

Chief of Staff

Start Date: Immediate
Team: Office of the President
Location: Brooklyn, New York

Who are we? Achievement First (AF) exists to address the legacy of racism in education in America. We know that all children—regardless of race, zip code, or economic status—need and deserve access to a great education. 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 nearly 15,000 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.

Achievement First is also an engaged and prominent partner in the broader education-reform movement, partnering with schools and networks 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 our Charter Network Accelerator and Navigator partnership organizations.

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. We choose joy and actively seek out moments of humor, gratitude, and deeper purpose. We know that we will go further together and intentionally join forces on both big and small things. We name brutal facts and see our mistakes as opportunities to get better.

Finally, come to Achievement First if you want to help schools redefine what's possible in education. We 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, passions, 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 and staff 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 our kids and families deserve. So, come to Achievement First if reflection, challenge, and growth feed your soul.

The Opportunity: The Chief of Staff (COS) serves as a key strategic advisor and support to the President. As part of Achievement's First senior leadership team, the COS works closely with Cabinet members and network leaders to increase the effectiveness and culture of the Network Support Team, improve partnership between Network Support and schools, and lead organization-wide planning.

Responsibilities of the Chief of Staff will include but are not limited to

Strategic Planning and Alignment

- Oversee the organization's strategic planning process and ensure alignment and coherence with all related planning processes (annual planning, staffing, budgets, individual goals)
- Lead the effort to develop key performance indicators to regularly monitor and communicate progress against strategic goals and ensure leaders and stakeholders have the necessary data to make decisions and adjust course when necessary
- Work collaboratively with Cabinet members and network leaders to identify opportunities to improve alignment and increase cross-functional collaboration across the network

Support for the Office of the President

- Act as the President's "right hand": a key partner who acts as an informed, insightful, and confidential sounding board to test ideas, debate issues, and provide critical feedback
- Collaborate with the Chief Equity Officer to execute on Leading for Racial Equity initiatives
- Partner with the Chief Talent Officer to ensure strong organizational culture, collaboration and functioning across Network Support
- Ensure a high level of functioning and team culture for the President's office, including leading the planning and facilitation of leadership team meetings and retreats, supporting collaboration among the President's direct reports; managing direct report meetings, and other office activities
- Manage the office and staff of the President to ensure the effective management of day-to-day priorities, operations, and decisions
- Collaborate with the communications team on the implementation of the org-wide internal communication strategy for Network Support and Schools

Special Projects Oversight and Execution

- Oversee the development and execution of critical initiatives and special projects that require senior-level leadership and are not directly linked to a specific functional area
- Lead cross-functional project teams to achieve specific outcomes on behalf of the organization. These may span a range of strategic and operational projects that require attention to detail and high-quality execution
- Assist in screening and selection of consultants on special projects; managing the overall relationship to ensure alignment and successful execution

Experience and Qualifications

- 5 or more years project management experience in consulting or client-service environment with a track record of successful project and team management
- Experience as a thought leader and strategic partner at the senior-most organizational levels
- Strong people management track record; widely viewed as a strong manager of junior and senior staff and able to build/sustain high-performing teams
- Highly collaborative, a track record of leading through influence in the absence of direct management authority
- Exceptional skills in long-term planning in complex organizations
- Strong operational mindsets and skills – able to keep lots of simultaneous trains running on time with an attention to detail and execution
- Ability to partner with a broad range of stakeholders with different interests and needs
- Ability to work proactively in an ambiguous, dynamic, fast paced environment



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. You can learn more about diversity at Achievement First here:

<http://www.achievementfirst.org/about-us/diversity/> .

HOW TO APPLY: Achievement First welcomes comments, referrals, or expressions of interest. **If you would like to apply or refer someone, please send a resume to kristennielsen@achievementfirst.org.**