

Director of Pre-K & Diverse by Design Programs

Start Date: Immediate – or no later than July 1, 2019
Team: Team Elementary
Location: Brooklyn, NY

About Achievement First

Achievement First, a non-profit 501(c)3 charter school management organization, operates over 30 public charter schools in Brooklyn, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The mission of Achievement First is to deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all children, regardless of race or economic status. Achievement First currently educates more than 12,600 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

There are two exciting new pilot opportunities on the horizon for Achievement First in New York City:

- (1) We have long served K-12 students, but we have never offered a Pre-K program. Due to recent developments in the regulatory environment and increasing demand for students, we would now like to do the research, design, and start-up activities necessary to launch our first Pre-K pilot – ideally in fall 2020.
- (2) Achievement First schools have historically served high concentrations of Black and Latinx, low-income students. Due to shifting demographics in Brooklyn, a handful of our schools are now in neighborhoods where the surrounding student population is more diverse both racially and economically. We would now like to undertake the research, design, and outreach activities necessary to launch our first “diverse by design” school.

We will need to make important “green light” decisions regarding each program in January 2020, but our hope is to launch both the pre-K pilot and to convert one of our existing kindergartens into “diverse by design” in Fall 2020. To take the lead on both of these important design efforts, the Director of Pre-K & Diverse by Design Programs will be responsible for setting the vision, applying for approval from the relevant external authorizers, guiding us to make the right organizational decision, and, if we proceed, launching one or both programs. We anticipate approximately 75% of this leader's time will be focused on Pre-K and 25% will be

focused on “diverse by design.” The Director of Pre-K & Diverse by Design will reporting to one of the elementary regional superintendents.

Responsibilities of the Director of Pre-K & Design by Design Programs will include but are not limited to:

Pre-K (75%)

- Develop a robust project plan for launching our first Pre-K pilot in Fall 2020, including all essential tasks and clear milestones to show “on track” or “off track” every month; report monthly on progress to AF’s Superintendent for Elementary Schools; in ~ December 2019, prepare a comprehensive recommendation to the AF Cabinet regarding whether to proceed with our first Pre-K pilot in Fall 2020
- Research best practice preK models and develop AF’s design heavily based on the most effective practices in the sector; our goal will be to borrow heavily from the most promising design we find and then augment it as necessary. We do not have the capacity to develop our own pre-K model from scratch.
- Refine curriculum and ensure vertical alignment with AF kindergarten
- Develop an affordable Pre-K budget for a school (including assumptions about which functions/costs can/should be shared with the K-4 school)
- Help to evaluate facility options and assist with facility decisions and planning
- Lead the NYCDOE and SUNY application process to get our Pre-K program approved
- Work with existing school and Network leaders to plan for program launch, including, but not limited Team Recruit, Operations, and Finance
- Develop selection criteria and partner with the school principal to execute a hiring process for school-site Pre-K Directors/Deans
- Provide readiness support and coaching for school-site Pre-K Directors/Deans (the school-site Director/Dean will report to the ES principal but will receive supplemental support/coaching from the Network Director of Pre-K, similar to the support from an Achievement Director, although more intense initially)
- Develop clear measures that we will use to evaluate our Pre-K program then track and analyze data; at least 3 times per year, report results to senior leadership
- As needed, other support for the launch and development of our Pre-K programs, especially doing whatever it takes to ensure the first two pilots are a success

Diverse by Design (25%)

- Develop a robust project plan for launching our first Diverse by Design pilot school in Fall 2020 including all essential tasks and clear milestones to show “on track” or “off track” every month; report monthly on progress to AF’s Superintendent for Elementary Schools; in ~ October 2019, prepare a comprehensive recommendation to the AF Cabinet regarding whether to proceed with our first Diverse by Design pilot in Fall 2020
- Do a modest, targeted research project to develop a list of “lessons learned” from other diverse-by-design efforts, especially those that are similar to our situation (where non-diverse schools or networks converted a school to diverse-by-design)
- Evaluate the AF Classic and AF Greenfield Designs and make a recommendation to the Diverse by Design pilot school principal, AF Superintendent for Elementary Schools, and co-CEO (Doug) on how, if at all, to modify the current AF program to attract a more diverse student body (NOTE: we do not intend to create a third model; we are only considering which Greenfield elements to add to our classic design with some additional intentionality about building a student and family community across lines of difference)

- Partner with Team X and Team M&C to modify our recruitment materials to appeal to more diverse families
- Lead targeted outreach efforts to attract a critical mass of early-adopter families in the local community in Fall-Winter 2020; engage them as necessary to help recruit other families; otherwise support outreach efforts as needed

Skills and Characteristics

- Pre-K or early elementary (K-1) experience and expertise
- Significant experience with project management, including managing multiple complex work streams
- Ability to thrive in a fast-paced, entrepreneurial environment; flexible, able to work autonomously as well as take direction as needed
- Strong social intelligence and the ability to engage a variety of stakeholders, including senior leaders of the organization, toward a common outcome
- Strategic thinker who uses research, data and multiple perspectives to form strong strategy
- Strong in oral and written communication
- Prior experience demonstrates strong alignment to Achievement First's mission
- Possess humility, a strong work ethic, sense of humor, and "roll-up-my-sleeves" attitude; extreme team player.

Educational Background and Work Experience

- B.A. required; Advanced degree a plus
- 3-5 years of relevant experience and/or experience in an elementary
- Occasional weekend or evening work and willingness to travel to our schools and offices throughout New York and Connecticut as needed 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:

Marcus Cortez

Associate Director, Team Academic Operations

marcuscortez@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/>.