

Principal Fellow

Start Date: July 1, 2021

Location: Brooklyn, NY; New Haven, CT; Hartford, CT; Bridgeport, CT; Providence, RI

As a Principal Fellow at Achievement First, you will be at the center of this work— leading at one of our schools, achieving breakthrough results for the students we serve, and building your own vision and skill to lead an extraordinary Achievement First school in the future. Here, you will be the driver of high-quality coaching instruction that enables teachers to develop strong classroom cultures, deliver strong content and to instill a lifelong love of learning in our scholars. You will work with teachers to be your students' champion because you believe all students are capable of greatness and achievement far beyond what society has been conditioned to accept. You will come to demand excellence for yourself, your teachers and your students, and accept nothing less than students' best and most thoughtful work.

At Achievement First, you will grow as a passionate and constant leader who thrives on feedback, enjoys regular one-on-one coaching with your principal and Regional Superintendent, and nurtures a voracious appetite for professional development and consistent improvement. You will cultivate school wide classroom cultures built on strong structures, communication and lasting relationships. Every day, you will contribute to the education of children who will go on to college and return to our communities as the next generation of game-changers, such that one day, you are leading your own school that does the same.

Overview of the Achievement First Principal Fellowship

The Principal Fellowship is typically an 18-month program, beginning each July, that supports future school leaders in their development as they prepare to become a principal. Principal Fellows have leader positions at AF schools where they learn from talented mentor principals, and also participate in a network-wide professional development program including skill-building, excellent school visits, and best practice sharing throughout the year.

The program is grounded in several core beliefs:

- School leaders learn best by doing the work of leading schools. All Fellows serve as full-time leaders at an Achievement First school, as a dean of school culture or academic dean. The Principal Fellow has clear and significant responsibilities for both instructional and school culture leadership in his/her host school.
- School leaders learn best through mentoring and feedback in the context of their everyday work. The principal and regional superintendent of the host school mentors the Fellow. These coaches provide regular support to the Fellow as they navigate the many challenges of leading a school, through individualized coaching and real-time feedback.
- School leaders must be strong instructional leaders and people leaders. The skill building we do over the course of the Fellowship focuses on instructional leadership, such as the observation/feedback cycle and leading adult PD, as well as people leadership skills such as engaging in difficult conversations or creating diverse and inclusive communities.
- Fellows attend the Instructional Leaders Professional Development series through the Relay Graduate School of Education. The program is focused on building instructional leadership skills and the cost of the program is covered entirely by Achievement First.

Achievement First typically interviews and selects principals in early Winter. Principal Fellows may apply for a principal position in their first or second year in the program. When a Principal Fellow is selected for a particular principal position, they receive additional coaching and support from their Regional Superintendent as well as through professional development with other new principals. This development is focused on the following:

- Extensive Talent Work: Hiring and matriculating new staff, retaining and developing current staff, building a strong leadership team
- Readiness Planning: Creating the vision and plans for all elements of the school the Fellow will lead, such as creating the school schedule, professional development plan or family engagement plans.
- Additional differentiated skill development

Skills and Characteristics:

- A commitment to Achievement First's mission, deep love of content, and an unwavering belief that all students can and will succeed.
- Track record of exemplary instructional and classroom management skills, including meeting extremely high standards for student achievement.
- High level of personal organization and planning.
- Excellent communication skills with diverse constituents (teachers, parents, children, board members)
- Proven ability to proactively lead by example, effectively manage adults, and seek out feedback
- Team player: maturity, humility, strong work ethic, follow-through, sense of humor, willingness to respond positively to feedback and a "roll-up-my-sleeves" attitude.
- Mastery of and enthusiasm for subject matter.

Educational Background and Work Experience:

- A bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred.
- Successful formal experience leading and managing adults, preferably in an Assistant Principal or Dean position
- At least 3 years of teaching experience with a record of high student achievement.
- If not currently certified, obtaining necessary state certification in specific subject and grade level is required within the first two months of employment.