

2024-25
was a
year of
alignment.

NextEd | Year in Review

But among Christian schools, we've also identified something deeper: a shared desire to reflect the image of Christ in all they do. That is why our mission is clear and unwavering—***to ensure education bears the image of Christ.***

Listening: We enter every situation with a listening ear, especially with clients, as each school is unique. If we actively listen, we understand and answer well (Prov. 18:13). Not once, not twice, but through the full relationship.

Angles: Great solutions are a culmination of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding—the many angles that make sense of a challenge. We operate as a team in everything, burdens included (Gal. 6:2). Teams that work well produce ideas that work well.

This shared foundation—our values, our vision, and our approach—shaped every partnership we formed this year. Whether our work led us to Naples, Florida, or Grand Rapids, Michigan, our aim remained the same: to help each school align its people, plans, and purpose with the image of Christ (and we'll be right next to them as they do).

“ Since our founding in 2020, our vision has been to empower schools to pursue their “next”—the next leader, the next plan, the next level of excellence.

Aligned Impact in 2024-25

In the 2024-2025 school year, we had the privilege of serving 28 schools through six distinct service areas, completing:



While each school's needs were unique, we were deeply encouraged by a unifying theme: **alignment**—between people, plans, and purpose—all in pursuit of a shared mission to impact the world for Christ.

Schools We Served in 2024-25

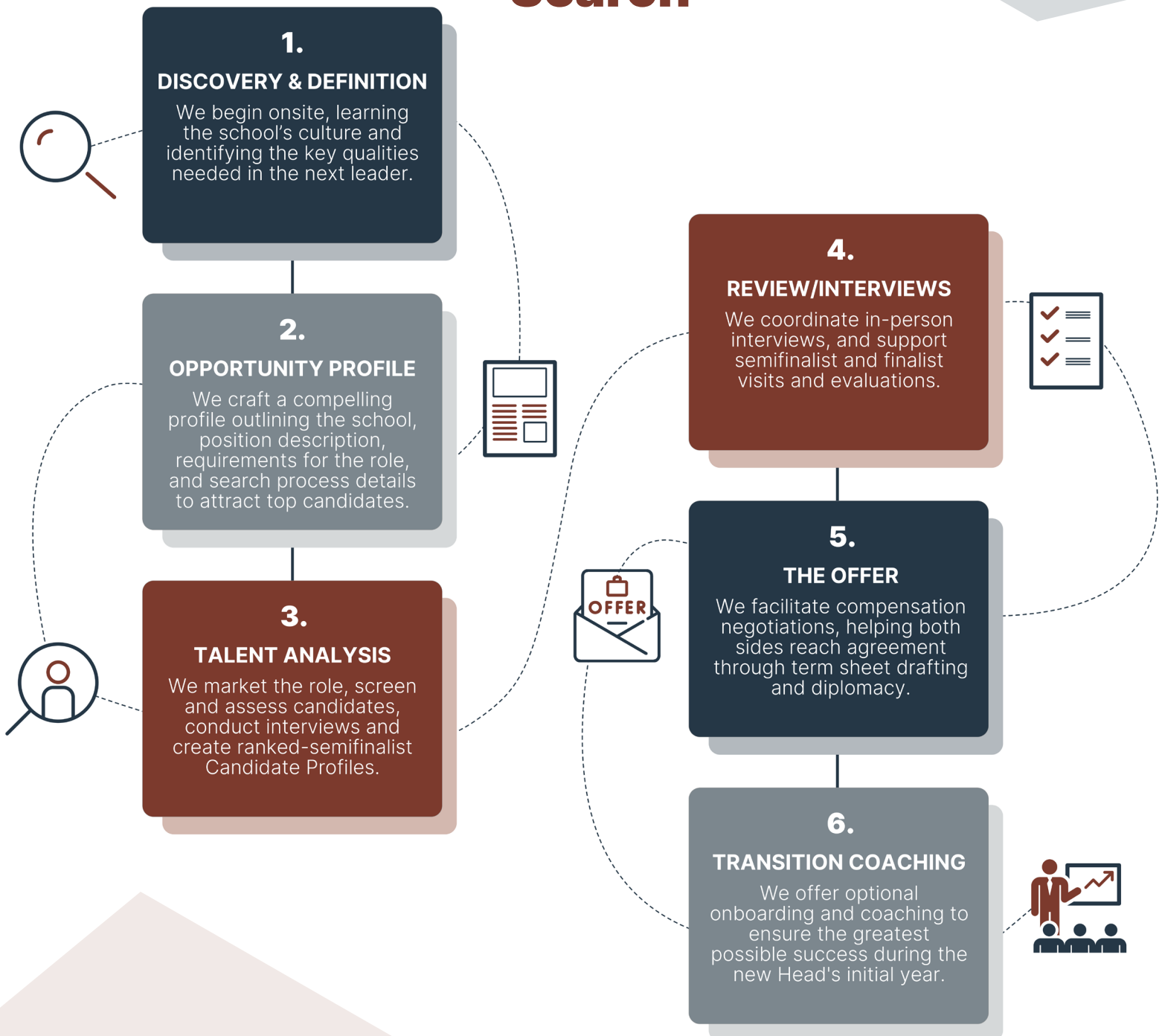
Augusta Christian Schools
Layton Christian Academy
Monte Vista Christian School
Savannah Christian Preparatory School
Cascade Christian Schools
Kirk Day School
Hyde Park Schools
Santa Fe Christian Schools
Cherry Hills Christian School
Legacy Christian Academy
Franklin Christian Academy
Conway Christian School
Gilbert Christian Schools
The Baptist Preparatory School
Grand Rapids Christian School
Allen Academy
Life Christian Academy
Naples Christian Academy
Little Rock Christian Academy
Timothy Christian Schools
Oakbrook Preparatory School
Cornerstone Christian Academy
Lansing Christian School
First Presbyterian Day School
Resurrection Christian School
Steamboat Christian Academy
Coastal Christian Preparatory School
Greater Atlanta Christian School



