

# THE BASIS SCOTTSDALE GAZETTE

## BASIS WELCOMES YOU BACK WITH OPEN BY GINA RYU (BUT SOCIALLY DISTANCED) ARMS

The 2020-2021 school year has taken an unusual form — all in-person instruction has been suspended for the beginning of the year. To accommodate these new circumstances as a result of COVID-19, BASIS.ed implemented a “Families Choose” program this year, in which parents can choose to have their children continue online schooling or in-person instruction, depending on their survey response each grading period or trimester.

Since school began on August 11th, all students have been taking classes through the SPORKForAll and Microsoft Teams software. Students have been able to attend school from the comfort of their own homes, completing an attestation form each day to confirm their attendance and participation in learning. However, as of September 4th, BASIS.ed has announced that Maricopa County has met the benchmarks set by the Arizona Department of Health to begin reopening schools for those families that opt into the in-person learning program. Although all plans are subject to change given the dynamic environment, the BASIS Scottsdale administration released a tentative multi-phase plan for reopening.

There are 5 phases in total. In Phase 0, which began on September 7th, the “Families Choose” survey was made available to families and final preparations to the building were made. In Phase 1, which began on September 14th,



Source: BASIS Scottsdale

specific guidance on the phased approach to a safe reopening was distributed throughout the week to teachers, parents, and students. In Phase 2, on September 21st, teachers returned to campus for training and final preparations. For this week, distance learning was asynchronous and consisted of pre-recorded sessions/activities for students to independently complete, similar to the end of the last school year. On September 28th, the start of Phase 3 marked the implementation of “Families Choose” for grades 5-8; students who elected in-person instruction return to campus, while students who elected online instruction continue to learn at home. Phase 4, which will launch on October 12th

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### SAVE THE DATE

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>September 28: 5<sup>th</sup>-<br/>7<sup>th</sup> In-Person<br/>Return</b> | <b>October 12: 9<sup>th</sup>-<br/>12<sup>th</sup> In-Person<br/>Return</b> |
| <b>October 5-9:<br/>Fall Break</b>   | <b>October 30: End<br/>of Trimester 1</b>                                   |

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following fall break, marks the implementation of “Families Choose” for grades 9-12 in the same fashion.

Although nothing is set in stone, BASIS.ed has released a Mitigation Plan for all BASIS charter schools, detailing what form in-person instruction could possibly take. BASIS.ed has assured that each BASIS campus will be equipped to readily implement physical distancing, coordinated movement, effective hygiene practices, and the location of sanitization stations. For example, all students will be required to indicate when they both enter and leave a restroom to mark how many students occupy it at a given time. The BASIS Scottsdale administration has also assured that the bathrooms will be cleaned hourly to ensure proper hygiene. In addition, each school building’s HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) system will be evaluated to meet suggested ventilation standards, and enhanced cleaning measures will be taken both during the school day and at night. Upon entering the BASIS building, students will be required to have a signed Health Attestation Form or be re-routed to an alternative entrance to have their temperature screened in the absence of this form.

Students and staff will also all be required to wear face coverings in accordance with governmental guidelines. The only exceptions to the face-covering policy for students are “during strenuous, physical activity where physical distancing is maintained; and school-designated

face-covering breaks where physical distancing is maintained.” For teachers, the exceptions to the face-covering policy are “during whole-class instruction where physical distancing is maintained and when working in an environment where physical distancing is maintained.” No matter what, there is an emphasis placed on social distancing to mitigate the spread of COVID-19: all desks in BASIS classrooms will be marked clearly to show where a student may/may not sit. During the day, all students and staff will need to regularly wash or sanitize their hands. As an extra precaution, the Early Bird and Late Bird programs will be staggered and students will be spaced out. Additionally, lunches will be eaten in classrooms instead of the MPR.

As for how both in-person and distance learning will take place simultaneously, no clear information has been established yet. However, students returning to school have been informed that they will need to bring their computers and continue using the Microsoft Teams software. Regardless of whether students decide to choose in-person learning or online learning, they always have the choice to change their preferences, thanks to the “Families Choose” program. Even with the uncertainty that our school faces in these ever-changing times, teachers are working in close coordination with the administration to ensure that students receive the best education possible, regardless of what form—in-person or online—that learning takes.



