



ACHIEVEMENT FIRST

Achievement First Management Team

Current as of August 15, 2007

Dacia Toll is the co-CEO and President of Achievement First, a non-profit organization which currently operates six public charter schools in Connecticut and New York and is set to open additional schools each year. Dacia led the founding team and served for six years as the Director of Amistad Academy, recently named Connecticut's Distinguished School of the Year. Under Dacia's leadership, Amistad Academy students – selected by lottery, 98% black and Latino, 84% free/reduced lunch – consistently made dramatic gains in student achievement, routinely scoring on par with students from some of Connecticut's wealthiest communities. The success of Amistad Academy was the subject of a nationally-televised PBS documentary, "Closing the Achievement Gap." Three years ago, Dacia co-founded Achievement First to replicate the successful Amistad model and began opening additional schools in New Haven, CT and Brooklyn, NY. Within 5 years, Achievement First will educate more than 7,000 students, proving that Amistad's gap-closing, life-changing student performance results are possible at scale. Prior to Amistad, Ms. Toll worked as a teacher, lawyer, and management consultant, providing support for community organizations on issues of strategic management and program design. Ms. Toll also worked on school reform at the U.S. Department of Education and in Community School District 19 in New York City. After graduating from the University of North Carolina, she received a Master's from Oxford and a J.D. from Yale Law School.

Doug McCurry is the co-CEO and Superintendent of Achievement First and was one of the founders of Amistad Academy, serving as the school's instructional leader for the first four years. In his teaching roles at Amistad Academy, Mr. McCurry has achieved outstanding results. His math students achieved 88 percent mastery (and 100 percent proficiency) on the Connecticut Mastery Test, and his reading and writing students consistently showed over two years growth in a single school year. Mr. McCurry led the development of Amistad Academy's standards-based curriculum, writing large portions of the reading, writing, and math curriculum. He personally led the efforts to create the school's interim assessment and data analysis system. Through Achievement First, Mr. McCurry is now working with consultants to put AF's curriculum and assessments on an online platform. Mr. McCurry also leads the professional development efforts at Achievement First, and he is a sought-after presenter and coach of teachers. Before coming to Amistad Academy, Mr. McCurry was a management and technology consultant in Atlanta and taught history and writing at Providence Day School in Charlotte, NC. A Morehead Scholar at the University of North Carolina, he earned a B.A. in history and journalism. Through the Klingenstein Private School Leadership program, he earned an M.A. in educational administration from Teachers College, Columbia University.



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Gaylord Bourne is the Director of Connecticut Operations for Achievement First. Just prior to joining the AF Central team, she worked in public accounting for nine years specializing in not-for-profit organizations. Ms. Bourne has also worked in administration and finance for a variety of advocacy, social service and political campaign organizations in New York, Connecticut and Washington, DC including Public Citizen (Ralph Nader), CT Citizen Action Group, New York Public Interest Research Group, federal and state candidate committees, and other political action committees. She currently serves as a campaign finance consultant, treasurer of a social service agency, and member of the New Haven Board of Zoning Appeals. Ms. Bourne is a certified public accountant who earned her BA from Skidmore College and her MBA from George Washington University.

Laurie Bussmann is the Director of Information Technology for Achievement First. Ms. Bussmann is responsible for setting up and maintaining Achievement First's network infrastructure and the computers within each school. Ms. Bussmann also provides training and support to all staff members, helping them integrate technology into the classroom. Before joining Achievement First, Ms. Bussmann worked at Compaq and Hewlett Packard and the Haddam-Killingworth School District, where she helped transform this school district into a smooth running, high-tech operation. Ms. Bussmann graduated, with honors, from Providence College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science.

Abby Farber is the Director of Finance for Achievement First. Prior to joining the AF Central team, she served as Director of Finance and Operations for the Bronx Preparatory Charter School. Before entering the charter school world, Ms. Farber worked in finance, operations, and program development for the nonprofit organizations Child Care Action Campaign and Families and Work Institute from 1995 to 2003. She has an extensive background spanning a decade in municipal government, having worked in operations, finance, and program design for the NYC Department of Homeless Services and the NYC Human Resources Administration. Ms. Farber earned her B.Sc. from Northwestern University.

