



**Tessellations**  
The Beneventi School  
**Middle School Director**  
Cupertino, CA



## Background

Serving gifted students and their families from Pre-K to Grade 12, Tessellations (Tessie) provides an appropriately challenging experiential education that recognizes and nurtures the individual strengths of gifted learners, empowering them to confidently express who they are and pursue a meaningful life. Often, when students start at Tessie, it is the first time they feel like they belong and are interacting with intellectual peers. Whether discussing every airplane model that was ever built since the first flight or explaining to another student the concept of infinity, students greet each other's interests with enthusiasm, kindness, and awe. Tessie teachers foster their students' curiosity and are appropriately attuned to the corresponding sensitivities that some of these learners display. Exploration, openness, and a commitment to meet the developmental needs of all its students are what you'll find at the heart of this new and still developing school.



Born out of the demand of Silicon Valley's families, Tessie opened in 2020 through a collaboration between a group of like-minded families and educators. In just five years, Tessie has grown from serving 30 gifted learners online to almost 300 on a 9.4-acre main campus, as well as an additional local nature campus that provides easy access to the outdoor exploration—a key part of the project-based program. Tessie's promise is to support gifted learners in their education and development so that these young people develop the mindset and skills to contribute to creative and innovative life-changing solutions.

## Tessellations at a Glance

### Mission

Tessellations provides challenging experiential education that recognizes and nurtures the individual strengths of gifted learners, empowering them to confidently express who they are and pursue a meaningful life.

### Vision

We are a community of imaginative, empathetic, productive, and passionate lifelong learners who advance an equitable and sustainable world.

## Values

- Wonder, curiosity, and deep learning
- Rigor, resilience, and courage
- Kindness, generosity, and integrity
- Open-mindedness and adaptability
- Acceptance of self and harmony with others
- Connection with and respect for nature



## Facts and Figures

Founded: 2020

2024-25 Schoolwide Enrollment: 267

Pre-K: 34

Lower School (K-5th): 158

Middle School (6th-8th): 75

High School (9th grade only this year): 7

Student-Faculty Ratio: approximately 5:1

Employees: 80, including 73 full-time faculty

% of Faculty with Advanced Degrees: 40%

Operating Budget: \$15 million

Tuition: \$41,000 for PreK-Grade 5,  
\$42,500 for Grades 6-8, \$49,500 for  
Grades 9-12

% of Students receiving Financial Aid: 10%

Total Funds Raised, 2023-24: \$7.5 million

Parent Participation in Annual Giving:  
88%

On the Web: <https://tessellations.school/>



## Opportunities and Challenges

The Middle School Director will help bring to life a newly redesigned middle school model, and this will call for significant energy to simultaneously build systems and implement processes. The Director will also be responsible for supporting students, faculty, and parents and their transition as the model is implemented.

Tessie's rapid growth has created the need to bridge all the key transitions across the learning continuum. The Director will create a culture that reflects these new expectations and the added time that faculty will need to invest to connect the fabric of the Middle School to the Upper and Elementary school while being deeply devoted to the unique developmental needs of 11- to 14-year-olds. The Middle School will be a foundation for the secondary school, and the faculty of the Middle School and High School will work together closely.

## The Position: Middle School Director

The Middle School Director (Grades 6–8) is responsible for the management, leadership, development, and daily operations of Tessellations' middle school program. This role is pivotal in implementing a unique and transformative middle school model that nurtures intellectual curiosity, interdisciplinary learning, social-emotional development, executive functioning, and holistic development for gifted middle schoolers.



The Middle School Director will lead faculty, students, and families through the implementation of this model, ensuring that the experience aligns with Tessellations' philosophy of gifted education, inquiry-driven learning, and interdisciplinary exploration. Moreover, the Middle School Director will work closely with the newly established High School to ensure alignment in curriculum, student expectations, and social-emotional development, positioning middle school as the foundation of the secondary school experience.

In addition to fostering a challenging and supportive academic environment, the Director will also:

- Guide students through seamless transitions from Grade 5 to Grade 6 and Grade 8 to Grade 9.
- Work closely with faculty, admissions, and student support teams to ensure every middle schooler thrives academically, socially, and emotionally.
- Build strong relationships with families, leading parent education initiatives to support the development of gifted middle school learners.
- Ensure continuity and coherence between middle school and high school, collaborating with high school leadership to create a seamless secondary school experience.

The Director will play a key role in shaping Tessellations' middle school identity, ensuring that students develop agency, collaboration skills, leadership skills, and deep learning habits that prepare them for high school and beyond.

