



## **Director of Science**

### **The Search**

Achieve, an independent, bipartisan, non-profit education reform organization seeks a Director of Science.

Reporting to the Vice President, Content & Policy Research, Laura Slover, the Director of Science will lead an exciting new effort to develop the next generation of science standards that will prepare students across the country for success in living and working in a science and technology-based society and global economy. Achieve is launching this initiative in partnership with the National Research Council (NRC), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and the National Science Teacher's Association (NSTA) with initial funding from the Carnegie Foundation.

Working with experts inside and outside Achieve and informed by the universe of available research and supported by research directed by this person, the Director of Science will work with state education leaders and other allies to ensure the successful execution of this program. Building off the success Achieve has seen in setting Mathematics and English standards across the country and the network they have built in 35 states that educate 85% of the country's children, the Director of Science will have the full support of a renowned organization and access to a network of passionate advocates and experts.

The position calls for a strategic and innovative program director who has developed and executed strategies with the input of multiple stakeholders. S/he will have knowledge of state education policy and reform processes and a proven ability to work collaboratively both internally and externally to build professional relationships. The successful candidate will have the proven ability to manage multiple, and often conflicting, priorities, people, and programs in a fast paced environment. Entrepreneurial, with proven ability to manage resources, s/he will identify and capitalize upon new opportunities and represent the organization in different forums. S/he will be able to appreciate the politics of science policy issues and be able to work within that context.

Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, has been engaged to assist with this important search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **The Organization**

Created in 1996 by the nation's governors and corporate leaders, Achieve helps states raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve assessments, and strengthen accountability. In 2006, Achieve was named by *Education Week* as one of the most influential education groups in the nation.

Achieve has:

<i>Number of Employees:</i>	33
<i>Current Budget:</i>	\$8 million
<i>Office Location:</i>	Washington, DC
<i>Website:</i>	<a href="http://www.achieve.org">www.achieve.org</a>

## **Mission and Goals**

Achieve is leading the effort to make college and career readiness a national priority so that the transition from high school graduation to postsecondary education and careers is seamless. The organization advances its mission through policy research, advocacy, and programmatic efforts.

## **The American Diploma Project Network**

To make college and career readiness a priority in the states, in 2005 Achieve launched the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network. Starting with only a handful of states, the Network has now grown to include 35 states educating nearly 85 percent of all U.S. public school students. Through the ADP Network governors, state education officials, postsecondary leaders, and business executives work together to improve postsecondary preparation by aligning high school standards, assessments, graduation requirements, and accountability systems with the demands of college and careers. Achieve tracks states' progress in the annual report, *Closing the Expectations Gap*. Achieve also supports ADP network states through:

### ***Research and Development***

Achieve regularly conducts R&D to help advance the work of the ADP Network states as well as the education reform community at large. Achieve's recent research includes studies of high school graduation requirements, state strategies for improving high school graduation rates, and evaluations of what high school exit exams and widely used college admissions and placement exams actually measure.

Achieve's work doesn't stop with the publication of reports; it has developed tools that help states change policies and practices. Chief among these are benchmark expectations, model K-12 academic standards in mathematics and English, that reflect the knowledge and skills graduates need to succeed after high school. More than half

the states have or will use these benchmarks to ensure their standards reflect the demands of college and high skilled careers.

Achieve has spearheaded a 15-state partnership to develop and implement the ADP Algebra I and II end-of-course exam, a rigorous test that measures whether high school students are ready for college-level mathematics. This is one of the first, and the largest, efforts of states to collaborate on the development of common exams. Currently, Achieve is undertaking a major analysis of mathematics, science, and literacy standards of high performing countries around the world and intends to develop science benchmarks.

#### ***Technical Assistance to States***

Achieve provides technical assistance to states on their standards, assessments, curriculum, and accountability. Achieve's Alignment Institutes have assisted 22 states in creating college- and career-ready end of high school standards in collaboration with their K-12, postsecondary, and business communities. The College & Career-Ready Policy Institute will assist eight leading states in ensuring that they have statewide assessment and accountability policies that support their college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements

#### ***Advocacy Tools***

In an effort to ensure that states have the tools they need to succeed, Achieve has created fact sheets, papers, PowerPoint presentations, and other advocacy tools to assist states in making the case for reform. Most recently, Achieve launched Math Works, a set of advocacy tools that explain why all students need higher-level mathematics to succeed.

