Position Title: Senior Research Statistician

Reports To: Kevin Schaaf, Director of Research and Evaluation

Location:
Tennessee Department of Education
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243

General Description:
Within the Division of Research and Evaluation, the Senior Research Analyst will lead research focused on 1) examining how to improve college and career readiness for Tennessee’s students and 2) investigating models of school improvement. Research may include program evaluations, landscape analyses, and randomized controlled trials of promising practices.

To ensure that programmatic and policy decisions are informed by valid, reliable, comprehensive, and understandable evidence, the analyst will collaborate with external researchers on planning, research design, analysis, and data integration; facilitate dissemination of results to internal and external stakeholders; and, ensure that the research directly informs the shared goals of the Office of Academics and the Office of Strategy to drive policy action on the part of the Tennessee Department of Education, districts, and schools.

An ideal candidate is a results-oriented, hands-on, team player with a demonstrated ability to work in a fast-paced, high energy environment while meeting multiple deadlines and completing multiple tasks. Additionally, an ideal candidate has strong statistical programming skills (e.g. R, STATA) with other data analysis skills preferred (e.g. Python, SQL), familiarity with advanced statistical methods, experience with complex data integration and/or analysis, and an interest in improving K-12 education.

Typical Position Responsibilities:
- Define, prioritize, and investigate research questions regarding college and career readiness and school improvement
- Support the use of data in the context of school improvement, program monitoring (particularly in the area of programs focused on improving long-term,
postsecondary outcomes within K-12 education), and regional support of prioritized districts and schools

- Monitor department implementation with respect to research priorities
- Access and analyze student, educator, school, and district data, with particular emphasis on the state's cross-agency longitudinal dataset P20 Connect, to guide department strategy and statewide data use
- Evaluate the performance of programs, initiatives, and policies to guide department strategy and decision-making
- Manage data governance and stewardship activities for the department's longitudinal and postsecondary data, including monitoring data quality and coordinating with the Division of Data Use to ensure adherence to a data governance framework for data policies, standards and practices to achieve the required level of consistency, quality and protection to meet overall needs
- Establish structures that improve quality data use across the agency and collaborate with other divisions and offices to develop data tools, support research and evaluation, and develop department leaders’ understanding of how data can inform strategy
- Collaborate with external researchers to define and conduct analyses of critical questions regarding school improvement and college and career readiness
- Distill external research regarding human capital and present to the department, school districts and the public in an accessible manner
- Serve as communications hub between the department and external researchers
- Maintain a knowledge base of all project data and serve as a resource for internal groups and external researchers
- Monitor, pursue, and secure grant opportunities to expand capacity to meet strategic priorities
- Identify opportunities for more effective data use, best practices and knowledge-sharing to support grant activities
- Supervise the research and job responsibilities of one or more direct reports

**Qualifications:**
- Master’s degree or higher in education research, econometrics, data science, applied research, quantitative methods, statistics, or related field, or equivalent
- Track record of success with using robust statistics, econometrics, and/or machine learning algorithms (based in Python and R) with intuitive visualizations with non-technical audiences to measurable improvements in outcomes. Impact on policy is preferred, measurable improvements to student learning outcomes strongly preferred.
• Strong planning, organization, and project management skills, with the ability to identify dependencies and develop a comprehensive, technical plan of action
• Strong strategic thinking and creative problem-solving skills
• Ability to perform a variety of activities involved in the research, collection, organization, analysis, processing, interpretation and reporting of academic and operational data
• Knowledge of statistical software including Stata and/or R; data collection information systems; data management and analysis including Python, SQL
• Conceptual and theoretical knowledge of statistical techniques to infer causality
• Knowledge of current trends and issues in U.S. education policy
• Training and experience in education research preferred, including understanding of measurement, curriculum, instruction, and assessment in PK-12 education
• Ability to present data clearly and in an accessible manner to variety of audiences
• Articulate, professional demeanor with strong initiative and project management skills

Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities
• Critical Thinking & Complex Problem Solving: Breaks down tasks and complex issues to inform decision-making; focuses on the right priorities, exercises good judgment justified with data and research
• Results and Achievement Orientation: Consistently produces high quality work, sets and meets ambitious goals, focused on big picture goal and how to achieve it
• Management: Able to motivate and develop a direct report toward achieving team goals
• Monitoring: Assesses self, other individuals, and the development of the work to make improvements and take corrective action

Supervisory Responsibility
This individual will manage one or more direct reports and serve as part of the leadership team for the Division of Research and Evaluation

Department of Education Vision: We will set all students on a path to success.

Priorities: Academics: All Tennessee students will have access to a high-quality education, no matter where they live. Whole Child: Tennessee public schools will be equipped to serve the academic and non-academic needs of all students. Educators: Tennessee will set a new path for the education profession and be the top state to become and remain a teacher and leader.
Travel
Minimal travel around the state and to limited national meetings and conferences may be required (~5-10%).

Other Duties
Please note this job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee for their job. Duties, responsibilities, and activities may change at any time with or without notice.

Salary and Benefits:
Salary is commensurate with qualifications and includes a comprehensive benefits package.

To Apply:
Email Kevin.Schaaf@tn.gov if interested, attaching your resume/CV. Please use this link to submit your official application through the State of Tennessee’s Department of Human Resources site.

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.

Tennessee Department of Education also provides reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants and employees with disabilities. If you need an accommodation during the application process, please contact the Human Capital team at 615-741-5158. You can also direct your request for accommodation in writing to the Tennessee Department of Education, Attn: Human Capital Division, 710 James Robertson Pkwy., Nashville, TN 37243.