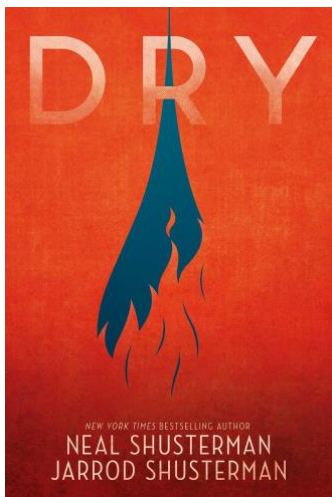
Source: BASIS Scottsdale

# FUN READS FOR QUARANTINED TEENS BY MEENAL SRIVASTAVA

Since quarantine trapped most of us in the confines of our homes, we have all been on the search for new activities to fill our time. While social media, exercise, or spending time with family are great options, there is also an engaging activity that is both pleasurable, relaxing, and intellectually stimulating: reading. Below, I've compiled a set of great novels to pass time or distract yourself from COVID-19 (or school-related) anxieties.

## 1. *Dry* by Jarrod Shusterman and Neal Shusterman

The Shustermans meld together philosophical thought and action scenes in this dystopian novel about a catastrophic drought in California. The authors complement a tense plotline by choosing a familiar setting, the U.S.A, and a time period not too far in the future. Most disaster novels choose settings or time periods that make the conflict feel removed and unimaginable to readers. Conversely, all of us can relate to the novel's disastrous water shortage as a consequence of human negligence that can happen anywhere (it also helps that Arizona is mentioned in the book). The combination of realism, traditional heart-stopping action, and relevant issues make this a great read for any fan of dystopian novels.



## 2. *Nyxia* by Scott Reintgen

*Nyxia*, a science-fiction novel by Scott Reintgen, is an intriguing book for teens centered around an extraterrestrial space voyage. Teenagers from around the world are recruited to mine a planet called Eden for Nyxia, a mysterious and valuable substance. Full of plot twists and dynamic character interactions, this novel keeps you hooked right from the get-go. My personal favorite parts include the array of diverse characters and the stunning secrets revealed throughout the complex journey.

## 3. *Running Out of Time* by Margaret Peterson

Haddix

Jessie's world is flipped upside down when she finds out that her hometown is actually a staged historical reenactment of the 1840s made for tourists, who view the town from the outside using hidden cameras. After a diphtheria outbreak strikes the town, she must sneak out into the real world. With Haddix's trademark emphasis on the character's emotions, readers can empathize with Jessie throughout her quest in the modern world. Haddix accomplishes this without long, rambling paragraphs describing the protagonist's thoughts, reactions, and emotions, a common practice in her other book series. Overall, she crafts a heart-pounding novel that keeps the reader on their toes throughout.



With school having started once again, there is far less time to fulfill our quarantine goals. However, reading is a pastime that has no boundaries, and these books are fantastic ways to take a break, relieve stress, and enjoy new fictional worlds. From dystopian California to 19th-century Indiana, these three novels will keep you engaged from start to finish.

# DIVERSIFY OUR NARRATIVE TAKES ON BASIS

BY GINA  
RYU

Since March 2020, our country has changed substantially. During a nationwide shutdown due to COVID-19, our nation was shocked once again due to the killing of George Floyd and the subsequent aftermath. These events sparked outrage and calls to increase racial sensitivity. Students in various academic institutions have been calling for increased diversity and anti-racism education within their own school systems. One such organization founded to address these concerns is Diversify Our Narrative.

Diversify Our Narrative is a student-led initiative that targets U.S.A. school boards to expand their curricula with diverse and anti-racist texts. The founders of this movement tracked the root of racial issues to the education system, which they hope to target to improve knowledge of racial history and modern-day events. The organization's mission is "to fight to be anti-racist and encourage a productive dialogue on race and identity among our student bodies through the inclusion of racially diverse, anti-racist texts in USA Schools," and specifically in English and Literature classes. Founded by two Stanford students in June 2020, the organization now has over 4000 organizers (and counting) across the United States. Among these chapters is one recently formed by students and alumni among the BASIS Charter Schools network.