Aligned Leadership – Executive Search

We helped identify the right leaders to carry each school's mission into the future. Each search was rooted in deep listening, spiritual discernment, and an understanding of the school's unique culture and needs. Our goal wasn't just to fill a role, but to find the leader best aligned with the school's vision, values, and future calling.

THE NEXTED WAY Search



SEARCH SPOTLIGHT

First Presbyterian Day School: From Uncertain Timing to a Seamless Transition

First Presbyterian Day School (FPD) is Middle Georgia's crown jewel of Christ-centered schools. Founded in 1970, FPD serves over 700 students from 3K through 12th grade on a stunning 236-acre campus. In December, FPD's Board of Trustees learned that its Head of School would conclude his tenure at the end of the school year. NextEd Partners Steve O'Neil and Gary Arnold were retained by the FPD Board to support them in their national search for a new leader. With the search timing, NextEd ran a parallel search providing the school with options for either a permanent or interim Head of School. Strong interim candidates were plentiful, but most interesting was the high quality of leadership that surfaced in January and February, with well over 30 exceptional applicants, including internal FPD candidates.



The search concluded in late March when Matt Kitchell was appointed FPD's next Head of School. What at first seemed to be less than ideal timing for a search turned out to be perfect timing as FPD seamlessly passed the Head of School baton from one strong leader to the next.



"I was continually impressed by NextEd's heart for Christian education and their integrity throughout the search process. Their experience brought calm and confidence to everyone involved — teachers, parents, board members, and me as a candidate. So much so that after being hired, I asked the board to keep NextEd on for executive coaching — and I'm thrilled they did."

— Matt Kitchell, Head of School, First Presbyterian Day School.

SEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Franklin Christian Academy: Honoring Legacy, Guiding Transition, Expanding Impact

Franklin Christian Academy (FCA), founded in 2004 by twenty committed families—including Hugh and Lisa Harris, who have faithfully served as Head of School and Business Administrator/HR since the start—has grown from 38 students in grades 7–12 to a thriving community of 380 students in grades 5–12, firmly establishing itself as a cornerstone of Christian education in Franklin, TN. As the Harris family prepared to pass the mantle after two decades of remarkable leadership, NextEd Partners Gary Arnold and Kurt Unruh were honored to walk alongside the FCA Board and community, launching a national search following a thoughtful discovery process. Through a highly engaged, competitive, and discerning search, the Board ultimately selected Noah Brink as the next Head of School.



