



**Tessellations**  
The Beneventi School  
**Elementary 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 holistic 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 Elementary School Director at Tessie will play an integral role in bringing consistency to the core curriculum. Tessie has excelled in providing a progressive education that fosters curiosity and a love of learning, but there is a need to reallocate time to ensure proper coverage and alignment of the curriculum and necessary foundational skill building. An audit of the academic calendar and how content is covered and sequenced has taken place. The Director will ensure fidelity in implementation and support teachers in balancing this alongside other objectives that are fundamental to Tessie's model.

The Director will need to be the face of the Elementary School and show up in spaces that communicate to students and parents they will be a regular presence and uphold and advance the warm culture of Tessie's learning environment and its spirit of community.

## The Position: Elementary School Director

The Elementary School Director (K-5) leads the daily operations of the elementary division at Tessellations School, ensuring a developmentally responsive, progressive, holistic, inquiry-driven, and intellectually engaging experience for gifted learners. This role fosters academic, social-emotional, and personal growth while ensuring horizontal and vertical alignment across K-5 and into middle and high school.

The Director works closely with Grade Band Leaders (K-3 and 4-5) to ensure consistency in instructional practices, student support, assessment, and curriculum implementation. Additionally, the Director plays a critical role in transitions for students and families at key moments, including:

- Entry into Kindergarten (helping families and young learners adjust to the structure, expectations, changing parent/child relationship, and gifted-focused, progressive approach at Tessellations).
- Transition from early elementary (K-3) to upper elementary (4-5).
- Preparation for middle school, ensuring students are academically and socially ready for the next phase of their education.



The Elementary School Director works closely with the Middle School and High School Director to ensure a seamless, aligned K-12 experience, collaborating on curriculum development, assessment practices, social-emotional programming, and student transitions. Additionally, the Director focuses on building faculty capacity, ensuring that educators

receive the mentorship, training, feedback, and support necessary to implement innovative, research-based instructional practices for gifted learners.

As both an instructional and cultural leader, the Director ensures that Tessellations' vision, mission, values, beliefs, and philosophy of gifted education are embedded throughout the K-5 program and reflected in student experiences, faculty collaboration, and family partnerships.

## Key Responsibilities

### Academic Leadership & K-12 Program Alignment

- Ensure horizontal alignment (consistency in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment within each grade level) and vertical alignment (coherence of executive function, knowledge, skills, concepts, and experiences across K-5 and into middle and high school).
- Collaborate closely with the Middle School and High School Director to ensure a seamless transition from elementary to middle school and middle to high school, maintaining continuity in academic expectations, inquiry-based learning, holistic development, and social-emotional support.
- Oversee the design, implementation, and evaluation of a differentiated, inquiry-based curriculum that supports gifted learners in developing deep conceptual understanding, executive functioning, foundational knowledge and skills, creative problem-solving, and strong critical-thinking.
- Work with Grade Band Leaders (K-3 and 4-5) to ensure instructional practices reflect the best approaches in gifted education, including direct-instruction, guided release of responsibility, differentiation, project-based learning, and student-driven inquiry.
- Ensure Tier 1 supports are embedded into classroom practices, offering enrichment, acceleration, and intervention strategies that meet the diverse needs of asynchronous gifted students.
- Conduct regular classroom observations, providing faculty with constructive feedback and coaching to enhance instructional effectiveness.
- Partner with the Middle and High School Director to align assessment practices, ensuring students experience a consistent, developmentally appropriate evaluation system that supports their learning progression and growth.



## Capacity Building & Faculty Development

- Supervise, support, and develop Grade Band Leaders (K-3 and 4-5) as instructional leaders and faculty mentors.
- Lead professional development initiatives focused on gifted education, differentiation, inquiry-based learning, and social-emotional learning (SEL).
- Provide ongoing coaching and mentorship to faculty, helping them refine instructional strategies to best support gifted learners.
- Foster a culture of reflection and innovation, encouraging faculty to collaborate, engage in research, and experiment with progressive approaches to gifted education.
- Partner with the leadership team to recruit, onboard, develop, and retain educators who align with Tessellations' philosophy and mission.



## Transitions & Student Support

- Support students and parents in the transition into kindergarten, helping families understand Tessellations' approach to early gifted education and ensuring a smooth start for young learners.
- Oversee student and parent transitions between K-3 and 4-5, ensuring academic and social-emotional readiness for upper elementary.
- Work closely with the Middle School and High School Director to design and implement a structured transition program for Grade 5 to Grade 6, including student orientation, academic preparation, and parent education.
- Serve on the Student Support Team, collaborating with teachers, counselors, parents, and outside experts as needed to address student needs related to acceleration, differentiation, social-emotional issues, and behavioral support.
- Guide the counseling-out process when a student's needs cannot be met by Tessellations, ensuring all decisions are made with compassion, transparency, and alignment with Tessellations' values.



