



OVERVIEW

Position Postings: The Knox School of Santa Barbara – private school for gifted learners

Position Title: Director

Description of Positions & Organization Overview

The Knox School of Santa Barbara, currently in its 12th year of operations, is seeking an exceptional leader to join a distinctive pedagogical team. The impassioned mission of the school is to provide a stimulating and nurturing environment where, alongside an engaging and challenging curriculum, the social and emotional needs of gifted learners are respected and compassionately supported. The Knox School of Santa Barbara ensures a student-centered and strength-based approach to learning.

The Knox School has a solid foundation: thriving children, a solid curricular program, involved and supportive parents, valuable opportunities in terms of field trips, speakers, and partnerships, an identity in the local and global education community, and strong, valuable relationships and partnerships within the gifted education world. The goal is to ensure a framework and environment to help build emotionally resilient, resourceful, deep thinking, and balanced individuals who will use their gifts in service to themselves and the world.

The Knox School is an institution of great potential and possibilities. It stands as a unique school with an integrated curriculum based on student inquiry and which is heavily differentiated to meet the specific, often far-ranging needs of each student. The School has dual goals of intellectual growth and social-emotional growth of its students as well as staff. It is at once highly challenging, demanding, and rewarding for all involved. We are carving out a place in gifted education on California's central coast that we aspire will serve our most gifted learners for decades to come.

The Knox School is located in beautiful Santa Barbara County, home to a world-class university, museums and restaurants, farmers markets and wineries, and outstanding outdoor opportunities for biking, hiking, riding, and surfing, contributing to a vibrant quality of life. Successful candidates for the full-time position will display a diverse range of qualities, competencies and experience as described below.

Qualifications, Experience, and Knowledge

The Director position includes many of the traditional Head of School's roles and responsibilities. This position ideally requires a minimum of 3 years of supervisory experience and proven leadership in an educational setting. The ideal candidate will have a high level of awareness of current developments, research, and best practices in the field of gifted education.

The successful candidate for this position will be an inspirational, passionate, and sensitive leader with the ability to bring the school to the next level of development while continuing to ensure a program that cultivates cognitive skills and compassionately honors the affective needs of gifted students. This individual will be responsible for maintaining The Knox School of Santa Barbara's positive, caring, safe, and supportive student culture and learning environment.

The ideal candidate for this position will possess exceptional interpersonal and public communication skills, both verbal and written, and a demonstrated ability to work with diverse stakeholders, including students, staff, board members, parents, and external communities. The candidate will be a strong, compassionate, diplomatic and approachable communicator.

Director JOB DESCRIPTION

Oversight / Operations

- Provide oversight and responsibility for the school's day-to-day operations
- Work with the Board of Directors to develop and implement the school's goals and strategic plan in order to realize the school's mission
- Create, promote and maintain the culture and ethos of the school regarding student growth, learning, development and excellence
- Build and enhance relationships with the professionals within gifted education as well as the school's stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, staff, parents, local and national independent schools and gifted programs, and the local community
- Represent the School both internally and externally

- Implement school policies, as well as collaboratively develop new policies for Board approval
- Actively participate in capital campaigns and annual fundraising efforts
- Support admissions, marketing and community outreach efforts in order to maintain and ensure robust enrollment numbers
- Attend, present, and participate as a non-voting member in all meetings of the Board of Directors and its committees
- Provide leadership in the school's accreditation and evaluation process and ongoing monitoring of compliance in subsequent reviews
- Work with High Schools, local and otherwise, to ensure ease of matriculation and acceptance of The Knox School's assessments and coursework
- Be responsible for maintaining The Knox School of Santa Barbara's positive, caring, safe, and supportive student culture and learning environment
- Be instrumental in promoting trusting and mutually respectful relationships among students, staff, and families by maintaining strong lines of communication and transparency of expectations across stakeholders

Staffing

- Ability to recruit, guide, motivate and blend highly competent faculty, administrators and staff members
- Head the hiring, firing, and supervising of the evaluation process of all faculty and staff
- Plan and organize school-level and external training for staff
- Provide school-level professional development in instructional and social/emotional support practices as needed
- Set up systems for communication and collaboration among all staff members involved in implementing the program