Interestingly, one of the finalists of the FCA search ultimately became the appointed Head at another school where NextEd was also conducting a search—further underscoring the reach and impact of NextEd’s relationships and connection with Christian schools and leaders.



“As our board at FCA embarked on our first Head of School search, we needed a trusted partner that could help us stay true to our organizational mission while managing a truly complex process. NextEd had the network, the experience, and the commitment to guide us to a great outcome for our community. We are grateful for their guidance in securing our next Head of School ... and we are happy to call Kurt and Gary friends of FCA.”

— Brad Weeks, Board Chair, Franklin Christian Academy.

SEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Santa Fe Christian: Two Key Roles, One Seamless Process

When Santa Fe Christian (SFC) faced the unexpected challenge of filling both their High School Principal and Assistant Principal roles in the same summer—following the departure of two long-serving leaders—they turned to NextEd for expert support. With a strong internal candidate already identified for the principal position, NextEd tailored a search strategy that honored internal talent while conducting a robust national search. Through thoughtful discernment and wise counsel, Tom Konjoyan provided the external validation needed to confirm the internal finalist as the right choice. Simultaneously, NextEd's professionalism and relational approach encouraged several principal-level applicants to also consider the Assistant Principal role—expanding the candidate pool in an unexpected but highly valuable way.



The result: SFC secured its top candidate for each position and entered the new school year with a strong, aligned leadership team. This dual-success story reflects how NextEd brings strategic insight, cultural understanding, and exceptional process management to even the most complex leadership transitions.



"NextEd exceeded my expectations—expertly guiding us through simultaneous searches for principal and assistant principal, validating our top internal candidate, and even attracting that same pool of principal finalists to the AP role. Thanks to their professionalism and cultural insight, we secured two strong leaders for 2025–2026—double the value I couldn't have achieved alone."

— Rod Gilbert, Head of School, Santa Fe Christian Schools.

If your school is seeking its next Head or leader, we're here to help you do more than fill a position—we'll help you find the right fit for your mission, your culture, and your future.

New Service Launching: Contingency-Based Search

We're excited to announce the upcoming launch of a Contingency-Based Search service—designed to help Christian schools attract and hire exceptional talent across a broader range of leadership roles, such as Administrative Director, Athletic Director, or Director of Human Resources.

While retained executive search has served schools well for top-level transitions, it may not be the right fit for other key positions. This new offering provides a flexible, cost-effective, and high-impact alternative—perfect for filling leadership team roles with quality candidates who align with your mission and culture.

Over the past four years, NextEd has gained deep experience in recruiting and placing top-tier executive leaders. We're now applying that same level of care, discernment, and strategic insight to help schools meet a wider array of staffing needs.

Launching this fall, Contingency-Based Search will make high-quality hiring support more accessible—so your school can grow with confidence, without compromising on excellence.