Melanie Mullan is the Chief Operations Officer for Achievement First. Previously, Ms. Mullan served as a program and business development consultant to the Center for Advanced Emotional Intelligence [AEI], a leadership development firm that coaches senior executives and corporate leadership teams from a wide range of industries and from some of America's most recognized companies. Prior to moving to New York City in 2001, Ms. Mullan was Executive Vice President for Operations of GlobalLearn, an Internet-based education



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company that she helped launch in 1995 and that produced dynamic content and curricula for the K-12 market. She is Chair of the Committee for the Future at the New York Women's Foundation and a Coro (Leadership New York) fellow. Ms. Mullan earned her B.A. from Yale College.

Ken Paul is the Director of Development for Achievement First in Connecticut. His responsibilities include fundraising, new school expansion planning, and relationship management. Previously, he was a Co-Owner of the Bridgeport Bluefish minor league baseball team, a founder of a Major League Lacrosse team, and an airline pilot. Mr. Paul is a Board member and Development Chairman for Hopkins School in New Haven and Habitat for Humanity Coastal Fairfield County. He graduated from the US Naval Academy and served as a Navy pilot.

Max Polaner is the Chief Financial Officer for Achievement First. Previously, Mr. Polaner was CFO of Inductis, an analytical consulting firm, and assisted that company in its growth from 100 to 250 employees and in a doubling of its revenue until it was acquired by EXL Services in July 2006. Prior to Inductis, he founded and ran Impromptu Gourmet, an online gourmet food company, and before that was a consultant at McKinsey and Company in New York. Before graduate school, Mr. Polaner led the quality control department at Polaner Preserves, the company started by his great-grandfather, until its acquisition by American Home Products in 1993, and before that, spent the first four year of his career as a middle school math, social studies and music teacher in the San Francisco Bay area. Mr. Polaner received a Master of Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government, an MBA from Harvard Business School, his teacher's certificate from San Francisco State University, and his BA from Yale University.

Kathleen Porter-Magee is the Director of Curriculum Development for Achievement First. As curriculum director, Ms. Porter-Magee directs the development of K-12 curriculum and assessments for Achievement First schools in Connecticut and New York and coordinates system-wide professional development opportunities for AF teachers. Previously, Ms. Porter-Magee served as the director of professional development and recruitment for the 115 Archdiocese of Washington, DC Catholic Schools, as the associate research director of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, and as a research fellow at both Stanford University's Hoover Institution and at the Progressive Policy Institute in Washington, DC. In addition to her policy work, Ms. Porter-Magee worked as a classroom teacher at both the middle and high school levels and served as Chair of the



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Department of Foreign Languages at a high school in Prince George's County, MD. She holds a B.A. from the College of the Holy Cross in Political Science and French and an M.A. in Education Policy from the George Washington University.

Lesley Esters Redwine is the Director of External Relations for Achievement First New York. In this role she is involved with community outreach efforts and strategic planning for school start-up in New York City. Previously, Ms. Redwine served as President/CEO of the New York Chapter of the Black Alliance for Educational Options, a school choice advocacy organization based in Washington D.C. Prior to BAEO, Ms. Redwine served as Project Director for Agenda for Children Tomorrow's Bridgebuilders, a community-collaborative project in the South Bronx. She has also served as a Policy Analyst at The After School Corporation. In 2000, Ms. Redwine was selected to the National Urban Fellows where she served as Special Assistant to Terri Thomson, then member of the New York City Board of Education focusing on parent involvement and charter schools. Currently, Ms. Redwine serves as an Adjunct Professor at City College teaching nonprofit management and leadership courses. Ms. Redwine is also a member of the New York State Bar. Ms. Redwine earned her B.A. from University of Michigan; J.D. from University of Detroit Mercy; and M.P.A. from Baruch College's School of Public Affairs.

Carla Seeger is the Director of Staff Recruitment for Achievement First. Ms. Seeger coordinates Achievement First's efforts to find the most outstanding teacher candidates for Achievement First schools. After graduating from the University of Miami with a degree in economics, Ms. Seeger joined Teach for America. As a corps member, she taught middle and high school math in Los Angeles for three years. Ms. Seeger then earned a Masters in Public Affairs from Indiana University, with concentrations in economic development and nonprofit management. Prior to joining the staff of Achievement First, Ms. Seeger served as the founding Executive Director for the Teach for America-Miami expansion site.