The current BASIS chapter has about 20 members, ranging from current high schoolers to alumni. The BASIS chapter is not affiliated with any BASIS school or administration, but aims to petition the BASIS community for

increased racially diverse education in the BASIS curriculum. The Diversify Our Narrative AZ BASIS petition includes six propositions total. Most importantly, the chapter petitions for at least two literary texts to be included in every English class from grades 5-11 which are written by a person of color (POC). They also hope that discussion of the texts should not only place the traditional focus on rhetorical devices and literary elements, but also center on race and modern issues faced by POC communities. Notably, they also hope to expand the BASIS curriculum to include at least one ethnic studies senior capstone or elective course. All provisions are aimed towards increasing the representation and sensitivity surrounding racial minorities. Although not all provisions may be able to be implemented, the students involved believe that changing the high school curriculum is the first step to enacting permanent, structural change to help dismantle systemic racism. Students of Diversify Our Narrative hope that taking the first step will prompt impetus for wider change within the community.

The students of the BASIS organization aim to "diversify our narrative and use our school system to combat oppression and work towards a more equal and just world for all." Students across the BASIS network have joined forces in unity, taking a stand to improve diversity and create a more aware and appreciative BASIS community. Diversify Our Narrative students believe that encouraging comprehensive education to combat unconscious apathy is key to expanding and "diversifying" the perspective of students within the community.



Source: Diversify Our Narrative BASIS

# EAST COAST HURRICANES: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

BY KISHORE  
RAJESH

Over the past few months, the eastern United States has suffered under the brunt of a multitude of hurricanes from the Atlantic Ocean. So far, this year is making out to be the worst hurricane season ever, with records being broken for the number of storms formed by a certain time. Twenty storms were recorded by mid-September, which surpassed the earlier record of 20 recorded storms by October. In total, the previous worst year was 2005, with 28 total tropical storms; at its current pace, this year may have more than that.

The first hurricane in 2020 was Hurricane Hanna, which hit Padre Island, Texas on July 25th. Luckily, it quickly weakened into a tropical depression by the next day. Three days later, however, Hurricane Isaias hit North Carolina. Though it also downgraded to a tropical storm a day later, it killed at least five people.

So far, the deadliest hurricane this year was Hurricane Laura, a Category 4 hurricane, which hit Louisiana on August 27th, killing 42 people before weakening to a tropical storm later in the day. In addition, it killed 35 people in Hispañola and caused flooding in Salinas, Puerto Rico. Hurricane Marco formed the same day as Hurricane Laura, but was only classified as Category 1, later weakening into a tropical storm before arriving near the mouth of the Mississippi River on August 24th.

The next storm, Hurricane Nana, did not collide with the U.S., but it did strike Belize. While it did not result in any deaths, it did cause an estimated \$10.2 million in damages to Belizean banana crops, possibly hindering the Belizean economy in the coming years.

The measure of the staggering number of hurricanes this year is shown through the naming system as well. In order to categorize the hurricanes, meteorologists have a list of names for tropical storms, ordered alphabetically, which they rotate every six years. However, some names are retired and replaced with new ones, especially if the name becomes associated with a great tragedy. If more than twenty-one tropical storms occur, then meteorologists resort to using Greek characters. Hurricane Paulette was the first storm to be given a completely unique name this year, and it marked the record for the earliest time by which 16 storms have formed in a year. As a Category 2 hurricane, it caused severe damage to

Bermuda, where it made landfall on September 14th. In addition, the rough surf produced by the storm led to excessive flooding in the East Coast, drowning a man in New Jersey.

The earliest 18th tropical storm to form in a year since Hurricane Stan in 2005, Tropical Storm Sally morphed into a Category 2 hurricane on September 15th, making landfall in Alabama and causing harsh flash flooding in Florida, forcing many to evacuate. Hurricane Teddy was the earliest 19th tropical storm (again, beating the record from 2005). While fluctuating between a Category 3 and Category 4 hurricane, it drowned a man and woman in Puerto Rico.