Curriculum, Teaching, Learning

- Work with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to develop, implement, and fine-tune curriculum, teaching, and learning programs
- A commitment of collaborative planning is central to the school's philosophy. The Director is supported by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and others to ensure that the standards for implementation are understood, and that the program is planned, taught, and assessed collaboratively

Strategic and Budgetary Planning

- Implement a capital campaign en route to procuring a permanent campus for the School
- Develop a strategic plan for the School, including the preparation of a staffing and resource plan
- Review the performance of the School in terms of its objectives as stated in its strategic plan and in its staffing and resource plan
- Collaborative responsibility for financial matters, including financial planning and sustainability, resource allocation, the identification of new sources of income, the monitoring of expenditure to ensure that it is within appropriate levels, ensuring the linking of resource allocation to strategic and operational planning
- Managing and monitoring of implementation of the resource allocation process within the School

Impact and Influence

- Bring the School to the next level of its development
- Ensure a strong program while growing enrollment and procuring a permanent campus
- Represent the school at events and be a visible and available ambassador
- Proactively circulate and be highly present and visible during school hours to maintain safe, positive, pro-learning school environment and promote open communication
- Model the school's values and standards for professional conduct; consistently demonstrate best practices for communicating with students, staff, and families
- Stay visibly focused, committed, and self-assured in the face of personal and professional resistance
- Consistently identify potential issues and obstacles and proactively take action to create and implement solutions
- Willingness to take on non-specific duties, however mundane, in furtherance of the school's mission, philosophy, and vision
- Work with Directors, Faculty, and Staff to create an atmosphere of respect among all members of the campus community; communicate with parents, faculty, and instructional leaders to ensure a shared vision of a positive and respectful school community
- Work with school leadership to support staff's implementation of best practices and procedures in actively promoting a safe, supportive, pro-learning environment

- Identify and engage stakeholders to anticipate concerns, drive consensus, build trust and facilitate positive change

DESIRED QUALITIES AND EXPERIENCE

- Master's degree in Education or related field
- At least five years of experience as Director or Head of a sizable school division (e.g.: Head of Lower, Middle or Upper School). Proven record of outstanding educational leadership as administrator in Primary and/or Secondary education
- Experience with gifted education and skill and understanding in serving gifted learners
- Exceptional interpersonal and public communication skills, both verbal and written
- Demonstrated ability to work with diverse stakeholders, including students, staff, board members, parents, and external communities
- Strong, compassionate, diplomatic and approachable communicator
- Approaches behavior as "teachable moments" wherein students investigate the root cause of their behavior and take initiative to improve it; understands that through this process, students see themselves as young people whose opinions and agency are respected
- Leadership experience in developing positive school culture, including a deep knowledge of socio-emotional needs of gifted students as evidenced by certifications held and/or research conducted
- Outstanding leadership abilities in motivating, inspiring, and challenging both staff and students in order to strengthen and promote the vision and the values of the school
- Experience working collaboratively in team settings
- A demonstrated openness and responsiveness to constructive feedback and a strong commitment to continuous improvement and professional growth
- Experience in identifying the need for change and of driving change processes as well as the ability to identify where things are working well and should be maintained
- Ability to multi-task and manage important challenges simultaneously. Ability to maintain day-to-day operations while pushing higher-level agenda ahead
- Approaches the role with maturity, humility, versatility (i.e., embraces the ambiguity and excitement associated with start-ups), a solutions-mindedness with a strong work ethic, and a sense of humor

THE SCHOOL

Because of the unmet need and latent demand for an environment which supports both the intellectual needs as well as the affective needs of gifted learners, The Knox School of Santa Barbara was formed. The Knox School of Santa Barbara is an independent co-ed day school for gifted and talented learners (grades JK-8), which opened its doors in the Fall of 2013.

MISSION

The mission of the Knox School of Santa Barbara is to provide a stimulating and nurturing environment where, alongside an engaging and challenging curriculum, the social and emotional needs of gifted learners are respected and compassionately supported.