**Elevating roles.
Finding *Fits*.**

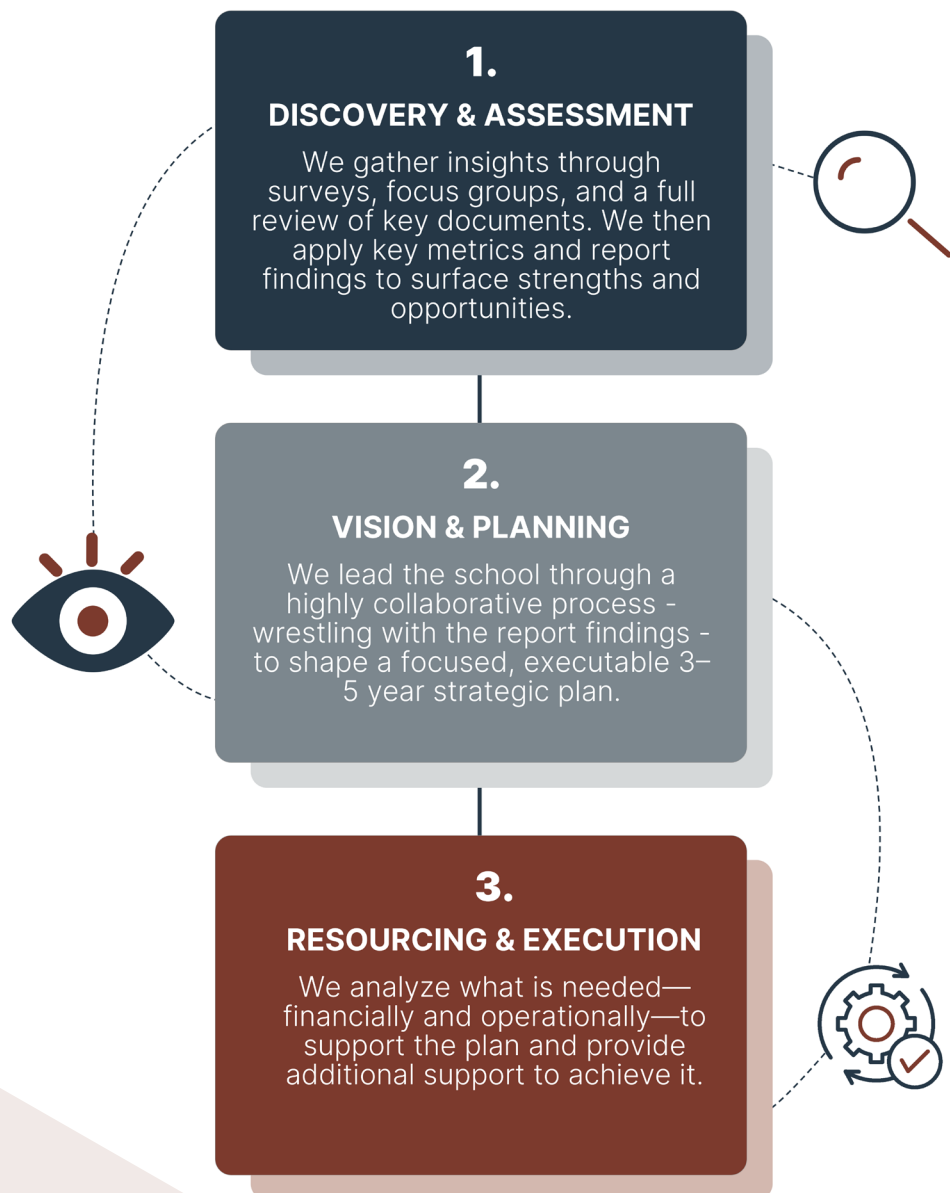


Aligned Vision – Strategic Planning

We helped schools define bold, actionable plans rooted in purpose and shared conviction. Through a process marked by prayer, discernment, and collaboration, we guided leaders and communities through honest reflection and courageous decision-making. Each plan was more than a document—it was a shared roadmap, rooted in mission, responsive to context, and built to sustain purposeful progress over time.

THE NEXTED WAY

Strategic Planning



STRATEGIC PLANNING SPOTLIGHT

Little Rock Christian Academy: Advancing with Clarity, Confidence, and Purpose

For nearly 50 years, Little Rock Christian Academy (LRCA) has exemplified excellence in K3–12 Christian education, serving nearly 1,400 students and partnering powerfully with families, churches, and the broader community. When Dr. Justin Smith became Head of School in July 2023 through a well-executed internal succession plan, he recognized the importance of bringing in outside expertise to strengthen his leadership team's strategic planning capacity. That's where NextEd stepped in. At a pivotal moment when the school's planning process had reached an impasse, NextEd provided thoughtful guidance, helping the team break through stagnation, accelerate their strategic development, and achieve far more than they could have alone. Beyond frameworks and tools, NextEd inspired confidence, unity, and



clarity across LRCA's leadership, equipping them to align around meaningful priorities and launch actionable steps toward a thriving future. This partnership illustrates how NextEd not only equips schools to build stronger plans but also empowers leadership teams to pursue them with renewed vision, energy, and faith.



"NextEd didn't just move us past a strategic planning impasse — they accelerated our development far beyond what we could have achieved on our own, inspiring confidence, unity, and clarity across our leadership team."

— Dr. Justin Smith, Head of School, Little Rock Christian Academy.

Naples Christian Academy: Turning Growth into Purposeful, Long-Term Vision

Naples Christian Academy (NCA), founded in 1973 by parents at Covenant Church in Naples, Florida, has long embodied the biblical mission of Proverbs 22:6—training up children to walk faithfully throughout their lives. In recent years, the school's growth has been remarkable, nearly doubling in size while deepening its foundational partnership with the church. With a new Head of School and a Board energized by both heritage and fresh opportunity—calling themselves a “fifty-year-old startup”—NCA turned to NextEd to help harness this pivotal moment.