## Family & Community Engagement

- Act as the primary liaison between the school and K-5 families, fostering a culture of open and proactive communication.
- Host parent education workshops and discussion forums on topics such as:
  - Understanding gifted education and how it shapes classroom experiences.
  - Social-emotional development of gifted learners and strategies for support.
  - Transitions from fifth grade to middle school, helping families navigate key developmental milestones.
- Partner with the Tessellations Parent Association (TPA) and its leadership to create opportunities for family engagement, school community building, and collaboration.
- Represent the K-5 division at admissions events, open houses, and other school functions, communicating the unique strengths of Tessellations' approach to gifted education.

## Strategic & Administrative Responsibilities

- Ensure that curricular, instructional, and student support practices align with the school's vision, mission, values, beliefs, and strategic priorities.
- Develop and implement K-5 policies and procedures that support a smooth, effective operation of the elementary program.
- Oversee student schedules, ensuring that they balance academic, co-curricular, and social-emotional learning priorities.
- Collaborate with the Acting Associate Head of School for Teaching and Learning and the leadership team to set strategic goals for K-5 and support school-wide initiatives.
- Ensure the timely completion of student assessments, progress reports, and faculty evaluations.
- Maintain documentation of student growth, behavior, and disciplinary actions, ensuring adherence to school policies.

## 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 5 years of teaching and administrative experience, preferably in a gifted or independent school setting
- Proven expertise in instructional leadership, student support, faculty development, and elementary education
- Strong understanding of gifted learners and their academic, social, and emotional needs preferred
- Expertise in curriculum alignment, direct instruction, differentiation, project-based learning, and inquiry-based learning
- Knowledge of restorative discipline and social-emotional learning best practices
- Exceptional organizational, communication, and leadership skills
- Ability to build trust and strong relationships with students, families, faculty, and staff

### Personal Characteristics

- Adaptable, thoughtful, and makes timely decisions.
- Deep passion for driving learning with student success and teacher development.
- Understands boundaries and embraces responsibility for the care of students.
- Can-do attitude and takes a problem-solving approach.
- A doer with a roll-up-sleeves mentality.
- Communicates and responds to all school communications in a timely manner.
- Exhibits flexibility and adaptability to change as needed.
- Warm, compassionate, and enjoys being with people.



### Key Competencies

<p><b>Builds Effective Team</b></p>	<p><b>Communicates Effectively</b></p>	<p><b>Instills Trust</b></p>
<p>Building strong teams with a strong identity that apply their diverse skills and perspectives to achieve common goals.</p>	<p>Developing and delivering multi-mode communications that convey a clear understanding of the unique needs of different audiences.</p>	<p>Gaining the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity, and authenticity.</p>
<p><b>Decision Quality</b></p>	<p><b>Plans and Aligns</b></p>	<p><b>Ensures Accountability</b></p>
<p>Making good and timely decisions that keep the organization moving forward.</p>	<p>Planning and prioritizing work to meet commitments aligned with organizational goals.</p>	<p>Holding self and others accountable to meet commitments.</p>

### Benefits and Compensation

The salary for this position aims to be competitive and commensurate with experience, falling within the range of \$130,000 – \$150,000 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:

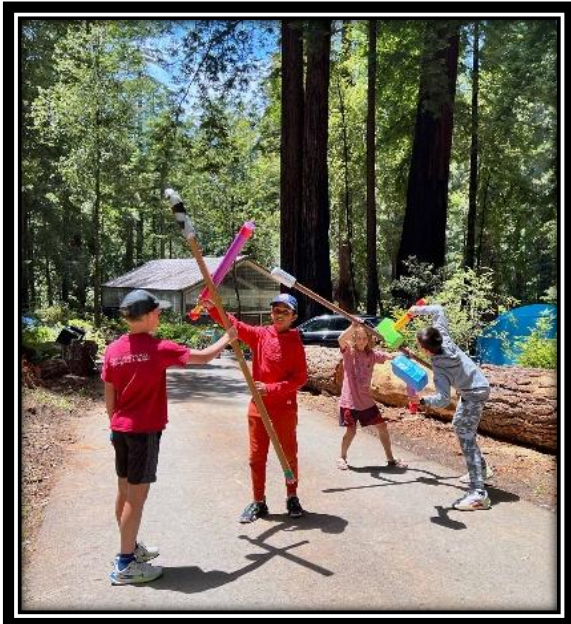
- A cover letter indicating why they are particularly interested in and qualified for the position.
- A current resume.
- A statement of educational philosophy plus an additional writing sample.
- The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of five references, to include the relationship with the 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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