

## Director of Special Services Achievement

**Start Date:** June 2019, but flexible  
**Team:** Team Special Services  
**Location:** New York (Brooklyn)

### 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](http://www.achievementfirst.org).

### Summary

Achievement First is committed to meeting the needs of scholars who enter our schools. As we grow roots within our communities and seek to educate student populations that mirror our neighboring community school districts, we have the opportunity to serve students with more diverse needs. Over the past 5 years, we have seen an increase in the number of students with significant needs applying to our schools and we are excited to see parents and guardians exercising choice for their scholars.

**As such, we have adopted a direct support model where a network team provides support and accountability to school based Special Services Leaders. The Director of Special Services will support a portfolio of 5-8 schools to achieve outcomes for students. The primary role of the Director of Special Services is to develop school based leaders to manage and drive special services at their school site.**

All ideal candidates will be passionate about meeting the needs of all students, have specialized expertise working in special education, and have a "make it happen" attitude.

The charter movement evolved to be innovative in the world of public education and this is an opportunity to revolutionize our program to truly serve the needs of all children. ***We are seeking hard-working candidates who are fanatical about doing right by all students.***

**Primary Responsibilities Include:**

- **Manage a portfolio of 5-8 schools to outcomes: Drive student achievement by ensuring schools implement strong special services**
  - Ensure students with disabilities, students with potential disabilities, and students who struggle are served across the continuum of services and interventions
  - Ensure IEPs and 504 plans are implemented with fidelity and live authentically as part of a scholar's academic experience
  - Support Child Find by ensuring students below triggers receive quality academic and behavioral interventions and are referred when appropriate
  - Ensure schools are in 100% legal compliance
- **Develop Leaders who are responsible for special services at the school site: Support the Special Services Leader (SSL) and principal relationship**
  - Drive SSL development through bi-weekly check-ins, bi-weekly school visits (focused on development via instructional walkthroughs, co-observations, coaching, etc.), and data reviews
  - Provide accountability and support (actionable feedback and coaching) to the school leaders
  - Communicate clearly (orally and in writing) with the principal to support her/his management of the SSL
  - Differentiate support depending on school leader skill and capacity
- **Oversee District Communication: Ensure schools' communication to the district is clear and take responsibility for communication when troubleshooting is necessary**
  - Support the district partnership by attending meetings with the school, provide actionable feedback around communication, etc.
  - If troubleshooting is necessary, communicate directly to the district to advocate on behalf of schools
  - If necessary, "play the heavy" to ensure kids get what they need from our district partners
- **Team and Cohort Support: Contribute to Team Special Services to support the entire special services cohort**
  - Create and deliver practice based professional development
  - Develop tools and resources to document best practices
  - Promote sharing and communication across schools
- **Core Values: Model AF Core Values including creating a network of schools that serve ALL children**

**Skills and Characteristics**

- Passion for progressive special education excellence and reform
- Strong instructional leader with a track record of improving teacher and leader effectiveness and the achievement of their students
- A flexible thinker who understands the chief metric is student achievement and experience
- Ability to inspire and influence others; strong relationship-builder
- Knowledge of special education

- Specific experience in differentiating and specializing curriculum, implementing Response to Intervention, and providing behavioral supports
- Exceptional teacher in his/her own right, who achieved dramatic student achievement gains and served as a model or teacher leader for other teachers within their school, network or district
- Ability to thrive in an entrepreneurial environment; flexible, able to work autonomously as well as take direction as needed
- Commitment to the Achievement First mission and educational model
- Maturity, humility, strong work ethic, sense of humor and roll-up-my-sleeves attitude

#### **Educational Background and Work Experience**

- Bachelor's degree from a competitive college or university
- At least four years of highly effective teaching experience demonstrating a strong track record of student performance gains with students with IEPs
- At least two of those years include school leadership experience (e.g. coaching)

This position will require occasional travel (approximately 1-4x per month) and candidates must be willing to work nights and weekends when necessary.

(Location can be flexible if the candidate is willing to travel 3 days per week to be at schools.)

#### **To Apply:**

Interested applicants should send a resume and cover letter to:

Payal Seth

Regional Director of Special Services, Network Support, Team Special Services

[payalseth@achievementfirst.org](mailto:payalseth@achievementfirst.org) (ccing [EmilySiefken@achievementfirst.org](mailto:EmilySiefken@achievementfirst.org))

Achievement First is an equal opportunity employer and people from all diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. We place particular emphasis on recruiting individuals who share the racial or socio-economic backgrounds of the students we teach, 90% of whom are Black or Latino. Learn more about diversity at Achievement First here: <http://www.achievementfirst.org/about-us/diversity/>.