Patricia B. Sweet is the Director of External Relations for Achievement First in Connecticut. Prior to coming to AF, she served as Vice-President of External Relations for the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority. Mrs. Sweet is an extremely active member of the New Haven community. She is the President of the Arts Council of Greater New Haven and a board member of the Connecticut Humanities Council, the University of New Haven, the Convention and Visitors Bureau of Greater New Haven, the Watershed Fund, and the Yale New Haven Hospital. Mrs. Sweet served as the Executive Director of the Connecticut Housing Investment Fund from 1979 to 1986, where she led the nonprofit organization's work in fostering racial integration of suburban neighborhoods and the revitalization of urban neighborhoods. She served on the board of Choate Rosemary Hall for ten years and was an officer on their executive committee.



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She holds an MBA from the University of New Haven and a BA from Smith College. In 2003, Mrs. Sweet was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of New Haven, and she has received Women in Leadership Awards from both the New Haven Business Times and the Waterbury, CT YMCA.

Natalie Wiltshire is Director of New York Operations for Achievement First. Prior to joining the Achievement First Central Team, she served as the Director of School Operations for Achievement First Crown Heights. Before entering the charter school world, Natalie served as the Program Manager for the Klingenstein Center for Private School Leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she managed admissions and student affairs for three of the five programs in the department. Ms. Wiltshire earned her BA from University of Pennsylvania and her MA from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Andy Zuckerman is the Assistant Superintendent Achievement First. Mr. Zuckerman began his education career as a 6th grade public school teacher in Washington, DC with Teach For America. In 2001, he helped found KIPP DC: KEY Academy, one of the first KIPP Academy expansion schools, and served as its first Dean of Students. He left Washington in 2003 to attend Teachers College, receiving his Masters in Education Leadership. He later joined the Inquiry Program for School Leadership, where he is currently pursuing his doctorate. His doctoral research examines the emergence of high-achieving urban charter school management organizations within the broader field of public education. Mr. Zuckerman's other academic interest includes the study of student peer cultures in American schooling. Along with John Bishop of Cornell University, he has presented papers at both AERA and Brookings on the subject of student engagement and peer culture in U.S. secondary schools. For the past three years, he has worked in school leadership positions at Achievement First.

Maia Heyck-Merlin is the incoming Vice-President for Talent Development, a new role that is designed to ensure that AF has world-class systems for recruiting, developing, and retaining talent at every level. Maia joined Teach For America in 1999 as a corps member in South Louisiana where she taught fourth grade for two years and was awarded Teacher of the Year during her second year of teaching. Following her commitment in the corps, she went on to teach fifth grade at Children's Charter School and worked for The New Teacher Project to lead Teach Baton Rouge's first summer training institute. In 2002, Maia returned to Teach For America as the executive director in South Louisiana, overseeing development and programmatic efforts for a corps that had recently doubled in size. She then served for three years as the Houston Institute Director, responsible for managing a staff of 100 and the training for over 800 incoming teachers. To support Teach For America's expansion, in 2006, Maia founded a new



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branch of the Teacher Preparation team that leads all national institute operations and currently serves as the managing director. She is responsible for leading all operations efforts for five training sites, including technology, communications, document production and shipping, procurement, human assets, data collection and analysis, and policy creation and implementation. Maia holds a B.A. with honors in child development from Tufts University.

Fawzia Ahmed is the Director of Special Projects for Achievement First. Her responsibilities include delivering on a range of projects critical to Achievement First's strategy, with an in-depth focus on managing and executing on the objectives of Achievement First's External relations team. Previously, she was a Senior Analyst for Analysis Group, Inc., an economic consulting firm in Boston, MA. She worked with teams of economists and academic experts to develop quantitative and economic analyses for a variety of industries, evaluating issues such as market definition and price-fixing. Prior to that, she was a market analyst for a start-up pharmaceutical consulting company. Ms. Ahmed holds a B.A. in Economics from Cambridge University, England and an M.B.A. from the Yale School of Management.