



*"The ASD has been part of systemic change at the state level in how we work to improve our lowest achieving schools. Five years ago the state had no structured plans for schools in the bottom five percent."*

- Governor Bill Haslam, Tennessee, July 17, 2015

### **Job Posting**

**Position Title:** Superintendent, Achievement School District (ASD)

**Reports To:** Tennessee Commissioner of Education

**Position Description:**

The Achievement School District (ASD), Tennessee's state-run school district, was created in 2010 as part of Tennessee's First to the Top Act—the most sweeping education law passed in Tennessee in over two decades. The ASD is a key component of Tennessee's strategy to address the schools in the state that consistently perform at the bottom. The ASD is set on proving what is possible by catapulting the bottom 5 percent of schools in Tennessee to the top 25 percent, and, in doing so, dramatically expanding the lives and opportunities of students in these schools.

To date, there are 83 schools in Tennessee that fall in the bottom 5 percent in terms of academic achievement. While not every one of those schools is currently in the ASD, the Commissioner of Education has the authority to determine which schools will fall under its oversight and accountability. The ASD began its operations in 6 schools in the 2012-13 school year and has since expanded its reach to 29 schools serving approximately 10,000 students. This past year, students in ASD schools grew faster in math and science than their state peers, and schools in their second and third year in the ASD averaged the highest level of growth possible.

Senior state officials are looking for a unique, innovative leader to drive and carry out the next chapter of the ASD. The primary role of this individual will be to develop and execute on Tennessee's strategy to dramatically improve the performance of the state's most underperforming schools. Reporting to the Commissioner of Education, the ASD superintendent will have responsibility for the district's schools and the students in them. In particular, the leader will utilize a portfolio strategy for these schools, which allows for autonomy and diversity in approach in exchange for greater performance-based accountability. Additionally, this individual will serve as a member of the TDOE's senior leadership team and contribute to key strategic decisions for the agency.

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Proving what is possible for students in ASD schools by transforming the bottom 5 percent of schools in Tennessee to the top 25 percent.
- Managing the performance of all ASD schools through a portfolio approach which includes direct-run schools and charter-run schools.
- Recruiting high-quality charter operators to Tennessee.
- Explaining the ASD strategy—which moves past the “one-size-fits-all” approach of education—to the public and building support by clearly framing the strategy around its impact on students.
- Partnering with the superintendents and school boards of priority schools to optimize school transformation and ensure a smooth transition for students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders.
- Developing a lean and sustainable district model that relies primarily on existing state education funding formula funds.
- Working closely with national and local third-party partners to implement dramatic changes—particularly in the area of human capital—to enable the success of all schools brought into the ASD.
- Leading a high-performing team that has the skills necessary for all areas of operations and implementation.
- Managing performance contracts with ASD schools, which provide schools with autonomy in exchange for high-level accountability.
- Ensuring the existence of strong social-emotional support systems, including wrap-around services for students and families, to address out-of-school factors impacting student achievement in ASD schools and strong parent and community support systems.
- Recognizing and communicating progress while pushing for continuous improvement in the district.
- Working with existing government entities to build capacity for the ASD’s work.
- Communicating proactively about ASD with all stakeholders.

**Personal Qualities:**

First and foremost, the ASD superintendent must possess an uncompromising belief in both the capacity of all children to learn and be successful and a deep commitment to the improvement of public education in low-income communities. The ideal candidate will also possess some combination of the following personal and professional qualities:

- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Driven
- Agile
- Courageous
- Reflective

**Skills and Qualifications:**

The ASD superintendent will have a demonstrable track record for producing results in a context relevant to that of ASD schools and a professional background including credentials and experiences that will validate their stated readiness to manage a bold initiative in the face of one of the most complex challenges in education reform to date. Additionally, candidates for the position must possess the following skills:

- Demonstrated leadership in education and development of high-performing teams measured against performance benchmarks and student outcomes.
- Ability to make hard judgments about schools and not think of them as “one-size-fits-all” institutions, including a willingness to face challenges to fully explore what is possible for the district.
- Willingness to be open and clear about decision criteria.
- Ability to delegate responsibility to others and then supervise on consistency of actions with overall strategy.
- Strong conflict management skills necessary to navigate school turnaround work.
- Capacity to explain ASD’s strategy to a broad variety of audiences, both internal and external.
- Strong relationship/coalition builder who can cultivate the support needed for portfolio implementation.
- Proven ability to prioritize, balance, and complete multiple complex projects across multiple sites simultaneously and in the face of competing deadlines.
- Superb grassroots-to-grasstops skills including the personal presence and communication skills necessary to effectively develop relationships, interact and convey ideas and positions to numerous audiences including students, parents, teachers, community groups, principals, superintendents, funders, and legislators.

Because schools in the ASD are located across the state, significant travel will be required.

**Salary and Benefits:**

Salary is highly-competitive and commensurate with qualifications. In addition, a comprehensive benefits package is included.

**To Apply:**

Applications must include a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three professional references. Please submit by email to [Commissioner.McQueen@tn.gov](mailto:Commissioner.McQueen@tn.gov).

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