Over the past year, NextEd has been honored to guide NCA in crafting a robust, actionable Strategic Plan, aligning leadership around clear priorities, developing a long-range financial roadmap, and providing the tools and encouragement to confidently pursue increasing excellence in both academics and discipleship. This kind of partnership shows how NextEd helps schools not just manage growth, but fully seize it—turning potential into purpose-driven impact and positioning schools to thrive for generations to come.



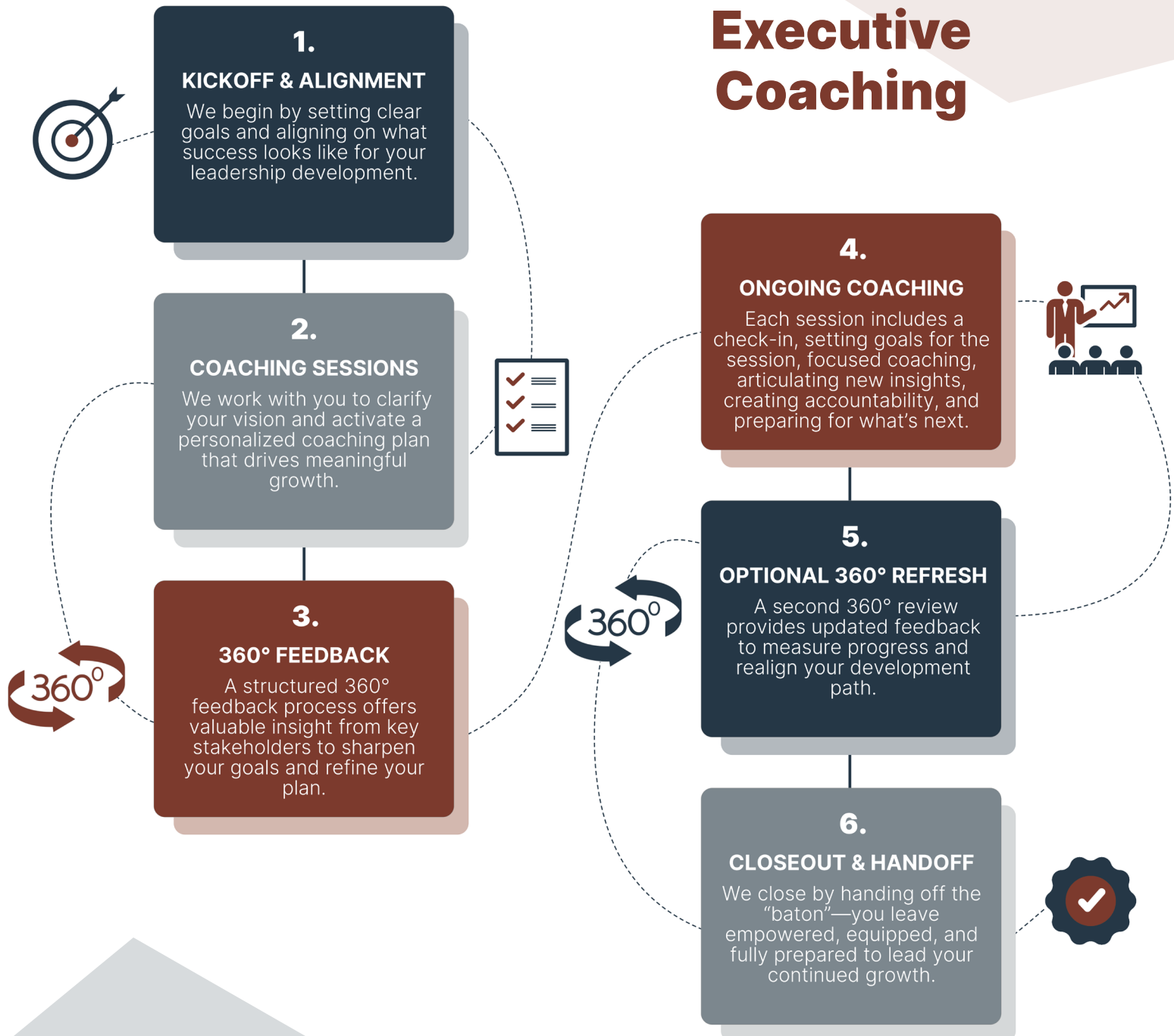
If your school is ready to pursue a clear, Christ-centered future with courage and conviction, we're ready to help you plan it—faithfully and strategically.

