

Associate Counsel

Start Date: Immediate
Team: Legal & Compliance
Location: New Haven, CT; Brooklyn, NY; Providence, RI

About Achievement First:

Achievement First, a non-profit 501(c)3 charter school management organization, operates 41 public charter schools in Brooklyn, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. The mission of Achievement First is to deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all of America's children. We know that every child—regardless of race, zip code, or economic status—deserves access to great schools. Achievement First currently educates more than 15,000 students in historically underserved neighborhoods, with over 90% of our students identifying as Black or Latinx. For more information about the Achievement First mission, model, our schools and team, please visit our website at www.achievementfirst.org.

Summary

Achievement First seeks an Associate Counsel with a strong background in the legal issues involved with serving students in a public education setting and helping a large non-profit run effectively, particularly in the area of special education, school policies and procedures, employment law, contracts, governance, and related areas. The position will report to the Counsel and will also work closely with our schools' leadership to support them in their legal needs.

Responsibilities of the Associate Counsel will include but are not limited to:

- Provide legal advice and guidance to the network and directly to school leaders on education law, including without limitation special education, student disciplinary matters, student privacy; and charter law and authorization.
- Supervise responses to requests for information and subpoenas, participate in mediations and other employee related negotiations, and oversee related litigation handled by outside counsel.
- Ensure AF's staff policies and related documents meet the evolving needs of our schools, scholars, and staff by being involved in the AF Employee Handbook and Family Handbook annual review process if needed.
- Assist the organization in a wide variety of legal and non-legal work, including compliance and reporting, authorizer and governmental relations, and policy proposals.
- Stay current on relevant laws and regulations and be the subject matter expert on education law, employment law, public records and open meetings law, and other relevant areas.
- Represent the network in front of boards, government agencies, parents, and authorizers on legal issues impacting our scholars and/or organization.
- Prepare policy reports, memoranda, briefing papers and talking points for internal and external use on education issues.
- Assist the organization and schools as necessary on a variety of additional in-house legal matters.
- Develop relationships with other education lawyers and bring best practices to the organization.
- Represent schools in disciplinary hearings.

Skills and Characteristics

- Ability to exercise considerable judgment and discretion in establishing and maintaining good working relationships in a manner consistent with Achievement First's culture and values.
- Strong legal reasoning, analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Capacity to analyze and articulate legal concepts and other complex issues to a variety of audiences.

- Ability to thrive in a fast-paced, entrepreneurial environment; flexible, able to work autonomously as well as take direction as needed.
- Exceptional advocacy, oral and written communication skills.
- Project management experience; detail-oriented and highly organized.
- Maturity, humility, strong work ethic, sense of humor, and “roll-up-my-sleeves” attitude.
- Supports fair treatment and equal opportunity for all and enforces that policy within his/her sphere of influence.
- Excellent people skills with commitment to compliance.
- Commitment to Achievement First’s mission and leading for racial equity.

Educational Background and Work Experience

- J. D. (Juris Doctor) required with 1-3 years of relevant experience obtained at a law firm, government agency or an educational institution.
- Licensed to practice or awaiting admission in CT, NY, or RI.
- Knowledge of or experience in special education law or teaching students with disabilities is required.
- Familiarity with employment law, data privacy, public records law, contract review, and/or board governance is a plus.
- Experience with administrative proceedings, moot court or law school clinics with a litigation component preferred.
- Evidence of ability to work well with colleagues, student families, outside counsel, network and school leaders, and opposing counsel.
- The ideal candidate will have a demonstrated passion for education reform and be eager to learn about the inner workings of running and managing high-performing charter schools.

Occasional travel to our schools in Connecticut, New York, and Rhode Island is required.

Compensation

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

To Apply

Applications for this position will be considered on a rolling basis. Interviews will be held in mid- to late September. The anticipated start date is November 1, 2021.

Send resume and cover letter to:

Melika Forbes
General Counsel
melikaforbes@achievementfirst.org

Teghan DeLane
Counsel
teghandelane@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/>.

Achievement First requires vaccination against COVID-19 for all employees. Reasonable Accommodations based on a qualifying disability or sincerely held religious belief are being considered in accordance with applicable law. [Click here](#) to read our full policy.