



Dean of Student Development & Wellbeing (TK–5)

Job Description

Are you an experienced, imaginative, and collaborative educator who believes in progressive gifted education? Do you enjoy creating meaningful learning experiences, and being part of a diverse, supportive and talented community? If so, please consider joining our team at Tessellations. We are currently accepting applications for a full-time Dean of Student Development & Wellbeing (TK–5) position to start in August 2026. Competitive salary and full benefits available.

Tessellations is a modern, innovative Pre-K-9th non-profit school for gifted learners based in Cupertino, CA. Our mission is to provide challenging experiential education that recognizes and nurtures the individual strengths of gifted learners, empowering them to confidently express who they are, pursue a meaningful life, and advance an equitable and sustainable world.

At Tessellations, community is a core value. A strong community was instrumental in launching our school during the pandemic and has facilitated our rapid growth and success since then. Our team consists of passionate, qualified and dedicated staff from diverse backgrounds and includes a nationally renowned gifted expert. We believe that it is time to open a new chapter in 21st century gifted education by forging a model that fosters a cultural ecosystem within the school that promotes innovative thinking and intellectual risk taking. Moving on from an antiquated model born during the industrial revolution, we favor transferable skills over compliance and rote memorization, and collaboration over competition. We believe that assessments should function as guidance for depth and complexity of learning rather than for judgment or sorting.

Reports to: Director of Student Support and Primary School Director (TK–5)

Collaborates Closely With:

Director of Student Culture & Wellbeing (6–8)

Associate Head of School

Holistic Development Lead

Student Support Team

Position Type: Full-Time Administrator

Position Overview

The **Dean of Student Development & Wellbeing (TK–5)** is a central student-facing leader responsible for supporting the social, emotional, and relational development of students in Transitional Kindergarten through Grade 5, with particular attention to the needs of gifted and asynchronous learners.

At Tessellations, we believe that intellectual development must grow alongside the cultivation of **kind hearts, integrity, open minds, and generosity**. The Dean plays a key role in helping students develop not only emotional awareness but also relational intelligence – the ability to understand oneself, recognize the perspectives of others, and participate thoughtfully and responsibly in a community.

Gifted learners often experience asynchronous development in which intellectual abilities develop faster than social-emotional capacities. This role helps students navigate that complexity by strengthening skills related to self-awareness, empathy, collaboration, resilience, and responsible decision-making.

Through direct work with students, close collaboration with teachers, and partnership with families, the Dean helps cultivate a Primary School culture where students are **intellectually curious, emotionally grounded, and capable of building meaningful relationships with others**.

The role reports jointly to the **Director of Student Support and the Primary School Director (TK–5)** and collaborates closely with the **Director of Student Culture & Wellbeing (6–8)** to ensure continuity in student development across divisions.

Core Purpose of the Role

The Dean helps ensure that Tessellations students develop the capacities necessary to flourish as learners and members of a community, including:

- emotional awareness and regulation
- relational intelligence and empathy
- executive functioning, growth mindset and resilience
- integrity and responsibility
- curiosity and openness to new ideas

The work of the Dean centers on three interconnected areas: Direct Student Support, Building Teacher Capacity, and Partnering with Parents.

Key Responsibilities

Direct Student Support (TK–5)

Provide developmentally informed **one-on-one support for students**, particularly those navigating challenges related to:

- emotional regulation
- perfectionism and fear of failure
- social belonging and peer relationships
- executive functioning development
- asynchronous development common among gifted learners

Help students develop skills related to:

- self-awareness and emotional regulation
- resilience and intellectual persistence
- conflict resolution and communication
- perspective-taking and empathy
- anti-bias/ anti-racism work
- healthy academic risk-taking

Support students in developing **relational intelligence**, including the ability to:

- understand others' perspectives
- navigate disagreements respectfully
- collaborate effectively
- recognize how their actions affect others

Encourage students to approach challenges with **integrity, curiosity, and openness**, helping them grow into individuals capable of thoughtful participation in a community.

Student Culture and Community Development

Partner with the Primary School Director to cultivate a student culture grounded in the values of **kind hearts, integrity, open minds, and generosity**.

