

Chief Program Officer

Who are we? Achievement First (AF) exists to address the legacy of racism in education in America. Our mission is to deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all of America’s children. That is what we work for, every day. We know that all children—regardless of race, zip code, or economic status—deserve access to great schools. At the core of our approach is the shared journey by our students and staff to fulfill our incredible potential.

Just the facts. Achievement First has consistently been rated one of the top charter school networks in the country, AND we are still learning and growing. AF is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that currently supports 37 public charter schools in New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. The mission of AF is to deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all children. We currently employ more than 2,000 staff -- 47% of whom identify as Black, Latinx, or Multi-racial -- who collectively educate more than 14,300 students in Brooklyn, NY; Providence, RI; and New Haven, Bridgeport, and Hartford CT. More than 85% of our students qualify for free or reduced priced lunch. Our students are proving what’s possible by achieving breakthrough results in terms of academic achievement and long-term college persistence.

Our focus and reach extend beyond the students and communities that we serve directly. Achievement First is an engaged and prominent partner in the broader education-reform movement, partnering with schools and networks from across the country and openly sharing all our resources with all educators free of charge. We currently serve more than 100,000 additional students through two key partnership initiatives. Our Charter Network Accelerator is an intensive cohort-based training program for CMO leaders (with a focus on leaders of color) who are looking to increase the number of top-quality options available to parents across the country; and through our Navigator Program, we provide coaching and support for district and charter schools who want to adopt and adapt our curriculum and instructional practices to help students achieve breakthrough results.

Why work at Achievement First? First and foremost: you should work at AF if you believe in our [values](#) and want to surround yourself with people who share them. We are committed to *leading for racial equity*. We approach our work with humility, humanity, and the recognition that both what we do and how we do it must model the equity we seek. *We strive for excellence* by setting a high bar in all areas and pursuing it relentlessly. *We care about the whole person* and are known to be as warm as we are demanding. We *choose joy* and actively seek out moments of humor, gratitude, and deeper purpose for ourselves and with each other. We know that we will *go further together* and intentionally choose to join forces on both big and small things. We name brutal facts, *embrace challenges*, and see our mistakes as opportunities to get better.

Finally, come to Achievement First if you want to help support schools that are striving to not only close the achievement gap but also to redefine what’s possible in education. We are obsessed with getting better and are working to create some of the best schools in the country - schools that support not just student’s academic success but also their social-emotional learning, identity development, independence as learners, passion/enrichment/extracurriculars, and life-long fulfillment. AND, at AF, we believe getting better starts with looking in the mirror. We have done a lot of that lately, as we have more aggressively confronted our own biases and unacceptable gaps in our student experience. We are committed to addressing inequity within our systems, culture, and talent with resolve to walk the long road ahead to the true equity and

opportunity that our kids and families deserve. *So, come to Achievement First if reflection, challenge, and growth feed your soul.*

THE OPPORTUNITY

Position Overview

In order to achieve our ambitious goals, we need to create a coordinated, scaffolded, and effective K-12 program to prepare our students for success in college and beyond. Our Chief Program Officer will be in charge of creating that alignment.

In this role, the Chief Program Officer will likely oversee our student experience, special services, equity, and academic operations teams. In addition, they will serve as the “right hand partner” to the Superintendent and Chiefs of Elementary, Middle, and High Schools in designing and implementing our core academic program across all 37 (soon to be 39!) schools.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: (Note: this represents our current best thinking but may change slightly through discussions with the ideal candidate and based on personnel)