Aligned Growth – Executive Coaching

We walked alongside leaders to foster clarity, courage, and Christ-centered development. Every relationship was rooted in trust and tailored to the leader's real context, fostering lasting transformation that touched not just the individual but the entire school community. By investing in the leader, we invested in the culture, direction, and spiritual vitality of the entire school.

THE NEXTED WAY

Executive Coaching



EXECUTIVE COACHING SPOTLIGHT

Kirk Day School: Coaching for Stronger Leadership and Governance

In 2023–24, Kirk Day School partnered with NextEd during a pivotal season of leadership development and organizational maturity. With a strong foundation under Head of School Taylor Clement, the school sought to deepen board-head collaboration and strengthen executive practices. NextEd Partner Dr. Jay Ferguson—an experienced Head of School and national leader—led the engagement, offering tailored coaching to both board and head. Through on-site assessments and ongoing conversations, he provided strategic insight, spiritual encouragement, and candid feedback that fostered trust, alignment, and clear direction.



The results were tangible: renewed energy, improved governance, and a leadership team equipped to lead a successful capital campaign. The partnership was so fruitful that the school renewed it for 2024–25, continuing the pursuit of high-trust leadership and mission-aligned excellence.



“Having a Christian brother, friend, and mentor who could accurately and effectively read a situation, push me through a reflective process, and offer biblically sound guidance was immeasurable. It slowly built trust and camaraderie, empowering me to be the solution instead of seeking one. It was like having a guide take me into the cave and coach me to spelunk properly.”

— Taylor Clement, Head of School, Kirk Day School.

If you're a school leader seeking clarity, confidence, and Christ-centered growth—we'd be honored to coach you toward what's next.

Aligned Governance – Board Retreats & Consulting

We equipped boards to speak with one voice and govern with unity, wisdom, and impact. Our customized board retreats clarified roles, strengthened relationships, and centered governance on mission. From one-day sessions to ongoing counsel, we helped boards build the culture, clarity, and trust needed to lead faithfully and effectively.

Savannah Christian Preparatory School: Building a Board Culture of Purposeful Growth

BOARD GOVERNANCE SPOTLIGHT

Savannah Christian Preparatory School (SCPS) distinguishes itself as a Christ-centered institution committed to continuous improvement. Over the years, SCPS has shaped the lives of more than 6,000 students, many of whom are now spread across the world. This commitment to growth starts with the school board and the Head of School. Demonstrating intentional leadership development, SCPS partnered with NextEd partners Steve O'Neil and Gary Arnold to conduct annual workshops on healthy board governance. Playfully dubbed "Healthy Board Leadership 101, 201, 301, and 401," these sessions have guided the board through increasingly deep levels of authenticity, insight, and strategic effectiveness. This four-year partnership began with SCPS's search for a new Head of School, where trust and alignment were built through personal, hands-on support. Since then, the collaboration has helped the board focus on strategic planning, Head-of-School support, and long-term growth in a thriving city. It's truly inspiring when a seventy-year-old school leads with humility and a hunger to keep learning.



"The leadership team of seasoned educators at NextEd brought not only professionalism and deep insight into the Christian college preparatory landscape, but also a thoughtful, tailored approach that equipped our Board of Trustees to lead with clarity and purpose. They invested the time to understand our institution, crafted a customized action plan for our board, and guided us through both a short-term leadership transition and long-term strategic planning. Following the completion of our Head of School search process, NextEd has continued to support our Board through retreats and counsel that have helped our institution to remain at the forefront of excellence in twenty-first-century, college-preparatory Christian Education."

— Donald R. Martin, Jr., Chairman, Board of Trustees, Savannah Christian Preparatory School

If your board is prepared to advance in clarity, unity, and purpose, our expertise is positioned to deliver the strategic guidance that drives meaningful results.

