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BASIS continues school expansion overseas with new campus in Prague

The popular BASIS network of charter and private schools is continuing its overseas expansion with a new campus opening in 2020 in Prague, the first European offering for the top-ranked educational program.

The new school will enroll students from kindergarten through the 12th grade and will be open to children from the Czech Republic as well as those with foreign passports. The establishment of the first European campus for BASIS comes a year after the school network announced its first international operation in Shenzhen, a bustling financial city of more than 10 million near the southern border of mainland China.



BASIS Oro Valley students participate in a 9th grade Advanced Placement Chemistry Lab. BASIS Oro Valley is ranked No. 1 in The Washington Post's 2016 America's Most Challenging High Schools list. (Photo by Photo by Dan Williams, Kalare Studios)

[BASIS, one of America's top charter school networks, seeks new turf: China]

The BASIS network's humble beginnings can be traced back to a Tucson shopping mall, where Michael and Olga Block opened their first school with the aim of cultivating a new educational standard for American children based on concepts from Asian and European classrooms. In the 18 years since, the 26 BASIS schools have become known for their rigorous curriculum.

With campuses from Silicon Valley to the District, BASIS schools have achieved acclaim for pushing students to succeed in an academically challenging environment. The model has resulted in two of the BASIS schools in Arizona being named in the top three public schools in the country according to U.S. News and World Report. The BASIS Oro Valley school ranked at the top of The Washington Post's national list of America's Most Challenging High Schools in 2016, and BASIS had three of the top five, including its schools in Flagstaff (No. 2) and Tucson North (No. 5).

[America's Most Challenging High Schools]

The new school in Prague will serve as a recruitment center for the network's European expansion and initiatives in the digital textbook arena. Some of the staff in Prague will work on a tablet application "that can ultimately replace textbooks in our classrooms and provide us with a more effective way to implement our educational model," according to a statement from BASIS.

[Texas, Arizona high schools dominate new U.S. News rankings]

"Prague will be a new model for us, targeting both international families but also very much targeting domestic families in Prague," said Mark Reford, a BASIS executive. Reford said the new school plans to open in fall 2020 and will enroll between 400 and 600 students.

By **T. Rees Shapiro** December 7, 2016