

Associate Counsel

Start Date: Immediate
Team: Legal & Compliance
Location: New Haven, CT

About Achievement First:

Achievement First, a non-profit 501(c)3 charter school management organization, operates 35 public charter schools in Brooklyn, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The mission of Achievement First is to close the achievement gap and deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all children, regardless of race or economic status. Achievement First currently educates more than 14,000 students in historically underserved neighborhoods, with over 90% of our students identifying as Black and Latino. With its college-preparatory focus, the Achievement First approach is attaining breakthrough academic gains throughout the network. Beyond our students and schools, Achievement First is an engaged and prominent partner in the larger conversation about how to improve public education and student achievement in our country.

Achievement First's approach to teaching and learning enables every student to succeed at the highest levels. This involves:

- Recruiting and developing successful teachers and school leaders and empowering them to use student data to strategically drive instruction;
- Creating a joyful school culture where it is "cool to be smart" that emphasizes character education and focuses students on college;
- Providing students with more time on task and intense intervention when they are struggling so that no child falls through the cracks.

For more information about Achievement First's mission, approach, schools and team, please visit our website at www.achievementfirst.org.

Summary

Achievement First seeks an associate counsel with a strong background in the legal issues involved with serving students in a public education setting, particularly in the area of special education. The position will report to the counsel and will also work closely with our schools' leadership to support them in their legal needs.

Responsibilities of the Associate Counsel will include but are not limited to:

- Travel regularly to schools in New Haven, Bridgeport and Hartford. Somewhat less frequently, the position will also require travel to schools located in Brooklyn, New York and Providence, Rhode Island.
- Participate in special education meetings (IEP/PPT meetings, 504 meetings).
- Provide legal advice and guidance to the network and directly to school leaders on education law, focusing on special education.
- Provide guidance on laws and regulations around the discipline of students; conduct disciplinary hearings as appropriate.
- Develop relationships with district personnel who partner with Achievement First around special education delivery.
- Stay current on relevant laws and regulations and be seen as the subject matter expert on education law.
- Represent the network in front of boards, government agencies, parents, and authorizers on legal issues impacting our scholars.

- Prepare policy reports, memoranda, briefing papers and talking points for internal and external use on education issues.
- Communicate independently with outside counsel and representatives of outside agencies.
- Develop relationships with other education lawyers and bring best practices to the organization.
- Assist the organization and schools as necessary on a variety of additional in-house legal matters.

Skills and Characteristics

- Ability to exercise considerable judgment and discretion in establishing and maintaining good working relationships in way that is consistent with Achievement First's culture and values.
- Strong legal reasoning, analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Capacity to analyze and articulate legal concepts and other complex issues to a variety of audiences.
- Ability to thrive in a fast-paced, entrepreneurial environment; flexible, able to work autonomously as well as take direction as needed.
- Excellent advocacy, oral and written communication skills.
- Project management experience; detail-oriented and highly organized.
- Maturity, humility, strong work ethic, sense of humor, and "roll-up-my-sleeves" attitude.
- Supports fair treatment and equal opportunity for all and enforces that policy within his/her sphere of influence.

Educational Background and Work Experience

- J. D. (Juris Doctor) required with 1-3 years of relevant experience obtained at a law firm, government agency or an educational institution.
- Experience in special education law or teaching students with disability is required.
- Licensed to practice in CT or NY.
- Litigation experience preferred.
- Evidence of ability to work well with colleagues, student families, outside counsel, network and school leaders, and opposing counsel.
- The ideal candidate will have a demonstrated passion for education reform and be eager to learn about the inner workings of running and managing high-performing charter schools.

Occasional weekend or evening work and frequent travel to our schools in Connecticut, New York, and Rhode Island is required.

Compensation

Salary for this position is competitive and commensurate with experience. Additionally, Achievement First offers a comprehensive benefits package.

To Apply

Send resume and cover letter to both of the following:

1. Michera Brooks, Counsel micherabrooks@achievementfirst.org
2. Peter Cymrot, General Counsel petercymrot@achievementfirst.org

Achievement First is an equal opportunity employer and an organization that values diversity. People from all diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. Spanish language proficiency is a plus. You can learn more about diversity at Achievement First here: <http://www.achievementfirst.org/about-us/diversity/>.