Aligned Resources – Long-Range Financial Planning

We built sustainable financial strategies that align with long-term mission and growth. By assessing existing financial structures, forecasting future needs, and collaborating closely with leadership teams, we helped schools strengthen their fiscal foundation—ensuring the plan and the resources are advancing in step with one another.

Conway Christian: Planning for Growth, Anchored in Stewardship

FINANCIAL PLANNING SPOTLIGHT

President Jason Carson has led Conway Christian School (CCS) through a remarkable period of growth, increasing enrollment from 492 students in 2017–18 to 624 just prior to the implementation of Arkansas LEARNS vouchers in 2023. These vouchers dramatically reduced family tuition costs, positioning CCS for a surge in demand. Recognizing the need for proactive planning, Jason engaged NextEd to develop a long-range financial model to guide the school through this pivotal moment. NextEd partners Kurt Unruh and Randy Brunk, with local support from Dr. Gary Arnold, built a comprehensive financial roadmap extending through 2029–30. The plan included projections for enrollment and facilities expansion, strategies for preserving school culture amid rapid growth, and a scalable compensation model to ensure staff quality and retention. These insights directly fueled the launch of Conway Christian's Legacy Campaign, which has already achieved key milestones: securing nearly full funding, completing architectural plans, surpassing projected enrollment, maximizing interim facility use, and executing the first phase of staff compensation increases. NextEd's financial modeling not only empowered CCS to move decisively but continues to serve as a strategic guardrail, ensuring disciplined, confident leadership through a season of dynamic growth.



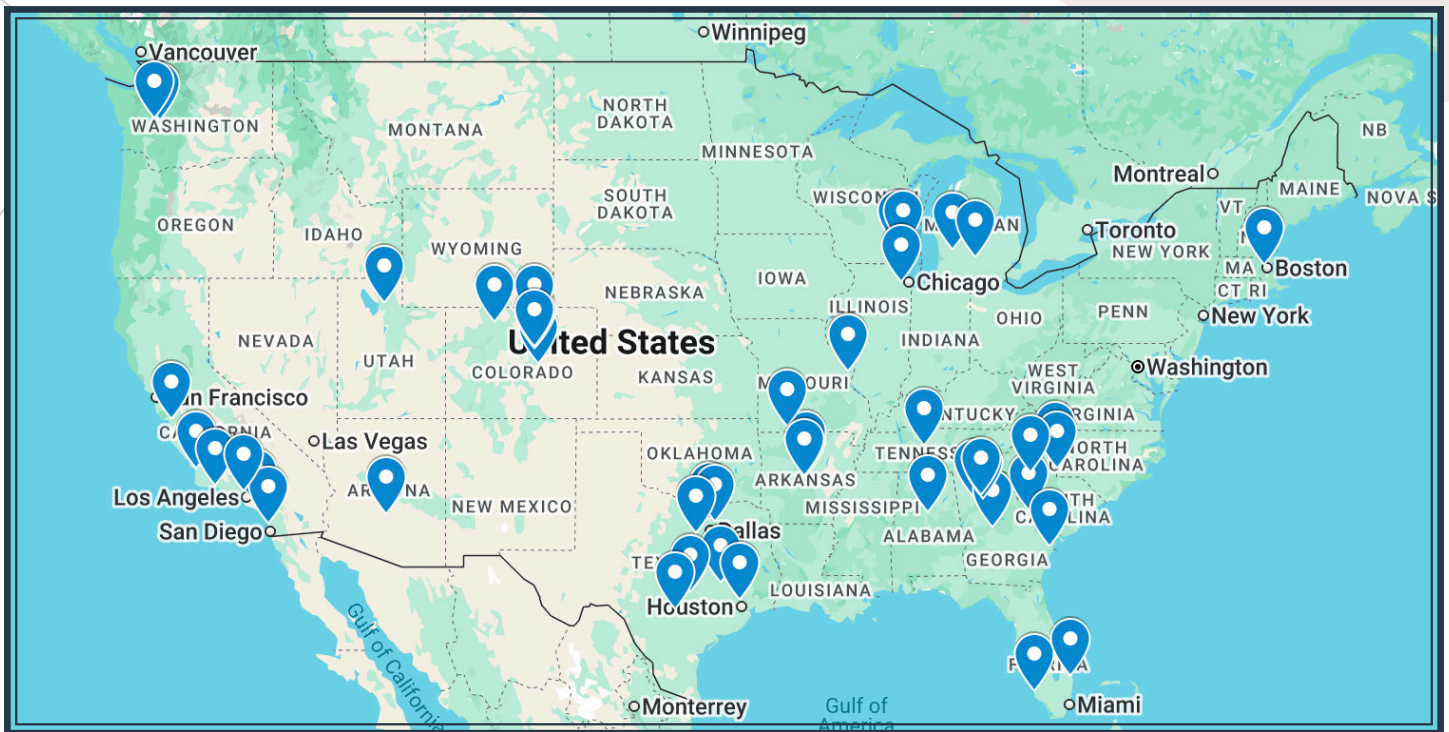
"Working with NextEd at this pivotal moment in our school's journey was transformational. Kurt, Randy, and Gary brought a rare blend of professionalism, strategic clarity, and deep educational insight. Their process helped us tackle complex questions with confidence and align around a long-range plan that embraces growth while protecting the culture we've carefully built over the past decade."

