

## Director of Pre-K

**Start Date:** September 2021  
**Team:** Team Elementary  
**Location:** Brooklyn, NY, New Haven, CT, or Providence, RI

**Who are we?** Achievement First (AF) exists to address the legacy of racism in education in America. Our mission is to deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all of America's children. That is what we work for every day. We know that all children—regardless of race, zip code, or economic status—deserve access to great schools. At the core of our approach is our 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 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.

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 our resources with educators free of charge. We currently serve more than 100,000 additional students through two key partnership initiatives. Our Charter Network Accelerator is an intensive cohort-based training program for CMO leaders (with a focus on leaders of color) who are looking to increase the number of top-quality options available to parents across the country; and through our Navigator Program, we provide coaching and support for district and charter schools who want to adopt and adapt our curriculum and instructional practices to help students achieve breakthrough results.

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

Finally, come to Achievement First if you want to help support schools that are striving to redefine 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 students' 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 experience. We are committed to addressing inequity within our systems, culture, and practices and resolve to do the critical work needed to ensure equity for our scholars and staff. *So, come to Achievement First if reflection, challenge, and growth feed your soul.*

## Summary:

We are hiring a Director of Pre-K to research, design, and launch our first Pre-K pilot and ultimately our first Pre-K program. The Director will be responsible for setting the vision, applying for approval from the relevant external authorizers, guiding us to make the right organizational decisions, and, when we proceed, launching both pilot and fully developed programs. The Director of Pre-K will report to one of the elementary regional superintendents.

This is an opportunity to work closely with some of the leading education reformers in the country while gaining insight into education reform within a top charter school management organization. The ideal candidate has deep content knowledge in Pre-K, is a strong leader of people, and is driven by a desire to realize an anti-racist vision for schooling. A background as a school leader or district content expert is also preferred, but not required.

## Launch Pre-K Pilot

- Research best practice Pre-K models and develop AF's design heavily based on the most effective practices in the sector. Note: Much of this work is in progress by the current Director of Pre-K.
- Lead the NYCDOE and SUNY application process to get our Pre-K program approved
- Develop a robust project plan for launching our first Pre-K pilot in Fall 2022, including all essential tasks and clear milestones to show "on track" or "off-track" every month; report monthly on progress to AF's Elementary Chief of Schools
- Prepare a comprehensive recommendation to the AF Cabinet regarding whether and how to proceed with our first Pre-K pilot in Fall 2022
- Develop an affordable Pre-K budget for a school (including assumptions about which functions/costs can/should be shared with the K-4 school)

## Prepare for Program Expansion

- Work across multiple stakeholders to evaluate the strength of the pilot and develop the proposed strategy moving forward.
- Help to evaluate facility options and assist with facility decisions and planning
- Work with to plan for program launch with existing school and Network leaders including, but not limited to Team Finance, Operations, and External Relations
- Develop selection criteria and partner with the school principal to execute a hiring process for school-site Pre-K Directors/Deans
- Provide readiness support and coaching for school-site Pre-K Directors/Deans (the school-site Director/Dean will report to the ES principal but will receive supplemental support/coaching from the Network Director of Pre-K, similar to the support from an Achievement Director, although more intense initially)

## Manage Program Changes

- Work with stakeholders to manage programmatic change, including soliciting and incorporating the feedback of students, families, teachers, and school leaders; utilizing pilot programs to determine scalable practices; working with network stakeholders to determine scope and pace of needed changes; and, mapping out short and long-term objectives for instructional shifts.

## Skills and Characteristics

- *Brings an Equity Lens to the Core Work:* Consistently ensures that the Leading for Racial Equity lens will be a required, explicit part of priority planning, goal-setting, professional development planning, and progress monitoring for school leaders and network leaders
- *Practices Self-Awareness:* Consistently reflects on “How am I positioned (relative to privilege and/or oppression) in all aspects of my identities (e.g. race, class, gender, language) ?How might these identities impact people and our process?”
- *Focuses on Relational Trust and Human Values:* Notices and actively repairs broken trust/relationships; notices and addresses patterns of exclusion in meetings and 1:1 interactions; holds time to address and lean into non-discussables.
- *Designs with not for:* Actively looks for and insists on decision-making that requires us to listen, learn, and co-create with the people most impacted by work/decisions.
- *Utilizes a Growth Mindset:* Consistently identifies and addresses gaps in previous mindsets/skills and perceives the strength and performance of others through a growth mindset. Actively seeks feedback to improve, and demonstrates growth in response to feedback.
- *Employs Strategic Thinking:* Utilizes multiple perspectives and data points to drive to a clear understanding of the current state relative to organizational goals and best practices and pushes for deeper understandings of how and why this came to be. Sets clear, obtainable, and timely goals which move work and the program forward and proactively plans how to involve and invest others in those goals.
- *Analyzes and Responds to Data:* Accurately identifies strengths and gaps based on existing data, considers additional information which may/may not be included in the dataset, and provides specific insights based upon multiple data points.

## Educational Background and Work Experience

- A bachelor’s degree
- Content expertise in Pre-K content and pedagogy
- Two or more years teaching lower elementary or Pre-K.
- We would prefer a candidate with two or more years of experience in academic teacher coaching or two or more years of highly successful leadership experience at the district level.

Occasional weekend or evening work and travel within New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island are required.

## Compensation

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

**To Apply**

Send resume to:

Lian States

[lianstates@achievementfirst.org](mailto:lianstates@achievementfirst.org)

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