

## Elementary School Academy Lead

**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 of 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 challenge*, 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 March 2020, Stephanie Keenoy – the Regional Superintendent who is currently responsible for the performance of all of our elementary schools across our 3 regions – was selected to become our network’s next Superintendent. We are seeking an exceptional senior leader who will step into Steph’s shoes and lead our elementary school cohort to continued success in the future.

In this role, the Elementary School Academy Lead will lead our team in ensuring that we keep the sacred promises we make to our elementary students and families. To deliver on these promises, the Elementary School Academy Lead will manage our Regional Superintendents (who each, in turn, manage a cohort of principals) and our VP of Great Teaching, ES, who is responsible for developing a strong curriculum and academic program for our scholars. In partnership with our Superintendent, the Elementary School Academy Lead (along with the academy leaders for our other academy levels and our Chief Program Officer) will work on our senior-most program team to ensure all of our scholars receive a quality education.

### MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

#### Manage and coach a team of senior school and program leaders, including:

- 4 Regional Superintendents who each manage a cohort of elementary schools, provide direct coaching to principals, and are responsible for the achievement of all schools within their cohort.
- A VP of Great Teaching, ES who is responsible for ensuring that our elementary school curriculum and instruction are rigorous, reflective of our scholar’s background, engaging, and effective.
- Ensure a strong culture among all elementary teammates (Regional Superintendents, VP of Great Teaching, ES, curriculum developers, coordinators, etc.) that spikes in care, challenge, and psychological safety - and creates the conditions for equity among senior leaders
- Ensure strong attention-to-results practices within and across our elementary schools so that we achieve our two North Star goals: (1) More Consistent Excellence across AF schools: At least 85% of AF schools achieving strong or exemplary status on our comprehensive AF Report Card (our summative measure for school success, including student achievement, investment, equity, and talent measures) and (2) Long-Term Alumni Success: At least 65% Expected College Completion (which would be greater than the average for top-income quartile families);

#### Set the standards and ensure we have a strong, ever-evolving core elementary program to achieve our goals and our vision of “great teaching fueling an exceptional student experience” that is aligned to our K-12 program

- In partnership with other academy levels, the Superintendent, the Chief Program Officer, elementary Regional Superintendents, and the VP of Great Teaching, ES, co-design a shared, inspiring, and crystal-clear vision of what an AF elementary school/classroom should look like grounded in our priorities of great teaching and student experience that does not stop at eliminating the achievement gap but that provides a truly world-class education to our scholars
- Ensure that this vision is aligned with our K-12 program (curriculum/schedule, assessments, student experience elements, talent and culture practices, etc.); this will require the Elementary School

Academy Lead to identify and work through the biggest K-12 alignment pain points with their colleagues at other academy levels.

- 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)

**Manage a cohort of schools to gap-closing outcomes and be an excellent coach to those principals, all with a lens towards Leading for Racial Equity**

- Directly manage a cohort of Elementary schools to ensure excellent and equitable academic, socioemotional, and talent outcomes for all scholars and staff
- Provide excellent coaching and development to the principals of these schools that supports those principals in leading their school, coaching their leadership team, and growing their impact across AF
- Regularly review data to spot strengths and growth areas; work with principals to develop clear plans to address growth areas.
- Through regular observations, build strong relationships with the school team including cultivation of teachers and leaders into future school leaders
- Strengthen the bond between the school and Network Support by being an effective liaison between the school and network

**Serve as a key senior leader and steward for our network**

- Along with the Superintendent, academy leads for other grade levels, and the Chief Program Officer, serve as one of the most senior program leaders in our organization, helping us achieve our goals and exercising strong judgment in making critical decisions about what we prioritize and how we operate
- Through modeling and feedback, serve as a powerful culture leader of AF to help ensure that we all consistently walk the talk of our core values
- Serving internally and externally (e.g., at large network gatherings, with public officials, at Board meetings) as a representative of Achievement First's leadership

**You should consider this role if you are...**

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

AF's Elementary School Academy Leader has to have personal experience - as a teacher, principal, and systems leader - of achieving gap-closing student achievement results AND leading schools that are affirming, empowering, and position students for long-term success. You must have first-hand experience leading a culture and program that achieves excellence (strong academic results for ALL students) with equity (e.g., low suspensions, low attrition). We are looking to create more schools that are amongst the best in the country - and we are looking to our Elementary School Academy Lead to be able to leverage their personal experience and learning to lead the way.

### **A “warm AND demanding” coach**

The Elementary School Academy Lead will support AF in meeting its goals by effectively managing and coaching a team of senior leaders. Therefore, as the leader overseeing our school management and program functions at the elementary level, 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 all of our elementary teams, the Elementary School Academy Lead must co-develop (with the team) a holistic vision for our K-4 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-4 aligned school design that consistently delivers excellent outcomes for students while also remaining aligned to our 5-12 program. 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 Elementary School Academy Lead 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 Elementary School Academy Lead 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.

### **Passionate and knowledgeable about great instruction**

The Elementary School Academy Lead must define--and hold--the bar for what instruction should look/feel/sound like across our growing network. To do that, you must be deeply passionate about supporting all of our scholars through strong school model and curriculum design, socio-emotional learning, teaching, and pedagogy. In this context you will be more than just a manager; you will be a “chief learner” - someone who will continue learning about great instruction and continually pushing our network to get better.

## **IDEAL EXPERIENCES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

- The ideal candidate will be a results oriented, determined, skilled instructional leader with a strong track record of gap-closing student achievement results as a teacher, principal, and systems leader at an elementary school level
- A minimum of 10 years of professional experience in school leadership / management
- A demonstrable commitment to pursuing equity
- A strong track record of experience and results as a trusted member of an organization’s senior leadership team

- Deep familiarity with pedagogy, instructional methods, and program design
- 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:** 4 Regional Superintendents and a VP of Great Teaching, MS. The team is spread across NY, CT, and RI.

**Location of next Superintendent:** 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 4/10 to [paulastuto@achievementfirst.org](mailto:paulastuto@achievementfirst.org)