

Strategic Recommendations for Maia Learning

6 Prioritized Actions for 2026 | Based on Competitive Analysis

Data as of: November 2025 | Research Period: September-November 2025

Investment Calculation Methodology

All investment estimates based on standard EdTech development costs and industry benchmarks:

AI Development (\$500K-1M):

- Senior AI/ML engineers: \$150-200K/year × 2-3 FTEs
- Data infrastructure, model training, API integration costs
- Timeline: 6-12 months development + testing
- Range reflects: Basic predictive features (low) vs comprehensive AI suite (high)

Mobile App Development (\$300K-500K):

- iOS + Android developers: \$120-150K/year × 2-4 FTEs
- QA engineers, UX/UI design, backend API development
- Timeline: 9-12 months to production launch
- Technology: React Native or Flutter for cross-platform efficiency

Marketing Campaigns (\$200K-400K):

- Sales team expansion: 2-3 FTEs (\$80-120K/year each)
- Conference participation: NAIS, regional events (\$30-50K)
- Marketing collateral, comparison materials, case studies (\$40-80K)
- Free migration services and dedicated onboarding support

Tiered Pricing Implementation (\$150K-250K):

- Product management and feature allocation planning
- Billing system development and testing
- Sales training, pricing calculator tools, contract templates
- Marketing materials and tier comparison documentation

Note: Investment ranges reflect scope uncertainty (basic implementation = low end, comprehensive with contingency buffer = high end). All estimates based on 2025-2026 EdTech market rates.

| # | Priority | Recommendation | Investment | Timeline | Addresses | Expected Outcome |
|---|-----------------|---|--------------|---------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | CRITICAL | <p>Attack the US Market (Biggest Market in the World)</p> <p>Combined Strategy: Position Maia to compete aggressively in the US market by addressing pricing gap + AI gap + Common App depth. These same investments simultaneously strengthen international competitive advantage—a dual-market strategy funded by a single investment.</p> <p>Component A: Launch Tiered Pricing - Basic (\$5-6), Plus (\$8-9), Premium (\$12-15) tiers to compete with SchooLinks/SCOIR while maintaining premium positioning</p> <p>Component B: Accelerate AI as Quickly as Possible - Match SCOIR AI 2.0 features (acceptance predictions, college</p> | \$650K-1.25M | Q1-Q4 2026 (12-18 months) | US market pricing gap (\$10 vs. \$3.50-6), AI gap vs. SCOIR/SchooLinks, Common App integration depth, 25,000+ US public schools currently inaccessible | Unlock biggest market in the world (US: 50M students), competitive parity with SCOIR AI, international benefits automatically |

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| | | <p>list balancing, conversational AI, essay review) via AI provider partnership (3-6 months)</p> <p>Component C: Deepen Common App Integration - Audit vs. SCOIR NEW 2025-26 integration, build Direct Admissions support</p> | | | | |

💡 International Market Benefits Automatically (Bonus Value)

Priority 1 investments unlock US market access AND strengthen international competitive position—with no additional investment required.

How US Investments Benefit International:

- **Tiered Pricing:** Basic tier (\$5-6) enables price-sensitive international markets; Premium (\$12-15) justifies white-glove international service
- **AI Development:** Predictive AI works for global university applications; multilingual AI for 12+ languages; international admissions patterns
- **Common App Integration:** International students applying to US colleges benefit; 200+ Direct Admissions colleges serve international applicants
- **International Moat Defense:** Prevents US competitors from catching up internationally; maintains 70+ country advantage WHILE achieving US innovation parity

Zero Additional Investment Required - International benefits come automatically from US-focused development.

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|---|----------|---|-------------|------------------------|--|--|
| 2 | HIGH | <p>Target Naviance Switchers + Attack Cialfo Asia-Pacific</p> <p>Naviance Campaign (US Focus): Target 3,000-4,000 US private schools using Naviance (poor 3.2/5 satisfaction). Value Prop: "Modern technology + service excellence + international capability"</p> <p>Cialfo Campaign (International Focus): Target 2,000 schools in Asia-Pacific (catastrophic 2.4/5 reviews). Value Prop: "Better service + 67% cost savings + broader reach"</p> | \$500K-900K | Q1 2026-2030 (ongoing) | Naviance poor satisfaction (3.2/5), Cialfo catastrophic reviews (2.4/5), combined 5,000+ schools addressable, \$10M+ revenue potential | Win 40-80 Naviance schools + 50-100 Cialfo schools in 2026, scale to \$1.8-3M cumulative ARR by 2030 |

CALCULATION NOTE - Combined Switcher Campaigns (Rec #2):

- **Naviance base:** ~15,000 US schools, 3.2/5 rating suggests 3,000-6,000 dissatisfied, 300-600 evaluating annually
- **Naviance target:** 40-80 schools year 1 (\$50-100K ARR), 200-400 by 2030 (\$600K-1.2M ARR)
- **Cialfo base:** 2,000 schools Asia-Pacific, 365K students, catastrophic 2.4/5 reviews
- **Cialfo target:** 50-100 schools year 1 (\$100-200K ARR), 20-30% market share by 2030 (\$700K-1.1M ARR)
- **Combined ROI:** \$1.8-3M cumulative ARR within 3 years, 3-4x return on \$500-900K investment