## Key Responsibilities

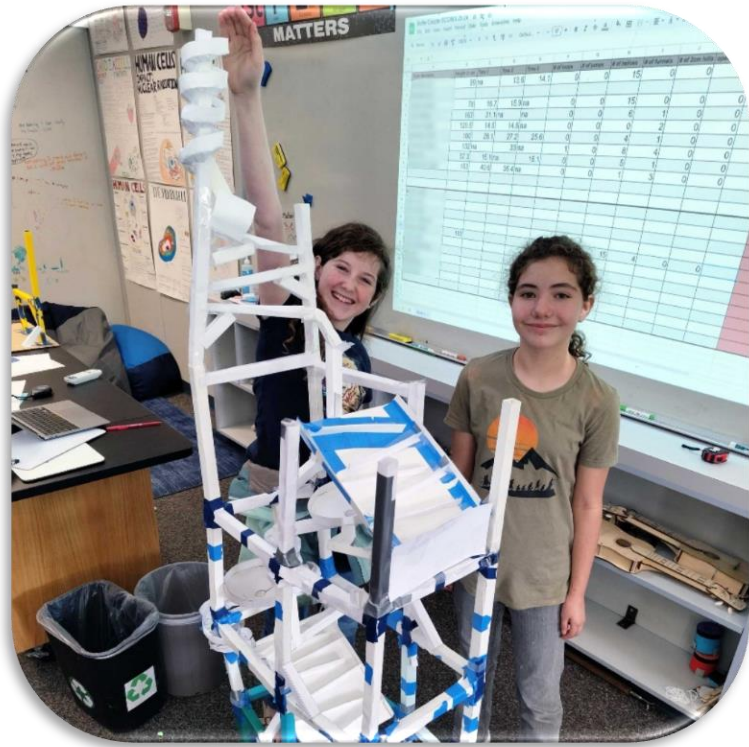
### Implementing the Middle School Model

- Lead the implementation of Tessellations' middle school model, ensuring alignment with the needs of gifted learners, best practices in inquiry-based education, and theme-based interdisciplinary learning.
- Design and establish structures that foster student autonomy, deep thinking, real-world applications of knowledge, support, holistic development, and leadership.
- Guide faculty, students, and families through the transition to a fully developed middle school model, ensuring clear communication, professional development, and community engagement.
- Foster social-emotional growth, executive functioning, academic excellence, and mastery of core academic skills and knowledge for gifted middle schoolers.
- Support smooth student transitions from Grade 5 to Grade 6 and Grade 8 to Grade 9, ensuring students are academically and socially prepared for the next stage of their journey.
- Collaborate closely with high school leadership to ensure alignment between middle and high school curriculum, student development, and school culture.
- Work closely with the Admissions team to ensure a balanced, mission-aligned cohort composition for each grade.



## Academic Leadership

- Oversee the development, implementation, and data-driven evaluation of a rigorous and interdisciplinary curriculum, ensuring that students experience challenge, creativity, and choice in their learning.
- Support faculty in implementing supports to meet students' academic and social-emotional needs.
- Facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration to create authentic connections.
- Ensure that executive functioning, self-regulation, and social-emotional development are embedded within academic and advisory programs.
- Provide instructional leadership by coaching faculty, leading professional development, and fostering best practices in inquiry-based and project-based learning.
- Work closely with high school leadership to align academic expectations, learning skills, and research-based writing to prepare students for the demands of high school coursework.
- Collaborate with Elementary School Director to ensure alignment and feedback loop.



## Student Integration & Transition Support

- Develop and implement a comprehensive transition program for:
  - New middle school students and families joining Tessellations.
  - Current Tessellations 5th graders and families advancing to 6th grade.
- Implement orientation programs, peer mentoring systems, and holistic advisory structures to ensure students experience belonging and confidence in their transition.
- Implement ongoing student check-ins and advisory curriculum that support academic, executive functioning, and social-emotional growth.
- Collaborate with the High School Director to ensure that Grade 8 students are well-prepared for the expectations of high school, including study skills, research methodologies, and independent learning strategies.

## Parent Education & Family Engagement

- Lead parent education programs to equip families with knowledge about:
  - Gifted middle school learners and their academic, social-emotional, and executive functioning needs.
  - The middle school model and its innovative instructional approaches.
  - How to support student transitions and independence at home.
- Host workshops, panels, and Q&A sessions on key topics such as:
  - Middle school development & giftedness.
  - Executive functioning & study habits for gifted learners.
  - Transitioning to high school & preparing for future opportunities.
- Serve as the primary liaison between the school and middle school families, ensuring proactive and transparent communication.