— Jason Carson, President & CEO, Conway Christian School

If your school is seeking clarity and confidence in funding its future, we provide the strategic guidance to align financial stewardship with sustainable growth.

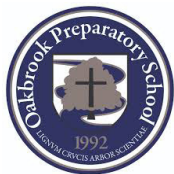
Aligned in Mission across the United States

Since NextEd first launched, we have empowered nearly 50 schools to achieve their next. While each school on this map represents a unique context and community with specific needs and challenges, they all share in the mission of NextEd to ensure the education they offer bears the image of Christ. NextEd is grateful to be aligned in mission with each one of these schools and looks forward to serving even more schools in the years to come.



Empowering schools to
achieve their *next*.

Case Study: Oakbrook Preparatory School



Oakbrook Preparatory School (Oakbrook) in Spartanburg, South Carolina—a Christ-centered, college-preparatory school serving over 400 students—embarked on a transformational partnership with NextEd to support a critical season of strategic advancement and leadership transition. With its strong legacy in Christ-centered, whole-child education, Oakbrook faced both opportunity and complexity: a need to unify its strategic vision, strengthen governance, and identify its next Head of School.

NextEd began the engagement with a robust consulting and coaching relationship, providing strategic plan refinement, executive coaching, and Board development. As it became clear that a leadership transition was imminent, Oakbrook entrusted NextEd with conducting a national Head of School search. This comprehensive process culminated in the successful appointment of Andy Bell as Oakbrook's next Head of School—an outcome shaped by deep listening, cultural alignment, and a process built on transparency and trust.

NextEd's work at Oakbrook reflects our full suite of services in action. Throughout the year, we provided strategic counsel to the Associate Heads who were temporarily leading the school, partnered with the Board to draft revised bylaws and a Head of School job description, and helped shape governance best practices that will serve Oakbrook well into the future.

Looking ahead to the 2025–26 school year, NextEd plans to continue its partnership by supporting the successful onboarding of Oakbrook's new Head, finalizing Board policy structures, and leading the school through the completion of a robust 3–5-year strategic plan.

The Oakbrook story demonstrates the unique value of NextEd's integrated approach—one that combines executive search, strategic planning, governance, and leadership coaching to help Christian schools not only navigate change but thrive through it.

For schools seeking comprehensive, values-driven solutions, Oakbrook's experience is a model of what's possible with the right partner.

"It's difficult to put into words the tremendous help NextEd has been to me personally as Board Chair, and to Oakbrook as a school. Through a challenging year of leadership transition and financial strain, their expert, prayerful guidance in governance, structure, and finance has left Oakbrook in a much stronger position than when we began."

— Gabriel O'Sullivan, Board Chair, Oakbrook Preparatory School

"If it hadn't been for the professional presentation and communication of NextEd, I may never have discovered this opportunity. From the very first call to the final interview, they had a firm grasp on whether I was the right fit for Oakbrook—and whether Oakbrook was the right fit for me."

— Andy Bell, Head of School, Oakbrook Preparatory School

Is your school ready for its next step—one that unites excellence with Christ-centered purpose? At NextEd, we specialize in guiding schools to align people, plans, and purpose with the image of Christ, creating a lasting impact. Contact us today to explore how we can help your school achieve its next.



Jay

Tom

Kurt

Gary

Steve

Randy

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