grades 2-5 will have the same courses they would on-campus, including Engineering, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, and Music. The required courses for grades 6-8 will be the same as on-campus, as well, but the electives and world languages may vary from the courses offered at each BASIS Independent School. More details about exact elective choices are coming soon; please reference the course catalog for potential electives

### **Q: If the local campus goes fully online, would we be able to switch to that program?**

**A:** While this is an understandable question, I speak on behalf of our BASIS Independent colleagues when I say that this is not encouraged. We are asking that parents only switch students at the close of a trimester, as staffing and social distancing considerations are all being made based on exact student counts in every trimester. Moving back and forth frequently will not be an option so that all students and schools are as successful and safe as possible.

### **Q: Are grades 2-8 a Trimester Model?**

**A:** Actually, all students at all campuses will be on trimesters in 2020-21. This decision was made to streamline the process of grade reports and the transition for students between grades. Therefore, there will not be an issue if students move from BIO to their “home” campus mid-year, and why we are asking that students wait until the close of a trimester to make such a change, if elected.

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**Q: How will the students get to “know” each other?**

**A:** By now, our teachers have been planning for many weeks for the possibility of every campus opening in a distance learning setting. While few would say that it is ideal for students to acquaint themselves with their classmates and teachers online, our teachers are prepared and, dare we say, enthusiastic for this opportunity. They are still completely dedicated to their profession and their students, and will bring their enthusiasm to BIO the same as they would their own campus. We are also working on a plan for a “virtual BOSS Camp,” which will serve some of these purposes as well, especially for incoming families that are new to BASIS Independent Schools.

**Q: What will happen if students are unable to attend all lessons? Will they be penalized somehow?**

**A:** It is very difficult to provide a firm “yes” or “no” answer on this. In general, the answer is no—we understand that schedules, the availability of devices within your home, and other considerations may impede a student’s ability to be available for a given live lesson. Please understand, however, that some lessons may be synchronous for a variety of purposes, including key discussions, assessments, small group work, etc.; not all (or even many) synchronous sessions will be passive on the student’s part. That said, flexibility is certainly possible, and we want our students to be successful. It is our plan to record all live sessions, but we are still finalizing logistical and security-related details related to this. Please do your part to communicate with teachers and me if anything comes up, so that we can ensure that your student does not fall behind in his or her coursework.

**Q. What will be the tuition?**

**A:** Tuition for the online-only option will be identical to the tuition you would pay for your student(s) on-campus. We are confident that students will be well-supported and will be offered a world-class education from the best possible teachers, online or in-person! This also allows for students to transfer back to their “home” campus mid-year if they wish to return (space/capacity permitting).

## SCHOOL TIMING

**Q: What will the calendar and schedule be?**

**A:** The academic year will start after Labor Day on Tuesday, September 8. The academic year will end on Thursday, June 24.

For grades 2-8, the online-only schedule will approximate the same number of minutes that our brick-and-mortar campuses will offer in their hybrid schedules (in a hybrid schedule, students spend some time on campus and some time off, as in an A/B schedule to keep students distant from each other) or in a full distance learning schedule. We require all classes to include the same components as they would in the classroom: instruction, practice/application (with teacher feedback), and independent work/homework. Courses will be a mix of synchronous (done all together at the same time, such as a live lecture) and asynchronous (done at any time that is convenient for the student) activities. The schedule of synchronous activities will be in the middle of the day and afternoon, so as to work best for the mix of time zones across our network. Asynchronous activities can be done at a time that is convenient to students.

**Q: When does the school day start?**

**A:** For families on the west coast, the school day will run from 8:00 AM to 1:45 PM. For students residing on the east coast, the school day will run from 11:00 AM to 4:45 PM.

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**Q: The sample schedule start times differ between east and west coast, what will my (east coast) student do until 11am? What will my (west coast) student do after 2 pm?**

**A:** Not all courses will be synchronous. There are many asynchronous activities that students will need to do, as well as courses that we envision will take place entirely asynchronously. We recommend that students maintain a diligent, full-day schedule, with asynchronous activities taking place in whichever portion of the day does not entail synchronous lessons. Those times can also be used for office hours (pending teacher availability), student support, etc.