## Middle School Cohort Composition & Admissions Support

- Work closely with the Admissions team to determine the optimal composition of each middle school grade.
- Provide insights on academic readiness, social-emotional fit, and learning styles to ensure a balanced and thriving student cohort.
- Support the Admissions team with student interviews, shadow days, and family meetings to ensure students are a strong fit for the middle school program.



## Faculty and Staff Development

- Recruit, mentor, and evaluate faculty for Grades 6–8, ensuring alignment with Tessellations' philosophy of gifted education and instructional model.
- Lead regular faculty meetings to promote collaboration, shared learning, and best practices.
- Provide ongoing coaching and feedback to faculty to support continuous growth and program excellence.
- Collaborate with the leadership team to design and implement professional development opportunities focused on:
  - Inquiry-based learning & interdisciplinary curriculum.
  - Supporting gifted middle school students with executive functioning strategies.
  - Social-emotional learning and restorative practices.
  - Alignment between middle school and high school expectations to support a seamless secondary school experience.

## Administrative Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain policies and procedures that support the effective operation of the middle school division.
- Oversee student schedules, ensuring they reflect the school's commitment to deep learning, collaboration, and student choice and voice.
- Partner with the Associate Head of School for Teaching and Learning and Senior Leadership Team to set strategic goals for the middle school.
- Ensure timely completion of high-quality, informative student assessments, progress reports, and faculty evaluations.



## Desired Qualifications and Qualities

### Education, Experience, and Skills

- Bachelor's degree required, master's degree in education, educational leadership, or a related field preferred.
- Minimum of five years of teaching and administrative experience, preferably in gifted education, middle school, or an independent school setting.
- Proven expertise in instructional leadership, student support, and faculty mentorship.
- Experience with the best practices in global education is a plus.
- Deep understanding of gifted learners and their academic, social-emotional, and executive functioning needs.
- Ability to build trust and positive relationships with students, families, and faculty.
- Strong organizational, communication, and problem-solving skills.
- Experience leading curriculum implementation and program design.
- Deep understanding of middle school best practices and gifted learners.
- Experience in differentiation, transition support, restorative discipline, and inquiry-based learning.
- Ability to coach faculty and create a collaborative, high-impact learning culture.
- Strong communication and leadership skills to engage students, families, and faculty.
- Experience working collaboratively with high school leadership to align secondary education.



### Personal Characteristics

- Sees the bigger picture and naturally inspires others to implement innovative strategies.
- Builds community by investing in and sustaining connections among a diverse set of groups and invites others into a shared sense of purpose.
- High standards of ethics, moral character, and professionalism, and serves as a positive role model.
- Demonstrates poise in pressure situations. Remains composed and brings a sense of patience and empathy for all those involved.
- Promotes a trust-based community by keeping appropriate confidences.
- Manages time effectively and meets deadlines and commitments.
- Kind, friendly, and enjoys being with people, in general, and especially Middle School students.



### Key Competencies

<p><b>Instills Trust</b></p>	<p><b>Communicates Effectively</b></p>	<p><b>Plans and Aligns</b></p>
<p>Gaining the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity, and authenticity.</p>	<p>Developing and delivering multi-mode communications that convey a clear understanding of the unique needs of different audiences.</p>	<p>Planning and prioritizing work to meet commitments aligned with organizational goals.</p>
<p><b>Builds Effective Team</b></p>	<p><b>Drives Results</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic Mindset</b></p>
<p>Building strong teams with a strong identity that apply their diverse skills and perspectives to achieve common goals.</p>	<p>Consistently achieving results, even under tough circumstances.</p>	<p>Seeing ahead to future possibilities and translating them into breakthrough strategies.</p>

### Benefits and Compensation

The salary for this position aims to be competitive and commensurate with experience, falling within the range of \$140,000 – \$160,000 annually. Tessellations School offers a comprehensive benefits package including medical, dental, and vision insurance and a matching 403(b) retirement plan.

## Application Requirements and Search Process

DRG is conducting this search on behalf of Tessellations. Interested candidates should submit, as soon as possible, materials including the following:

- A cover letter indicating why they are particularly interested in and qualified for the position.
- A current resume.
- A statement of educational philosophy plus an additional writing sample.
- The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of five references, to include the relationship with the references. (We will obtain permission from candidates, at the finalist stage, before contacting references.)

Application materials should be uploaded directly on the DRG website by visiting the [Tessellations listing](#).

**Application Status:** Accepting Applications

**Start Date:** July 1, 2025

This position description is based upon material provided by Tessellations, an equal opportunity employer committed to providing equal employment opportunities and who does not discriminate based on perceived or actual race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, pregnancy (or any related conditions), age, marital status, military or veteran status, medical condition, gender/identity/expression, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

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