

Codification of the Beneventi 10: The Foundation of Tessellations

Preface

Over the course of the last several months, we have been working to articulate the foundational philosophy, practices, and culture of Tessie, which spring from Anne's expertise, vision for gifted education, and research-based learning. When Tessie was a smaller school, this philosophy and its practices lived intuitively in the faculty and staff. With our rapid growth and evolution, we need to reaffirm these educational design principles explicitly to maintain the integrity of Tessie's foundation so that our school will now and in the future remain a magical place for gifted young people.

At the heart of Tessie is a simple but radical idea: gifted young people are not defined solely by their intellect but by their whole being—their curiosity, intensity, sensitivity, and inner complexity. The Beneventi 10 emerged from this understanding. They are not a checklist or curriculum framework but a living philosophy—one that honors the full humanity of each child and calls us, as educators, staff, and parents, into a deeper relationship with learning and giftedness.

These ten principles ask us to teach with intention and humility. They remind us that the true task of gifted education is not to accelerate our students down a predetermined path but to walk beside and guide them as they uncover who they are, how they think, what they feel, and what matters to them so that they can lead meaningful lives of purpose.

In our classrooms, the Beneventi 10 show up in small, profound ways:

- In the pause we take to listen to a young learner's unexpected question, idea, or solution
- In the space we create for open-ended inquiry and intellectual play
- In the breath we offer when emotions run high, signaling safety and trust
- In the rhythm of our days—where the process of learning and depth are chosen over speed, and reflection over rote repetition
- In our belief that learning is not just academic, but relational, emotional, moral, and soulful

These principles guide how we ask questions, how we give feedback, how we build community, and how we partner with families. They remind us that every moment in a student's life is an opportunity for connection, regulation, insight, creativity, innovation, and personal growth.

The Beneventi 10 are both philosophy and practice—an invitation to teach with the head and the heart. And when we embrace them fully, we endeavor to create something rare and beautiful: a school where gifted students are not merely seen for what they can do but cherished for becoming their authentic selves. This discovery happens in a magical place where they belong.

We have attached an explanation of the Beneventi 10 so that parents can have more clarity about the principles that provide the foundation for Tessie and its evolution.

By explicitly articulating the Beneventi 10 and publishing them, we create a shared understanding of the educational design principles that inform all aspects of our educational program, teaching and learning model, and culture. We can now more intentionally ensure the alignment of our program, practices, and culture with the Beneventi 10. As we continue to undertake this work, we will hit some bumps and fall short, as this iterative process will take time. We will be monitoring our efforts through the year and inviting feedback from faculty, staff, students, and parents, as we are dedicated to improving and striving toward realizing the full promise of Tessie's unique educational approach.

We will intentionally engage our teachers, staff, and parents with the Beneventi 10 throughout the year so that we can ensure that our practices at school and home support the development of the unique gifted young people in our care.

The next step is working with the faculty to prepare a detailed document so that parents can understand how these specifically show up in the classroom at various stages of students' emotional, social, intellectual, academic, and character development. This way, the faculty will express in their own words how these principles show up for our gifted learners in the classroom daily. We will share that as soon as it is ready.

With gratitude for your partnership,

Anne and Luthern

Beneventi 10

Honoring the Whole Gifted Person at Tessellations

At Tessie, we believe gifted children are not defined solely by intellect, but by their full humanity—curiosity, sensitivity, complexity, and creativity. The Beneventi 10 are guiding educational design principles that reflect our commitment to whole-person development. Though outlined individually, they are deeply interwoven—any one classroom moment may embody several.

1. Kind Hearts & Open Minds

We create emotionally safe spaces where kindness and open-mindedness are daily practices. Students engage respectfully with differences and grow through empathy and intellectual humility.

2. Encourage Curiosity

We preserve students' natural inquisitiveness, inviting them to ask bold questions, explore unknowns, and develop habits of lifelong learning rooted in wonder.

3. Connect to Self, Others, and Nature

Through self-awareness, relationships, and time in nature, students build emotional balance, belonging, and the perspective needed to act ethically and sustainably as compassionate global citizens who advance an equitable and sustainable world.

4. Intellectual Play & Love of Learning

Students learn through purposeful play—tinkering, storytelling, building, and experimenting—developing joy, depth, and ownership in their learning.

5. Open-Ended High-Level Questions

We ask questions that spark introspection, reflection, analysis, dialogue, synthesis, and creativity—encouraging students to explore ambiguity, nuance, interdependence, and layered meaning.

6. Depth & Complexity

We prioritize depth over superficial coverage of material. Students examine multiple

perspectives, connect ideas across disciplines, and apply their knowledge, skills, and thinking to real-world contexts for an authentic audience.

7. Creative & Critical Thinking

Students think boldly and clearly—questioning assumptions, designing solutions, and reflecting on their thinking in a culture that values iteration and originality.

8. Emotional Needs & Self-Regulation

We honor emotional intensity and teach students tools for regulation, empathy, and resilience through daily practices and supportive relationships.

9. Differentiation for All Learners

We meet students where they are—offering foundational, advanced, or accelerated pathways tailored to each learner's needs, pace, and passions.

10. Partnership with Parents

Educators and families work together to nurture the whole person. This shared commitment surrounds each student with a caring, coordinated community that empowers them to confidently express who they are and thrive.