Given that hurricane season usually ends around the end of November, it is likely that scientists will have to resort to using Greek letters for this year's tropical storm names, which has not happened since 2005. In terms of the sheer number of hurricanes, 2020 has proven to be one of, if not the worst tropical storm seasons in history. Coupled with the pandemic, many are finding it difficult to evacuate. The hurricanes, along with the forest fires ravaging the west coast, are two distinct catastrophes demonstrating the effects of global climate change, which must be addressed quickly to mitigate the increasingly disastrous damage.



Damage caused by Hurricane Laura (Source: ABC News)

# COVID-19 VACCINE RELEASE — SOONER OR LATER?

BY ETHAN WILK

While social distancing, masks, and sanitary practices have helped slow the spread of the coronavirus, the development of a vaccine is perhaps the only solution that could see a return to life as it was before. The United States as a whole has been incessantly ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic for six months now, and it continues to infect millions, complicate social gatherings, and bankrupt small businesses. In a time like this, it follows that one would wonder, “when will there be a vaccine?”

Surprisingly, in Russia, a vaccine for the COVID-19 pathogen has already been approved. Indeed, the Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology in Moscow received certification from the nation’s Ministry of Health to begin public testing on citizens of vulnerable groups in August, a controversial decision that many claimed to be driven more predominantly by political fuel than public interest. Regardless of motive, the foreign development begs a domestic response from the U.S., and luckily, that response may come sooner rather than later.

According to GAVI, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations, the U.S. has entered Phase 3 trials for its mRNA vaccine, an innovation developed by researchers at Moderna Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Phase 3 clinical testing entails a large-scale test group for the vaccine, usually involving tens of thousands of individuals, and aims to address the effectiveness of the treatment across various demographics, as well as note any rare side effects.

In addition, the pharmaceutical companies GSK and Sanofi are working on Phase 2 trials for their adjuvanted recombinant vaccine. They expect to conduct Phase 3 trials by the end of the year, with vaccines beginning to be distributed in early 2021 if successful. In fact, the U.S. has already ordered 100 million doses from the two companies. Once complete, vaccines are typically assessed, reworked if necessary, and eventually approved for the general public. However, this final process may take much longer than some anticipate.

Due to the obscure and uncharted nature of the pandemic, estimations of the vaccine’s release date are wide-ranging, with the World Health Organization (WHO) not expecting a reliable treatment until mid-2021 — an estimation that many still consider to be a quixotic ambition. To truly grasp how monumental such a release date would be, consider this: even if the vaccine’s approval was delayed until the end of 2023, this vaccine sanction would be faster than any other in U.S. history (the next closest being the mumps vaccine, which took four years for public approval).

Unfortunately, researchers simply do not have all the information to fairly assess when a vaccine will be approved for the public. But, with the majority of estimations centering around some time in 2021, it seems that the focus for now should be on remembering to wear masks, staying optimistic, and not forgetting to sign in through SPORK.



Scientist working in a Moderna lab on Feb. 28, 2020  
(Source: David L. Ryan)

# OPINION

## ONLINE LEARNING: TAKING THE GOOD WITH THE BAD

BY ALLISON LI

With the summer over, we all get to look forward to a wonderful new school year. Or...maybe not. Because of COVID-19, which caused school closures following spring break in March, we have stayed indoors for far too long. Not only did quarantine drag through summer, but it has also now prevented students from physically returning to school. With distance learning in place for the time being, I took a look at some of the positives and negatives of our new school experience these past few months.

One of the most noticeable drawbacks of online learning is the extraordinary amount of screen usage. My school day has never felt more tiring — not only do we attend live sessions for eight hours a day, but we also spend countless hours afterwards on our computers doing homework. Unlike during physical learning, there are little opportunities to stretch your legs, and passing periods feel much too short, providing few chances to take a break from the technology.