#### ***Partnerships***

Partnerships are key to advancing Achieve's work nationally and in the states. Achieve works closely with organizations representing state policymakers, higher education leaders, business leaders, and community-based organizations. Similar local partnerships are developed in ADP Network states.

### **Current Context**

Achieve has been highly successful in carrying out its mission. As a result, some of the major objectives will be accomplished ahead of schedule. The organization is therefore seeking out new opportunities to make a meaningful difference in education reform. In the future, they will be focused on the following programs in addition to other new ventures:

***Leading International Benchmarking Efforts:*** Achieve has launched a sweeping international benchmarking initiative to ensure that state policies are competitive with the highest performing countries.

***Leading the Common State Standards Initiative:*** As a result of their work with Achieve, 16 states have adopted math and English standards that share a common core of college- and career-ready expectations – a marked departure from the situation over the past 20 years in which state standards were “all over the map.” Building on this foundation, Achieve joined with the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), to spearhead a state-led effort to encourage all states to adopt a common set of internationally benchmarked, college- and career-ready mathematics and English standards. As a result 48 states have agreed to participate in a process to pursue the adoption of these standards.

### **The Position**

Located in Washington, DC and reporting to Laura Slover, the Vice President, Content & Policy Research, the Director of Science will lead the effort to develop common state standards for science with leading states for grades K-12.

### **Overall Responsibilities**

The Director of Science will work with leaders inside Achieve and with external experts to craft, manage, and execute an overall plan for standards development including conducting research and analyses to inform development, facilitating a core writing team and content advisory group, engaging state content leads, and overseeing the drafting and vetting of the standards to ensure a product that is high quality and adoptable by states. S/he will work with Achieve’s research and communications teams to help determine a research agenda to drive science work and develop and execute a dissemination strategy for standards and other relevant materials.

The Director of Science will work with state leadership and content and policy research teams, including the Director of State Services, to ensure coordination of efforts towards meeting American Diploma Project goals and be responsible for developing and executing the state project plan, scope of work, budget, timeline, and product delivery.

The Director of Science will work closely with key development partners to ensure the successful execution of the program and act as Achieve’s leading voice on science standards internally and externally. S/he will coordinate development of science standards and will engage with state policy makers to ensure standards meet state needs. This person will inform and advise other Achieve interests around science and help to identify new fee-for-service opportunities around the science agenda. The Director of Science will navigate the politics of science policy issues with Achieve’s partners and the public to successfully execute the program in order to have a meaningful impact.

Working in a collaborative environment, the Director of Science will provide regular updates to Achieve senior staff and funder/s about the status of work. S/he will also develop and manage program budgets appropriately and work with the Contracts Manager and VP, Management, Finance and Operations to review and execute contracts

and agreements with states and other organizations in accordance with Achieve guidelines.

### **The Person**

The successful candidate will have:

- Masters degree in Education or related discipline, plus 10 years of relevant science and education policy experience;
- Knowledge of state education policy and/or science policy issues and reform processes;
- An accomplished planner, strategic thinker, and outstanding writer, able to understand and help shape Achieve’s strategy for advancing its policy agenda.
- An ability to represent the organization in public forums at the national and state levels;
- Experience managing budgets, people and consultants, including those working remotely;
- An ability to work in a fast-paced environment, under considerable pressure and tight deadlines.
- An ability to develop and execute strategies around Achieve’s work with states and standards and assessments;
- Strong program management skills and proven ability to successfully manage multiple and often conflicting priorities, people, programs in a fast-paced, deadline-driven environment;
- A proven ability to work collaboratively (internally and externally) to build professional relationships;
- An ability to identify and capitalize upon new opportunities to further an agenda; and
- Experience managing budgets, programs and people (including remotely).

Other Attributes:

- Strategic and tactical
- Trustworthy
- Highly focused– skills and mind
- Hard working

- Collegial
- Respectful
- Committed to equity
- Relationship-driven
- Creative and politically savvy
- Comfortable with ambiguity

Inquiries, applications, and nominations may be directed in confidence to:

Lisa Fisher, Vice President  
Natalie Leonhard, Associate  
Isaacson, Miller  
1875 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 710  
Washington, DC 20009

Email: [3983@imsearch.com](mailto:3983@imsearch.com)

*Electronic submission of credentials is strongly encouraged.*

Achieve is an Equal Opportunity Employer and invites and encourages qualified applicants from all walks of life.