

Executive Director, AF Accelerate

Start Date: Ideal: July 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. The mission of AF is to deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all children, as we know that all children—regardless of race, zip code, or economic status—need and deserve access to a great education.

Achievement First is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that currently supports 37 public charter schools in New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. 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. At the core of our approach is the shared journey by our students and staff to fulfill our incredible potential, and our students are proving what's possible by achieving breakthrough results in terms of academic achievement and long-term college persistence. AF has consistently been rated one of the top charter school networks in the country, *and* we are still learning and growing.

For more information about the AF 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 work to foster a collective learning environment within the broader education community to ensure that quality resources, proven practices, lessons learned, and promising ideas are available to all. Specifically, *AF Accelerate's* work is anchored on AF's open source K-12 materials, used by thousands of educators around the world every day, and we work with charter network leaders and with traditional district schools through two programs: 1) the [Charter Network Accelerator](#), which partners with system level leaders of CMOs to create and sustain transformational change in the networks they lead and 2) [Navigator](#), which accelerates student achievement through coaching for district and charter instructional leaders. *AF Accelerate* Programs serve 40,000+ students nationwide and we have plans to scale to impact the outcomes of 150,000 students in the next 5 years.

***AF Accelerate* Executive Director Role**

We are looking for a skilled culture leader who is passionate about our mission, our programs, and leading for racial equity. Ideally, this leader will have experience in K-12 education and in adult learning.

Major Duties and Responsibilities

Vision-setting and strategic planning

- Lead an inclusive process to co-create an inspiring, coherent vision for *AF Accelerate's* next 3-year strategic plan
- Lead the implementation of the strategic plan, clearly defining, communicating, and managing toward strong outcomes, ensuring alignment across the division, and managing multiple teams to achieve excellent and equitable outcomes
- Ensure strong systems are in place to scale the programs with excellence

Leading a high-performing, virtual, diverse team:

- Manage and coach a team of senior leaders, including:
 - *AF Accelerate* program leaders from the Charter Network Accelerator and Navigator Program content areas in elementary math, middle school math and middle school ELA. These four leaders develop and implement the strategy for each of our core programs and directly manage and coach the coaches who execute the program.
 - the senior operational leader for AFA who leads the team charged with creating and codifying the internal systems and tools required to support *AF Accelerate's* current scale and future expansion
 - the Director of Partnerships and Recruitment, who manages development and leads recruitment, external communications, and branding.
- Build a strong leadership team with a clear purpose and a cohesive culture to guide the work of *AF Accelerate*, and oversee the work across Navigator to build a program that is aligned across multiple content areas.
- Continue to clarify *AF Accelerate's* relationship with AF's network to ensure that it is mutually-beneficial and builds on the unique strengths of each entity
- Coordinate and foster alignment and collaboration across multiple teams, including engaging with teams at Achievement First to represent *AF Accelerate* and external partners
- Through modeling and feedback, serve as a powerful culture leader of *AF Accelerate*, ensuring we all consistently walk the talk of our core values.
- Ensure essential talent practices are consistently implemented to ensure that we retain our strongest people, and create a high-performing and high-equity adult culture
- Enhance the existing communication and engagement strategy that ensures people have the essential information they need to be effective, and that we leverage their voice and insight

Serving as the primary external representative and fundraiser for *AF Accelerate*

- Represent *AF Accelerate* with a variety of audiences, modeling poise, comfort, passion, and confidence with a variety of stakeholders
- Lead the fundraising strategy and secures resources to meet a \$5M annual budget projected to grow at approximately \$500K per year
- Refine and implement the vision for long-term financial sustainability through a mix of earned revenue and philanthropic support
- Engage with prospective and current funders to successfully build long-term relationships, inspire confidence, and demonstrate effectiveness of funded work
- Initiate external partnerships with districts and peer organizations
- Ensure external partners feel connected to and engaged with the organization's agenda over the

long term

You should consider this role if you are...

An equity champion with a track record of results

The Executive Director will need to set the standard for how *AF Accelerate* models our core values, and specifically how we embody leading for racial equity through our programs and our interactions with each other. Therefore, you are an empath who works hard to understand the experience of people of all identities at all levels of the organization, you approach issues with an explicit values-based lens, and you are a tested organizational culture leader whose background includes getting to the root of adaptive challenges and tackling equity issues manifested at the systemic level. You must have shown that you have been able to achieve excellent results while being very attentive to issues of equity (ensuring that success is equally shared across different demographic groups).

A talent and culture leader who can inspire the team to achieve breakthrough results

The Executive Director will support AFA in meeting its goals by effectively managing and coaching a team of senior leaders. As the leader overseeing all *AF Accelerate* functions, you must be strong at setting clear, ambitious goals and effectively coaching leaders and teams to achieve them. You must also be a skilled communicator and relationship-builder who creates trust with--and between--senior leaders and who successfully coaches leaders through adaptive challenges to fulfill their potential.

A strategic leader who can build a vision to scale

You will need the planning, change management, and organizational development skills to implement the strategic plan to scale the program with excellence. We are looking for a systems thinker with an entrepreneurial spirit who can co-lead and execute a strategic plan over multiple years. The ED will continuously iterate with program directors while scaling the talent and infrastructure needed to grow *AF Accelerate's* programs from 40,000 to 150,000+ students.

Passionate and knowledgeable about K-12 and adult learning

Ideally, the Executive Director brings experience with K-12 education and adult learning. A background in instructional and professional development will support program directors and coaches in continuing to refine our program models that support a wide range of learners, from children to adults. You will be a “chief learner” -- someone who will continue learning about great instruction and continually pushing our programs to get better as we scale.

Experience, qualifications, and characteristics:

- A minimum of 10 years of experience in an organizational leadership role managing teams
- Experience scaling up an organization, building strong systems and talent
- Experience building programs and launching new initiatives
- Experience with creating and leading a diverse staff
- Demonstrated results in fundraising; ability to deliver high-impact pitches to potential funders and secure a high percentage of target asks

- A demonstrable commitment to pursuing equity; the ability to interrupt inequities through honest and difficult conversations about race and power, and a commitment to creating an equitable and inclusive organization that honors marginalized identities
- Comfort with ambiguity and an ability to work towards increasing levels of clarity
- Excellent communication and influencing skills that lend themselves to effective influence across all levels of the organization and external stakeholders
- Strategic planning and critical thinking skills

Reporting:

The Executive Director will report to Rich Buery, CEO of Achievement First. The leaders of *AF Accelerate's* external facing programs will report to you. The *AF Accelerate* team is nearly 30 people.

Location & Travel:

Our work is national in scope, and our team is virtual. The location for this role is therefore flexible, though we prefer to have team members in the New York / Connecticut / Rhode Island region given the location of our schools and network leadership. Travel is currently paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. When travel resumes, you can expect to travel at least once per month to workshops, school site visits and/or meetings, and more frequently, if not based in the greater New York City area.

To Apply:

We're partnering with Monisha and Leslie at [Promise54](#). [Drop them a note](#) and they'll tell you more. When you are ready to apply, please prepare your resume and cover letter and follow the steps [here](#), ideally by Friday, May 14, 2021. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled.

Compensation:

Achievement First provides compensation commensurate with experience and an attractive benefits package.

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](#).