Support the development of a community in which students learn to:

- listen thoughtfully
- express ideas respectfully
- approach differences with curiosity
- take responsibility for their actions
- understand and nurture diversity, equity, inclusion and justice lens

Design and support experiences that strengthen community and belonging, including:

- orientation programs
- community-building activities and Tessie Gathering
- student recognition
- service and stewardship opportunities
- student interest or support groups responsive to student needs

Support transitions across developmental stages, including TK to Kindergarten, Lower Primary to Upper Primary, and Grade 5 to Middle School.

Work with the admissions team to facilitate family and/or student ambassadors for new admits.

Building Teacher Capacity

Partner with teachers to strengthen classroom practices that support both **intellectual challenge and emotional wellbeing**.

Provide consultation and coaching on:

- supporting asynchronous learners
- addressing perfectionism and academic anxiety
- fostering inclusive classroom communities
- supporting executive functioning development
- responding to emotionally intense or highly sensitive students

Help teachers integrate practices that strengthen **social cognition and relational intelligence**, enabling students to understand and navigate relationships more effectively.

Provide professional learning opportunities related to:

- gifted child development
- twice-exceptional learners
- restorative practices
- developmentally responsive classroom culture
- identity and culture

Collaborate with primary division teachers and outside SEL providers to make agreements and a responsive scope and sequence (grounded in SEL framework) including conceptual threads that address developmental needs of students in different bands such as K-5, K-2, and 3-5.

Partnering with Parents

Serve as a thoughtful partner to families navigating the social and emotional development of gifted children.

Consult with parents regarding topics such as:

- emotional intensity and sensitivity
- perfectionism and resilience
- peer relationships and belonging
- executive functioning development
- identity development in gifted learners

Maintain open communication with families while collaborating closely with teachers and school leadership to support student development.

Lead and design **parent education initiatives** that help families better understand the developmental characteristics of gifted learners and the importance of social-emotional and relational development. Develop opportunities such as:

- parent workshops and seminars
- discussion groups or speaker series
- written guidance and resources for families
- collaboration with the Parent Association

Parent education topics may include:

- the emotional development of gifted children
- supporting resilience and managing perfectionism
- developing executive functioning skills
- supporting healthy friendships and social belonging
- helping children develop empathy, integrity, and relational intelligence

Through parent education, the Dean helps ensure that the school and families work in partnership to support children's growth.

Collaboration with the Student Support Team

Work closely with the Director of Student Support to:

- coordinate individualized student support strategies
- identify emerging student needs
- support twice-exceptional learners
- align SEL practices with broader student support initiatives

Cross-Divisional Collaboration

Collaborate closely with the Director of Student Culture & Wellbeing (6–8) to ensure continuity across TK–8 in:

- social-emotional learning practices
- student support approaches
- restorative and relational practices
- executive functioning development
- the cultivation of relational intelligence

This partnership supports a coherent developmental pathway as students grow from early childhood into adolescence.

Qualifications

Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree in Education, Counseling, Psychology, Child Development, or related field preferred.

3–5 years of experience working with elementary-aged students in counseling, student development, or gifted education.

Demonstrated knowledge of:

- gifted and asynchronous development
- social-emotional learning
- relational intelligence and social cognition
- executive functioning development
- neurodiversity and twice-exceptional learners
- attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

Experience working collaboratively with teachers and families to support student development.

Strong interpersonal, communication, and collaboration skills.

Deep commitment to fostering learning environments grounded in kindness, integrity, curiosity, and openness to ideas.

Impact of This Role

As Dean of Student Development & Wellbeing, you will help shape the developmental foundation of Tessellations' youngest learners.

By supporting students directly, strengthening faculty capacity, and partnering with families, you will help cultivate a school environment where gifted learners develop not only intellectually but also socially and relationally.

Through this work, students grow into individuals who approach the world with curiosity, empathy, integrity, and the relational intelligence necessary to contribute thoughtfully to an interconnected world.

Compensation

Salary range: \$85,000 - \$105,000

Benefits include medical, dental, vision, life, short-term disability, 401(k), flexible spending account, paid time off, holidays, and school breaks.

To Apply

Please submit a cover letter and resume to careers@tessellations.school. For more information about our school, visit <http://www.tessellations.school>.

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