In fulfillment of its mission, The Knox School of Santa Barbara will provide a rigorous and stimulating academic environment and high caliber curriculum combined with an individualized, ability-based (instead of age-based), project- and inquiry-based approach to learning in order for students to develop critical and creative thinking skills and retain a deep love of learning. The school is committed to developing a professional and supportive faculty sensitive to the instructional and emotional needs of gifted students and who are strongly dedicated to providing the highest quality education. The school is committed to ensuring respectful accommodation and a variety of strategies to meet all learning styles and continuing to develop instructional strategies and academic and affective curriculum based on current research and best practices.

The Knox School of Santa Barbara offers an exemplary program developed specifically for gifted learners; our respectful and supportive approach to learning optimizes each student's intellectual, academic, social and emotional development.

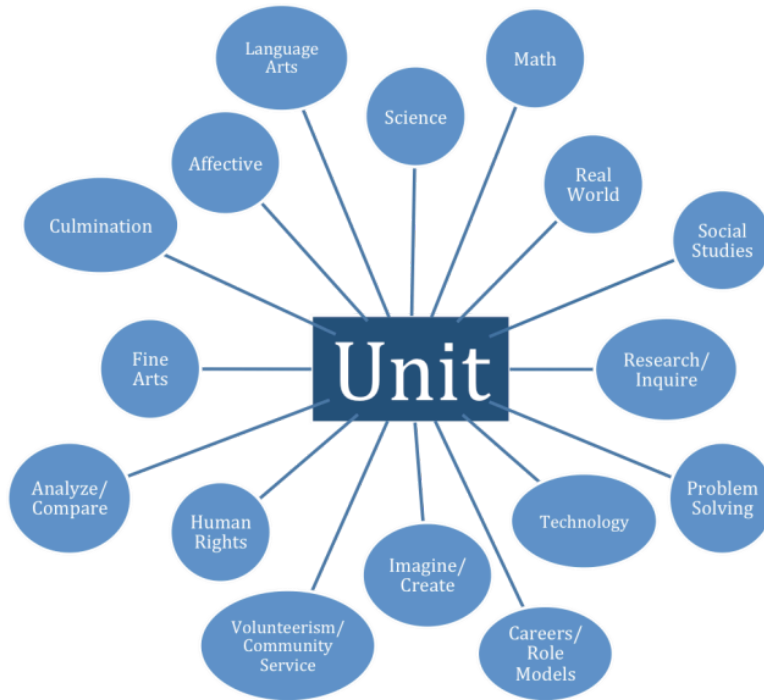
CURRICULUM

The Knox School of Santa Barbara's curriculum is based on the Integrated Curriculum Model developed at the Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary and refined in gifted classrooms over the past 30 years. The integrated curriculum organizes learning in a way that links together the humanities, natural sciences,

mathematics, social studies, music, and art. Our curriculum creates opportunities for exploration, active learning, and meaningful connections across subject areas. Through this curriculum, students come to see the interrelatedness of disciplines, which in turn brings meaning and relevance to their education.

Specifically, each trimester at The Knox School is organized around a "Unit of Study", such as Architecture, Natural Disasters, Africa, Space, and the like. Within the Unit of Study, lessons span the disciplines, incorporating them into the broader Unit topic.

These integrated curriculum units include lessons and projects that are hands-on, high interest, and which encourage critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking, abstract reasoning, higher level thinking skills, inquiry, and collaboration.



Workshops (Mathematics, Reading, Writing)

While lessons are integrated when possible, there is also the recognition that each discipline has elements specific to its domain. The workshop model provides a daily opportunity for whole group, small group, and individual instruction around specific skills within the domains of mathematics, reading, and writing. For example, basic math facts are discrete pieces of information that need to be learned in order to understand higher-level complex mathematics; an understanding of phonics is necessary in order to decipher novel words; rules of grammar and punctuation aid in the construction of a logical narrative. While Unit time is spent on the application of skills and concepts, workshop time entails direct instruction around specific skills.

