Strategic Recommendations for MaiaLearning

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	Attack the US Market **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	$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	Unlock US market (50M students), competitive parity with SCOIR AI, international

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		international competitive advantage—a dual-market strategy funded by a single investment.			schools currently inaccessible	benefits automatically
		Component A: Launch Tiered Pricing - Basic ($5-6), Plus ($8-9), Premium ($12-15) tiers to compete with SchooLinks/SCOIR while maintaining premium positioning. *Alternative: Volume-based pricing (decreasing per-student cost at higher enrollment) may better align with US public district procurement practices.*				
		Component B: Accelerate AI as Quickly as Possible - Match SCOIR AI 2.0 features (acceptance predictions, college list balancing, conversational AI, essay review) via AI provider partnership (3-6 months)				
		Component C: Deepen Common App Integration - Audit vs. SCOIR NEW 2025-26 integration, build Direct Admissions support				

💡 **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	Target Naviance Switchers + Attack Cialfo Asia-Pacific **Naviance Campaign (US Focus):** Target 3,000-4,000 US private schools using Naviance	$500K-900K	Q1 2026-2030 (ongoing)	Naviance poor satisfaction (3.2/5), Cialfo catastrophic reviews (2.4/5), combined 5,000+	Win 40-80 Naviance schools + 50-100 Cialfo schools in

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		(poor 3.2/5 satisfaction). Value Prop: "Modern technology + service excellence + international capability"			schools addressable, $10M+ revenue potential	2026, scale to $1.8-3M cumulative ARR by 2030
		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"				

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

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

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		decision guidance. Beta test Q3 2026, launch Q4 2026 for 2026-27 cycle.				
6	MEDIUM	**Establish Customer Review Program** Survey customers to measure satisfaction (NPS, 1-5 stars). IF ≥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 ≥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

Priority Level	Total Investment	Expected Return	Rationale
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
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