

## Chief of Staff



**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.

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.

**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 challenges, and see our mistakes as opportunities to get better.

Finally, come to Achievement First if you want to help support schools that are redefining 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 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 that our kids and families deserve. So, come to Achievement First if reflection, challenge, and growth feed your soul.

### **The Opportunity**

The Chief of Staff serves as a trusted strategic partner and sounding board to the CEO. As part of the senior leadership team, the Chief of Staff works closely with Cabinet members and network leaders to ensure Achievement First achieves its mission by leading organization-wide strategic planning, promoting cross-functional collaboration and alignment, overseeing the execution of critical strategic priorities, and acting as key advisor to the CEO and senior leaders.

## Major Duties and Responsibilities



### Strategic Planning and Alignment

- Oversee the organization's visioning and strategic planning processes and ensure alignment and coherence between all planning processes (annual planning, staffing, budgeting, team goals).
- Lead the effort to develop org-wide 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 improve alignment between teams, eliminate silos and increase cross-functional collaboration across the network.

### CEO Support

- Act as the CEO's "right hand": a key partner who acts as an informed, insightful, and confidential sounding board for the CEO to set priorities, review/prioritize organizational fiscal resources, consider recommendations and provide critical feedback.
- Represent the CEO as an official of the organization and serve as a proxy in interactions with internal and external stakeholders, as needed.
- Ensure the CEO's involvement in project or decision-making processes takes place at key times where their input and authority are most needed.
- Ensure a high level of functioning, productivity and team culture for the Cabinet, including leading the planning and facilitation of leadership team meetings and retreats to ensure strategic agenda and topics are timely, high-impact, lead to effective decision-making, and have a clear plan for follow through.
- Liaise with Cabinet members to ensure timely communication, collaboration, and results orientation among the team, with high levels of ownership and accountability.
- Manage and coach the CEO's administrative and special projects team to ensure effective management of day-to-day priorities, projects, budget and decisions for the office of the CEO.
- In collaboration with Achievement First's strategic communications team, supports the implementation of the org-wide internal communication strategy for Network Support and Schools

### Team and Organizational Leadership

- Lead a high-performing, diverse and inclusive team: recruit, hire and coach diverse and equity-minded talent; practice inclusive team management practices that result in high levels of engagement and belonging; align on vision, priorities and role expectations with all team members and ensure a high degree of alignment between organizational goals, team goals and individual role goals.
- Promote organization-wide systems improvements that advance our mission and progress toward our goals, including identifying structures, and policies – on own team and in the organization broadly – to make them more impactful, agile, inclusive and equitable and to create a deeper sense of belonging among our staff.
- Operate as an organizational leader by engaging rigorously to inform organization-wide strategy, budget and other key decisions; own the success of decisions once made; build strong, trusting relationships across AF; steward organization's resources and ensure team compliance in critical areas.

### NS Board Management

- Work with the CEO, Cabinet and governance team to ensure the NS Board of Directors are informed and appropriately engaged on organization-wide strategic issues.
- Support CEO in developing an annual Board communications and engagement plan that includes monthly email updates, cadence for routine and strategic updates for Board meetings, committee meetings, and Board retreats.

- Coordinate Board and staff interactions and provide frontline support/coaching to staff members to ensure that they are ready to be successful in Board interactions, including management of controversial and/or sensitive situations.



### **Special Projects Oversight and Execution**

- Oversee the design, development and execution of the CEO's highest-priority 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, analyzing results and adjusting course as needed, and ensuring overall high-quality execution.

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

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

AF's Chief of Staff must have an impressive track record of results. You must have shown that you have been able to achieve excellence while being very attentive to issues of equity (ensuring that success is equally shared across different demographic groups). In addition, we are looking to leverage your expertise as a senior executive with experience in leading organizations through a time of change and opportunity.

#### **A big picture thinker who can work collaborative with others to achieve our most important goals**

As a key member of the cabinet, and a senior advisor to the CEO, you will work collaboratively with leaders throughout the organization to achieve our most ambitious goals. You will need the change management and organizational development skills to implement this vision across teams and schools, especially in an organization like ours that is large and multi-region.

#### **An equity champion and organizational culture leader**

The Chief of Staff will also set the standard for how Achievement First models our core values and specifically what leading for racial equity looks like for one of the country's biggest charter networks. 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.

#### **A "warm AND demanding" coach**

Besides managing and coaching their direct reports, the Chief of Staff will often be positioned to lead by influence and to coach and manage leaders across the organization. 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.

### **Experience and Qualifications**

- Bachelor's degree required, Master's preferred
- Minimum of 7 years of experience in senior leadership; prior Chief of Staff experience highly preferred
- Track record of exceptional performance and driving towards outcomes under challenging conditions
- Strong people management track record; should be widely viewed as a strong manager and able to build/sustain high-performing teams
- Highly collaborative, a track record of leading through influence in the absence of direct management authority

- Strong operational mindsets and skills – able to keep lots of simultaneous trains running on time with an attention to detail and execution
- Ability to build relationships and effectively interact with a broad range of stakeholders with different interests and needs
- Exceptional reasoning, problem solving and strategic thinking skills
- Highly effective at communicating orally and in writing to a range of audience
- Ability to work proactively in an ambiguous, dynamic, fast paced environment



**KEY RELATIONSHIPS:** Reports to CEO

**LOCATION:** NY

**COMPENSATION:** Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience

**TO APPLY:** Please send resume and letter of interest to: [AFCareers@achievementfirst.org](mailto:AFCareers@achievementfirst.org) with the subject line: Chief of Staff by **September 3rd**. Due to the high volume of applications we receive, we will only be able to notify those who advance to a phone interview. 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/aboutus/diversity>