Workshop time is scheduled at the same time across all grades, which allows students to participate in the workshop which best matches their individual level. For example, a third grade student is welcome to join the math workshop focusing on Geometry if that is where the student's capabilities lie, even though it is "above" grade level in the traditional sense. In this sense, all 3rd graders at The Knox School may not be reading the same books or doing the same mathematics, nor should they be, solely because they are 8 and therefore, in the 3rd grade. The teachers consistently assess to ensure the student is not missing foundational elements of the skill, while allowing the student

to progress through the curriculum at their own pace without being held back by the curriculum.

The Knox School's curriculum organizes the learning experiences for gifted children around broad, timeless ideas and themes that define deep understanding of a discipline and provide meaningful connections across disciplines. Differentiating and individualizing the curriculum ensures that gifted children are appropriately and supportively challenged at their individual capacities: student needs are established and documented, goals are then developed, and appropriate pre-assessments are administered. The curriculum is then carefully organized and differentiated for the specific cognitive and affective needs of the gifted learner. Lastly, providing multiple opportunities for higher-order thinking and processing and engaging gifted learners in deep and meaningful interdisciplinary inquiry is a critical element of the curriculum model.

In addition to a strong skills-based curriculum, the concept-based and inquiry-based programs afford the students the opportunity to investigate topics at a level that challenges them and taps their interests, learning styles, and natural intelligences. Teachers strive to stimulate the development of curiosity and imagination, and offer extensive opportunity for creative expression of knowledge. The environment is one of rich self-discovery, and the curriculum is delivered through approaches that are best practices in gifted education, allowing children opportunities to extend and enrich their own learning on their individual journeys to becoming educated, thinking, and moral adults.

FINANCIAL POSITION

The school is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization, and is financed entirely from school fees, grants, and private funding.

THE FACILITIES

Located at 1525 Santa Barbara Street, the Knox School is housed in adjacent campuses with its administration offices located on the campus of the Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara. The School lies across the street from one of the city's most beautiful spots

often called the "crown jewel" of city parks. Alice Keck Park Gardens feature a large botanical collection (75 different tree and plant species), a pond with koi and turtles, a sensory garden, a low water-using demonstration garden, picnic areas and gazebo. One block away is Alameda Park, the home of Kids' World, an 8,000 square foot playground designed by children in consultation with playground experts containing a castle, swings and slides. These large parks are a perfect venue for hands-on learning, physical exercise, and exploration.

The School is ready for a campus of its own and a site selection committee has been involved in identifying and researching potential sites.

THE FACULTY

Our Faculty is made up of a professional and supportive staff sensitive to the instructional and emotional needs of gifted learners who can provide an emotionally safe haven where both strengths and weaknesses are understood and respected, one where it is safe for students to discover and reveal who they really are. These are teachers who are not threatened by their students' intelligence but who welcome their intellectual debates, give opportunities to delve deeply into topics of interest and take joy in their students' strengths.

You can learn more about our Faculty at:
<http://knoxschools.org/about/faculty-and-staff>

GOVERNANCE

The Knox School of Santa Barbara's Board of Directors is comprised of several members, including the Board President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Board members serve two year terms.

The primary responsibilities of the Board are to review and set policies, to make strategic decisions, and to approve the annual budget. The Board carries out its responsibilities through the Director who in turn operates the school to implement Board policies and strategies. However, the Board of Directors retains the ultimate responsibility for the long-term viability and success of the school.

BENEFITS/SALARY

The benefits and salary package for this position is regionally competitive based on level of experience. Start date for positions will be July 15, 2025 and annually contracted for 12 months.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested candidates should send an application at the earliest possible time. The review of files will begin as soon as applications are received. The Knox School of Santa Barbara reserves the right to appoint an Executive Director before the stated application deadline should an exceptionally appropriate candidate be identified.

Please provide:

1. A current résumé or CV, with photo
2. A maximum two-page statement outlining educational philosophy and leadership style
3. A one-page list of minimum three current professional references with phone numbers and email addresses
4. A maximum of four letters of reference which may already be in your possession

All applications should be emailed to careers@knoxschools.org. If you have any questions, please email or call us at (805) 222-0107.

The Knox School of Santa Barbara believes that each individual is entitled to equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, age, disability, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, ancestry, genetic information, citizenship, veteran status, or any other class protected under federal, state or local laws.