**Executive Director of External Affairs**

Reports to Superintendent

Salary: $77,000 - $85,000. In addition, a comprehensive benefits package is included.

**About the Achievement School District**

## In January 2010, Tennessee passed the First to the Top Act, a sweeping reform of the state’s education policy that was the cornerstone of its successful Race to the Top application. The Act created the Achievement School District (ASD), a state-run education authority with the power to directly run eligible schools and to authorize charter management organizations to operate schools. The ASD was charged with enacting bold reforms to drive transformational results for students zoned to attend or attending Priority schools. In doing so, the ASD acts as an operator of schools (the directly managed “Achievement Schools” clustered in the Frayser neighborhood in Memphis), authorizes non-profit partners, and works as a catalyst for state-wide school improvement through increased focus on Priority schools and improved student outcomes. The vision of the ASD is for all students in Priority schools to be prepared for success in education, career, and citizenship after high school. In support of this vision, our mission is to fight for justice for Priority school students by committing to excellence, equity, and community in their schools and lives.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

* **Education and Experience:** Bachelor’s degree in Communications, Public Relations, or a related field from an accredited university and 7+ years work experience. Master’s degree from accredited university, highly preferred.
* Direct experience in education, political, or integrated marketing preferred
* Professional knowledge of public charter schools preferred
* Professional knowledge of urban public education preferred

**Additional Qualifications:**

* Superior interpersonal skills and demonstrated track record of building relationships across diverse stakeholder groups
* Strong communication and presentation skills (written and oral)
* Demonstrated high degree of initiative in resolving problems, developing and implementing solutions in an independent manner, and extraordinary attention to detail
* Demonstrated track record of success managing multiple media channels
* Excellent project management skills and ability to organize and prioritize work to meet concurrent deadlines and to measure and manage progress
* Strong management and coaching skills and demonstrated effectiveness building teams
* Strong ability to think strategically and creatively, and to create messages and materials that strike the right tone on complex issues
* Advanced computer skills (especially in MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Adobe creative applications)
* Familiarity with and relationships in Tennessee (in particular Memphis and Nashville) required

**Position Summary**:

The Achievement School District (ASD) Executive Director of External Affairs (EDEA) is responsible for leading the planning, development, and implementation of strategic communications for the ASD. This leader also supervises two of the district’s key portfolio management annual public engagement initiatives: authorization and school matching. He or she serves as spokesperson for the district in the absence of the Superintendent and supports crisis communications with school operators and their communications personnel across the district.

The EDEA identifies and cultivates community stakeholders and partners, including businesses and community agencies to support the work of ASD schools. The EDEA collaborates with partner school district officials to support the implementation of actions consistent with mutually beneficial rules of engagement. He or she plans and implements district wide events and communications campaigns geared toward increasing enrollment, improving relationships with community members, and sharing the work of ASD students and staff members.

**Work Activities:**

**Planning, Leadership & Management**

* Work in collaboration with other ASD Leadership Team members to advance cross-team priorities and functions in support of the organization’s mission
* Providing organizational strategic guidance on the Superintendent’s leadership team
* Advocating with LEAs, the State, and facilitating collaboration among schools and service providers

**School Authorization & Matching**

* Collaborate with TDOE and school districts to support regarding anticipated intervention needs
* Represent the ASD in presentations to and conversations with potential district partners, charter applicants, legislators, parents, funders, the media and stakeholders

**External Engagement & Advocacy**

* Designs and guides processes to ensure that ASD leaders are provided with pertinent input from parents and key community stakeholders prior to making key decisions or communicating major organizational shifts;
* Ensures that the ASD public calendar of events reflects multiple opportunities per year for ASD staff listening, informing and learning directly with and from school community members across all operator networks;
* Ensures 100% of operators provide ASD parents with regular, direct interactions with school leaders during school hours and beyond;
* Provides bi-annual updates to local elected officials regarding the ASD;
* Develop and execute legislative communications strategy during session each year in partnership with stakeholders (TDOE, advocacy organizations, etc.); and
* Supports the work of TDOE re: communicating with members of the Tennessee General Assembly during the legislative session.

**Communications & Crisis Management**

* Conducts quarterly interviews of Operator Executive Directors and annual comprehensive focus groups with students, parents, teachers, and community stakeholders
* Creates an Annual Report yearly to share advances by the ASD
* Provide strategic communications leadership, message development and counsel on complex and important initiatives, announcements, and events
* Build and manage the ASD brand into a source of strength for the organization
* Ensure coherence and strategic alignment of communications and outreach efforts with broader district strategy
* Ensure media responses are timely and on message, and internal and external partners are equipped to deliver consistent messaging
* Keeps direct reports apprised of relevant information and context to empower them to be strong messengers
* Participate as a member of the district’s Emergency Response team
* Convenes quarterly meetings with Operators’ communications personnel to align messaging and support district wide initiatives;
* Proactively promotes successes of the district and mitigates negative and/or inaccurate district portrayals; and
* Responds to crises, inclusive of proper communication coordination.

**To Apply:**

Submit a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three professional references to [TeachAS@tnasd.org](mailto:TeachAS@tnasd.org).

*Pursuant to the State of Tennessee’s Workplace Discrimination and Harassment policy, the State is firmly committed to the principle of fair and equal employment opportunities for its citizens and strives to protect the rights and opportunities of all people to seek, obtain, and hold employment without being subjected to illegal discrimination and harassment in the workplace. It is the State’s policy to provide an environment free of discrimination and harassment of an individual because of that person’s race, color, national origin, age (40 and over), sex, pregnancy, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status or any other category protected by state and/or federal civil rights laws.*