

Senior Director and Leadership Coach, Charter Network Accelerator

Start Date: June 2021
Team: AF Accelerate
Location: Flexible
Scope: Full-Time Role

About Achievement First and *AF Accelerate*:

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.

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 38 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. For more information about the Achievement First mission, model, our schools and team, please visit our [website](#).

AF Accelerate, a division of Achievement First, provides strategic support to educators outside of AF and partners with them to fulfill their missions and achieve stronger outcomes for students. We also work to foster an open source and collective learning environment within the broader education community to ensure quality resources, proven practices, lessons learned and promising ideas are available to all. *AF Accelerate* works with charter network leaders and with traditional district schools through two programs, the [Charter Network Accelerator](#) and [Navigator](#). The Charter Network Accelerator is currently supporting our 6th cohort of amazing leaders through an intensive program with coaching and cohort learning, and we are planning to launch a pilot program for early stage charter network founders. Learn more about our program's [theory of change](#), about the [cohorts of leaders](#) we have partnered with, our [vision for equity](#) in the workshop experience, and our [initial design draft](#) for the new pilot program.

Summary

The Senior Director will provide intensive coaching to a portfolio of CEOs and senior instructional leaders who lead networks of growing charter schools around the country. This new team member will also lead the founding of a pilot program focused on supporting early stage leaders of charter networks. In terms of time, a candidate can expect to spend about 60% of their time focused on the Accelerator program and about 40% of their time focused on the new pilot program. We are looking for a leader who is passionate about coaching school system leaders, facilitating cohort-based learning, and leading for racial equity. Ideally, this leader will have deep experience as a school and system-level leader.

As a program, we have a set of beliefs that are our strategic anchors, guiding how we do our work.

Program Beliefs

- We are focused on students' academic achievement AND know that school outcomes encompass more than academic outcomes.
- We believe in both deep technical support AND personal leadership development in order to catalyze transformational change in networks.
- We believe that our equity work starts with us; we look at ourselves first. We reflect and talk about the role race plays in our work, experiences, and decisions. We bring an awareness of racial identity and an equity lens to our coaching.
- We value the cultural norms, mission, vision and values of the individuals and organizations with whom we partner and believe there is more than one "right" way to educate kids or build a network.
- We believe in cohort-based learning and in the value creating space for leaders to build trusting relationships with each other.

What These Beliefs Mean for this Role

The ideal candidate for this role:

- Believes in the importance of building deep context on each partner network and fostering trusting relationships with network leaders
- Integrates their awareness of racial identity (their own and others), equity beliefs and equitable practices into their coaching, design, and facilitation
- Embraces the opportunity to individualize coaching support for different networks based on their context
- Thrives on helping leaders connect more deeply to their vision and values, recognizing them as the foundation for strengthening leadership
- Moves flexibly between coaching leaders on emotional intelligence and the concrete managing of people and priorities at their network
- Designs and facilitates professional development that centers leaders making meaning and learning from and with each other

Responsibilities of the Senior Director for the Charter Network Accelerator will include but are not limited to:

- Design and Manage a New Pilot Program for Early Stage Charter School Leaders
 - Design the program's year-long scope and sequence with partnership from a design advisory committee
- Manage the implementation of the program
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program and engage an advisory committee in recommendations for the program beyond 21-22
- Coach a couple of leaders directly and coordinate coaching for other leaders
- Facilitate meaningful cohort engagement and curate and oversee facilitation for all sessions

- Coach a Portfolio of Chief Executive Officers and Chief Academic Officers in the Accelerator Program on Personal Leadership and Strengthening their Organizations

- Build deep context on each network and support leaders in identifying personal leadership goals and organizational priorities that they are deeply invested in
- Provide frequent coaching to leaders, including observing them and their networks in action and providing feedback aligned to their goals
- Support leaders in working with their teams to identify, launch and manage the implementation of annual priorities
- Support leaders in making progress on their personal leader goals by building self and social awareness, connecting to their core values and shifting mindsets and behaviors
- Design and Facilitate Effective Professional Development for the Accelerator Program
 - Own a strand of content, clarify vision and goals rooted in our equity beliefs, and develop a sustained sequence of learning, including synchronous and self-directed content
 - Engage alumni and current cohort leaders to partner in design and facilitation
 - Design and facilitate highly-engaging, specific content sessions
- As an Accelerator Team Member, Collaborate on All Aspects of Program Design and Implementation
 - Attend weekly meetings with the Accelerator team to shape content for our cohort workshops and support
 - Engage in regular cycles of input and iteration with the team on all aspects of our work: coaching, workshops, partner-to-partner engagement, communication, and more
 - Participate in monthly coach professional development and alignment meetings, regularly observing other coaches in action and debriefing
 - Invest deeply in building a high-performing, healthy, and inclusive team culture
- Support Continuous Improvement of AF Accelerate and AF
 - Build relationships with leaders in other organizations to learn from their work and to enlist them as supporters for our program and Accelerator leaders
 - Research and distill lessons learned and best practices on a range of issues facing charter system leaders
 - Work with program staff to curate online organization of resources to ensure Accelerator leaders have access to the highest quality, most relevant materials to support their work
 - Facilitate the sharing of knowledge gained through the Accelerator across teams at AF

Skills and Characteristics

- Belief in the Achievement First mission, [our values](#), and a demonstrable commitment to pursuing equity, in particular that of building equitable systems and processes with AF Accelerate and in our programs
- Ability to coach leaders on their emotional intelligence and adaptive leadership, as well as coach them on leading school-facing priorities that will impact student outcomes over time
- Awareness of how issues of equity, race, and power play out in all levels of our organizations and an ability to name patterns and interrupt inequities through honest conversation
- Strong relationship builder, creating authentic connection based in trust and candor
- Motivated by the opportunity to work in a dynamic organization and as part of a highly collaborative team
- Ability to take initiative and excitement to build a new program
- Commitment to ongoing learning

Work Experience and Educational Background

- A decade or more of leadership in schools and/or network roles
- Experience coaching senior leaders and coaching on adaptive leadership
- A strong track record of improving academic outcomes for kids and/or organizational outcomes
- A strong track record of experience and results as a trusted member of an organization's senior leadership team
- Deep understanding of the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion required to support network leaders' efforts to become more equitable and anti-racist organizations
- Experience building programs and launching new initiatives
- Bachelor's degree required

Some travel for workshops and school visits will be required, though travel is currently paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. To be more specific, a high travel month may include 2 trips for a total of 4-5 nights away from home. Most months may include 1 trip with 2 nights away.

Compensation

Salary for this position is competitive and commensurate with experience. Additionally, Achievement First offers a comprehensive benefits package.

To Apply

Send resume and cover letter to:

Kelsey Wasserman

KelseyWasserman@achievementfirst.org

Please visit the Achievement First [careers site](#). 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](#).