- **Manage and coach a team of senior school and program leaders, including:**
 - The leaders (Vice-Presidents) of our K-12 instructional support teams including Student Experience, Special Services, Equity, Academic Operations, and (possibly over time) School Operations and/or School Leader Development
- **Set the standards and ensure we have a strong, ever-evolving core program to achieve our goals and our vision of “great teaching fueling an exceptional student experience”**
 - The Chief of Program will serve as the “right hand person” to the Superintendent to co-design (using the input of many others) a shared, inspiring, and crystal-clear vision of what an AF school/classroom should look like grounded in our priorities of great teaching and student experience. This vision goes beyond eliminating the achievement gap but points towards a truly world-class education for our scholars.
 - Support the VPs you manage to provide exceptionally strong lateral support to schools aligned to this vision. This includes the following:
 - Strong visions of excellence (written plans, videos, PDs) for all core areas. Illustrative examples include school year calendar and IA schedule and process (academic operations), mindset reflections and ensuring equity is front-and-center in dean hiring (equity), guided reading vision and process to ensure all IEP services are given (special services), strong core practices for school “common pictures” and student feedback systems and effective student experience reviews (student experience), and allocating budget resources to priorities and clear school-site processes for core HR issues (operations).
 - Effective structures for engaging school leaders and regional superintendents to align on the work and ensure it’s done at a high level
 - Support VPs to have a clear multi-year vision and yearly plan (including top 5 goals, key measures, and the most important tactics)
 - Ensure that this vision is translated into a strong, aligned, K-12 program (curriculum/schedule, assessments, student experience elements, talent and culture practices, etc.)

- Ensure that we leverage both internal and external bright spots to constantly evolve our core program and school support practices
- Build team alignment around the shared commitments made by leaders across all AF schools and the areas where teachers / school leaders are encouraged to innovate
- Oversee the systems/processes to assess progress against our vision and course correct when gaps develop
- Oversee systems/processes to ensure equitable implementation of these systems that serve ALL students (including equity across students with disabilities and English Language Learner subpopulations)

You should consider this role if you are...

An outstanding leader with a track record of achieving excellence with equity

AF's Chief Program Officer has to have personal experience - as a teacher, principal, or systems leader - of achieving gap-closing student achievement results AND doing so in a way that simultaneously supports all students and values equity (e.g., low suspensions, low attrition). The Chief Program Officer needs to push the all the core program areas to excellence in support of our big goals.

A “warm AND demanding” coach

The Chief Program Officer will support AF in meeting its goals by effectively managing and coaching a team of senior programs leaders. Therefore, as the leader overseeing our program functions, you must be exceptionally strong at setting clear, ambitious goals and effectively coaching leaders and teams to achieve them. You must also be an effective listener and relationship-builder who creates trust with--and between--senior leaders and who successfully coaches leaders through adaptive challenges that may be holding back leaders or teams from fulfilling their potential.

A big picture thinker who can inspire and align a team to achieve breakthrough results

As the leader of our program teams, the Chief Program Officer must co-develop (with the team) a holistic vision for our K-16 program and subsequently guide and inspire the team to achieve that vision. You will need the change management and organizational development skills to implement this vision across teams and schools to create a coherent, K-16 aligned school design that consistently delivers excellent outcomes for students. You will need to be vigilant about naming and managing the team to go after areas where we are not delivering for students at the level we need to.

An equity champion and organizational culture leader

The Chief Program Officer will be a standard-bearer for how Achievement First models our core values and, specifically, what leading for racial equity looks like at one of the country's biggest charter networks. You must approach all issues with an explicit values-based lens and bring a skill set that includes getting to the root of adaptive challenges and tackling equity issues manifested at the systemic level. It is particularly important that the Chief Program Officer ensures that our school design is culturally competent, enrichment-oriented, and designed to unleash the intellect and confidence of our scholars. You must be an empath who works hard to understand the experience of people of all identities at all levels of the organization.

IDEAL EXPERIENCES AND QUALIFICATIONS

- The ideal candidate will be a results oriented, determined, skilled leader with a track record of gap-closing student achievement results as a teacher, principal, or systems leader
- A minimum of 10 years of professional experience in school leadership / program leadership / management
- A demonstrable commitment to pursuing equity
- This candidate should be an exceptional manager, coach, and team leader
- Excellent communication and influencing skills to interact effectively with all levels of the organization and the school network
- Exceptional strategic, analytical and critical thinking skills

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to: The Superintendent

Manages: The leaders (Vice-Presidents) of our K-12 instructional support teams including Team Student Experience, Team Special Services, Equity, and Academic Operations (note: as mentioned above, this may change slightly)

Location of next Chief Program Officer: NY, CT or Rhode Island

COMPENSATION: Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience. 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/> .

TO APPLY

Achievement First welcomes comments, referrals, or expressions of interest. If you would like to refer someone or to apply, please send a resume and any supporting materials by 3/31 to paulastuto@achievementfirst.org