**Q: What will be the timing of the live sessions?**

**A:** The BIO team is still finalizing the exact schedule, and this is mostly to do with the fact that we have not yet firmly chosen the teachers who have volunteered to be involved in BIO. We will share the finalized schedule the minute we are able to! We are aiming for several hours of synchronous lessons per day, which will occur in the middle of the day to account for the time zones in which our families reside.

**Q: Why can't BIO have the same first and last day of school as my student's "home" campus?**

**A:** Choosing a calendar for BIO was a tricky venture because our start and end dates vary so much across the country. Our start and end dates are the same as our New York campuses, and approximately the same as our McLean campus. We know that it is different for our west coast campuses, and we apologize for any inconvenience that this difference may incur. As an education solution that many families are consciously choosing for the full school year, however, the choice of calendar dates should not have a big effect on their experience.

**Q: Will students have a lunch break?**

**A:** There will be break time built into the school day; we take seriously the need for students to have rest, healthy nutrition, and social-emotional stimulation/support.

## SUBJECT EXPERT TEACHERS

**Q: How many teachers will there be from my "home" campus? When can we get some bios or more information from/above them?**

**A:** We are actively seeking teachers from across the BASIS Independent network. Firm decisions cannot be made until families have signed the enrollment addendums, but the wheels are in motion. Please know that we are working diligently on a staffing solution that ensures that students at BIO will not have a substantially different educational experience than any of their BASIS Independent peers.

**Q. What teachers will my student have? How will we get to know them?**

**A:** This online-only option will be staffed by existing BASIS Independent teachers who are beloved at their own campuses. Exact staff choices are yet to be determined, but will be a mix of teachers from across our network. We have the same rigorous hiring practices for Subject Expert Teachers and Learning Expert Teachers across our network, so please be assured that they are wonderful, caring teachers who will offer challenging and engaging instruction no matter the format. We will have a "meet the teachers" event prior to the first day of school.

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## ELECTIVES

### **Q: What are the elective options for grades 6-8?**

**A:** We plan on offering arts courses for specials and electives in all grades, at a minimum. Pending teacher selection, we may also be able to offer electives that these teachers are qualified to teach. Beyond this, we may be able to utilize our sister school within Spring for additional electives. We will inform all families of elective choices shortly. While we cannot, of course, guarantee the exact electives that each brick and mortar campus can offer, we know that choice is important for students, and we will do our best to ensure that students take an elective that they will enjoy.

### **Q: If other schools like in NY and VA do not reopen physically due to surge in cases, does this mean they will all join BIO or with it be conducted separately online from BIO?**

**A:** BASIS Independent Online should be regarded as a completely separate campus from all other BASIS Independent Schools. If any one BASIS Independent School must move to full distance learning, they will not join BASIS Independent Online. They will move back to traditional education or a hybrid schedule as soon as it is considered safe to do so, and BIO will remain completely online.

## TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM

### **Q. What technology/learning management system (LMS) will my student use?**

**A:** While we still have Zoom and Microsoft Teams available, as we did for distance learning in the 2019-20 school year, we will also be utilizing Schoology, an LMS designed for schools and built by/integrated with PowerSchool. Students and families will receive training and support on all systems prior to school starting, and at any point throughout the year as-needed.

BIO will use ParentSquare the same as all other campuses. The other Heads of School want very much to keep BIO families informed and included as much as possible, and we are working on solutions for families to see multiple ParentSquare updates, or some other way to make sure that the transition back is smooth.

Student Support

### **Q. Will there still be student support?**

**A:** Absolutely! Students will still be encouraged to drop into Student Hours, as they would on-campus (there will be Parent Hours as well), for small-group support. We will also have teacher- and administrator-driven student support based on all the same indicators as there are on campus.

### **Q: Can BIO release a short sample video on how the asynchronous classes will work? What about the live lessons?**

**A:** This is a good request, and we will prepare more information about asynchronous classes (and asynchronous activities) soon. Live lessons will vary a great deal by grade level, course, and teacher; we can assure you each teacher will make sure that students and families understand the structure and expectations of all lessons, synchronous or asynchronous.

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## AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

**Q: Will there be any after school activities or clubs?**

**A:** We absolutely wish to maintain the experience our students would have at their home campuses, including activities. We are working with the Heads of School at each campus to determine the extent to which it will be possible to maintain.