Strategic Initiatives Associate

THE ORGANIZATION

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 41 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.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Strategic Initiatives Associate provides direct support to the Chief of Staff, Director of Strategic Initiatives and the broader “Team Chief of Staff” (also referred to as the CEO’s “Front Office”). In this role, the Associate prepares materials used by the Chief of Staff and Director of Strategic Initiatives, particularly as it relates to annual planning, long-term strategic planning, board relations, Cabinet meetings and organization-wide communication – for example: research briefs, board summaries, OKR presentation slides, and meeting logistics communications. As needed, the Associate will own and execute small scale projects for the Front Office – for example: build a governance database, coordinate Cabinet retreat logistics, plan and produce virtual all-staff town hall. Lastly, the Associate oversees the logistics for all internal Front Office meetings, activities, events and off-sites.

Basics

- **Location**: AF Network Support staff are currently working remotely. However, relative proximity to NYC is preferred (i.e., within driving distance or ~2 hour train/plane ride away).
- **Start Date**: February 2022
- **Position Reports To**: Chief of Staff, Beth Cocuzza
- **Compensation**: Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience
- **Travel**: This role may require occasional travel to AF school sites and/or public engagements

Responsibilities

- **Materials Preparation (50%)**: Prepare supporting materials and collateral for Chief of Staff and Director of Strategic Initiatives with a focus on presentations, memos, briefs, and emails used with the executive team and
board (with the expectation that all drafts are 80%+ usable without further edits). Conduct appropriate meetings and research to gather requirements (e.g., tone, aesthetic, length), content and context. Proactively seek feedback and make adjustments to final materials as needed. Ensure final materials are in the format and platform needed for the audience at hand (e.g., PDF, protected permissioning).

- **Small Scale Strategic Initiative Projects (30%).** Own the end-to-end implementation of small scale projects that are a priority to the Chief of Staff and Director of Strategic Initiatives with a focus on systems, operations and logistics related to the improved functioning of the Front Office, Cabinet, Board relations and annual or long-term planning. Conduct meetings to gather requirements, input, preferences, etc. Propose project plan, timeline and resourcing, and provide regular updates on execution against plan.

- **CEO Front Office Team Logistics & Administrative Tasks (20%).** In partnership with the Chief of Staff, ensure front office and Cabinet documents, resources, assets and recurring systems (e.g., expense management, organizational culture rituals, weekly communications) are well maintained and operate with consistency. Own or oversee ad hoc projects and administrative tasks as needed and directed by the CEO or Chief of Staff.

**About You**

- You have a bachelor’s degree and 2-3 years of experience, possibly more; and may have prior experience in the education/nonprofit sector.
- You have prior administrative experience, ideally managing the time and efforts of a principal (e.g., CEO, COO, President or senior C-level executive). Your principal’s time is the most precious resource and you get joy out of beating her to the “I saw that around the corner” punch.
- You are highly organized and fluidly manage documents in MS Office and GSuite, and have been known to introduce your team to new platforms and tools to optimize communication and workflow.
- You are known for building systems that people love to use and have demonstrated experience managing data and building ad hoc reports; you genuinely get excited when you learn a new Google Sheets equation.
- You are able to balance multiple priorities — planning event logistics, writing a memo for the board, building a presentation for the Chief of Staff — gracefully and with practiced personal organization and time management.
- You are a natural problem solver, fixer and finder of resources; in moments of tension, you defuse and resolve conflict.
- You have strong verbal and written communication skills, with a demonstrated ability to communicate strategically with senior executives.
- You are an organizer by nature and connect with others easily; you feel comfortable communicating in person, by phone, over email, text, Slack, Signal, Zoom, and know how to leverage the newest digital and project management tools.
- You work quickly, but deliberately and with high quality; you find the rapidly changing context of a social mission environment motivating and adapt without skipping a beat.
- You seek to build context; like an ever expanding Wikipedia page, you seek new knowledge to improve your understanding of the space that you work in and to stay one step ahead of your principal.
- You are humble, mature, situationally sensitive, and discreet; you take pride in supporting leaders worth supporting.

**Application & Selection Process**

- **Deadline to Apply:** Thursday, January 27, 2022 @ 5PM ET. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.
- **How to Apply:** To apply, please complete this application. The application is intended to share the kind of information that would be covered in a phone-screen interview and includes some basic questions, six substantive written questions, and a video submission. We anticipate the application will take approximately 2 hours to complete and suggest planning your time accordingly.
Looking Ahead: If you are selected to move forward, you will be invited to complete a Performance Task, after which there may be 1-2 45-minute Phone Interviews.

Due to the high volume of applications we receive, we will only be able to notify those who advance to the performance task.

Achievement First is an equal opportunity employer and an organization that deeply values diversity. Achievement First provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. In addition to federal law requirements, Achievement First complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment in every location in which the organization is located. Achievement First expressly prohibits any form of workplace harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training.

People from all diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. Learn more about diversity and inclusiveness 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.