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|---|----------|---|-------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| 3 | HIGH | <p>Develop Native Mobile App</p> <p>Build native iOS + Android app (React Native or Flutter).</p> <p>Student-focused features: portfolio, college search, AI assistant, push notifications, offline access.</p> | \$300K-500K | Q2 2026 - Q1 2027 (9-12 months) | <p>Mobile-first student generation, Gen Z/Gen Alpha expectations,</p> <p>NO competitor has native mobile app</p> | <p>12-18 month first-mover advantage,</p> <p>2-3x engagement increase</p> |

| # | Priority | Recommendation | Investment | Timeline | Addresses | Expected Outcome |
|---|----------|---|-------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| 4 | MED-HIGH | <p>Enhance AI Career Exploration</p> <p>Develop "AI Career Coach" leveraging Maia AI 2.0 infrastructure (marginal cost).</p> <p>Conversational career guidance, interest-career matching, pathway planning.</p> <p>Train AI on career data (occupations, labor market, pathways).</p> | \$200K-400K | Q2-Q4 2026 (9 months) | <p>Xello owns career-first (28 years, 14x engagement) but has NO AI.</p> <p>Opportunity to combine career depth + AI innovation</p> | <p>Comprehensive positioning (strong career + strong college), differentiation vs. SCOIR (college-only AI) and Xello (no AI)</p> |

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|---|----------|---|-------------|------------------------|---|--|
| 5 | MED-HIGH | Build Direct Admissions Support Support Common App Direct Admissions program (200+ colleges 2025-26, 500+ by 2028). Build offer dashboard, financial aid comparison, AI decision guidance. Beta test Q3 2026, launch Q4 2026 for 2026-27 cycle. | \$100K-300K | Q1-Q4 2026 (12 months) | Table stakes requirement - platforms must support Direct Admissions or lose to competitors who do | Prevents "Can Maia handle Direct Admissions?" → "No" competitive loss |
| 6 | MEDIUM | Establish Customer Review Program Survey customers to measure satisfaction (NPS, 1-5 stars). IF $\geq 4.0/5$, solicit public reviews on Capterra, G2, TrustRadius. Feature verified ratings and badges on website and sales materials. | \$20K-50K | Q1-Q2 2026 (survey Q1) | Satisfaction as differentiator (SCOIR 4.7 winning, Naviance 3.2 losing). Maia's inferred 4.0-4.5/5 needs validation | VERY HIGH ROI if satisfaction ≥ 4.0 - visible competitive advantage, differentiation from poor-satisfaction competitors |

2026 Implementation Roadmap

Q1 2026 (Jan-Mar)

- Launch tiered pricing (Priority #1 Component A) - Basic/Plus/Premium tiers go live
- Start AI development (Priority #1 Component B) - Partner selection or in-house build decision
- Survey customer satisfaction (Priority #6) - Measure NPS and satisfaction scores
- Identify Naviance/Cialfo targets (Priority #2) - Build prospect lists

Q2 2026 (Apr-Jun)

- Accelerate AI as quickly as possible (Priority #1 Component B) - Launch Maia AI 2.0 with predictive features
 - Audit Common App integration (Priority #1 Component C) - Close gaps vs. SCOIR 2025-26
 - Start mobile app development (Priority #3) - Native iOS + Android build
 - Launch Naviance campaign at NAIS (Priority #2) - Conference presence Q3 2026 (Jul-Sep)
 - Continue mobile app development (Priority #3) - Beta testing phase
 - Launch Cialfo Asia-Pacific campaign (Priority #2) - Target 2,000 schools
 - Develop AI Career Coach (Priority #4) - Leverage AI 2.0 infrastructure
 - Solicit customer reviews (Priority #6) - IF satisfaction $\geq 4.0/5$
- Q4 2026 (Oct-Dec)
- Complete mobile app (Priority #3) - Production launch Q1 2027
 - Build Direct Admissions support (Priority #5) - 200+ colleges, offer dashboard
 - Publicize customer reviews (Priority #6) - Website badges, sales materials
 - Scale Naviance/Cialfo programs (Priority #2) - Target 90-180 schools year 1

Investment Summary

| Priority Level | Total Investment | Expected Return | Rationale |
|---|------------------|--|---|
| Critical Priority (Priority #1) | \$650K-1.25M | Unlock biggest market in the world (US: 50M students), international benefits automatically | Combined strategy: Tiered pricing + AI acceleration + Common App depth = dual-market access with single investment |
| High Priority (Priorities #2-3) | \$800K-1.4M | First-mover mobile advantage (12-18 months), +\$1.8-3M ARR from switcher campaigns by 2030 | Mobile = time-sensitive window, Naviance/Cialfo switchers = immediate \$10M+ opportunity |
| Medium Priority (Priorities #4-6) | \$320K-750K | Comprehensive platform (career + college), table stakes features, visible satisfaction advantage | Career AI differentiates vs SCOIR, Direct Admissions prevents competitive losses, customer reviews validate quality |

| Priority Level | Total Investment | Expected Return | Rationale |
|-------------------|------------------|---|---|
| TOTAL 2026 | \$1.77M-3.4M | Category leadership, defensible moat, revenue growth, dual-market dominance | Strategic investments to attack US market while strengthening international competitive advantage |