Another con of distance learning has been the almost complete lack of socialization. Normally, passing periods and lunch breaks provide opportunities to interact with our friends, allowing a much-needed reprieve from the stress of classes. School is an opportunity to make new friends, reconnect with teachers and staff, and socialize with each other. With distance learning, however, school has been strictly about learning, a change that I believe could be harmful to mental health. In addition, the interactions that take place in the classroom between peers are also valuable, forging a sense of togetherness. At home, in the majority of my classes, no one has their camera turned on, and people rarely unmute themselves to speak. While there are a multitude of reasons for this, and having a camera on is understandably difficult or not possible for some, there is undoubtedly a lack of connection throughout the day.

Despite this, there are also definitely some positives about the online school experience. For one, the flexibility in access to course materials is a huge plus. Ordinarily, missing a day of class means hunting down notes from peers, self-studying to catch up, and trying to find out which assignments you missed. However, with

each lecture being recorded, and homework readily available in the “Assignments” tab on Microsoft Teams, it becomes much easier to stay on track if one misses a day (or falls asleep). With in-person classes, it is usually a struggle to ensure you don’t miss the announcement of assignments if they are not written down. Another benefit for those who live far away is the ability to wake up and immediately attend school, rather than having to drive from cities such as Peoria or Chandler.

Online school is quite different from in-person school for teachers as well. Most teachers cannot actually see the students who they are teaching, and there is a lack of personal connection that may normally exist, which creates some issues when it comes to lecturing and notetaking. Because of this, some have shifted the format of their classes to the benefit of everyone involved. For example, in both my Honors Biology class and AP European History class, my teachers have provided us with notes beforehand, using the class meetings to explain the notes. Compared to students, I think that teachers can have an equally difficult time adjusting to this type of school.

With hybrid learning soon to be instituted, some students will be going back to in-person learning for the first time in six months. While it will be strange with the new social distancing measures and the lack of a full student body, it might be nice to have a return to some normalcy. As I discussed, there are some great benefits to online school, but also some harmful drawbacks. Whether online or physical learning is better varies from person-to-person, but it has been a unique experience that we can all reflect on as we slowly move into a new chapter in our lives.



Source: Google Images

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# MATH MINDBENDERS

BY KISHORE RAJESH

**Algebra:**

Suppose I write down all the numbers from 1 to 1000 inclusive. Which digit do I write the most? Which one do I write the least?

**Precalculus:**

Suppose we have a piece of paper. If we draw a straight line, we split it into two parts. If we draw two straight lines, we can get a maximum of 4 parts. What if we draw 3 straight lines? 4? 5? Can you generalize this to  $n$  straight lines?

**Calculus:**

A cone has a circular base of radius  $(5-t)$  and a height of  $20/(5-t)$ . Find the maximum area of the cone.

**Discrete Math:**

We know ways to find out if a number is divisible by all primes up to 11. Find a rule to determine whether a number is divisible by 13.

**History of Math:**

An Egyptian Fraction is a fraction in which the numerator is 1. Find a way to express the Egyptian Fraction  $1/a$  as a sum of two distinct Egyptian Fractions, where  $a > 1$ .

**Multivariable Calculus:**

Suppose the determinant of a 3 by 3 matrix formed by the vectors  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  is  $D$ . The determinant of the 3 by 3 matrix formed by the vectors  $a \times b$ ,  $b \times c$ , and  $c \times a$  is  $k \cdot (D^n)$ , where  $k$  and  $n$  are both integers. Find  $k$  and  $n$ .

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# ANAGRAMS!

BY KISHORE RAJESH

Each of the following phrases is an anagram (a reordering of letters) of a topic discussed in this month's Gazette (any punctuation or capitalization is not part of the anagram):

1. Frayed Inertia Survivor
2. Icon Uncovers Caviar
3. Nice Trashcan Ritual
4. Bogus Goose Knits
5. Begone, Aspirins!
6. Insect Dinner Gala

Unscramble the words to find out what the phrases are supposed to be.

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# MEME OF THE MONTH

BY VIRAJ MEHTA



Solutions to Anagrams on Page 8:

- 1. Diversify Our Narrative
- 2. Coronavirus Vaccine
- 3. Atlantic Hurricanes
- 4. Book Suggestions
- 5. BASIS Reopening
- 6. Distance Learning

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