Part 1: "Elevator" Introduction

Brief elevator pitch for your company

On a national level, we recognize that students are individuals who all learn in different ways, so we know school fit matters, but as parents, we now have more options in where to send our kids, and there's no easy way to know which school is the best option.

Our platform connects parents and students to all K-12 schools whether they're private, district, or charter, and eliminates marketing costs, allowing schools to focus on what's truly important.

Part 2: Market and Industry Analysis

How large is your market? What market segments are you going after and why?

There are 121,057 schools, and counting, across 38 states in the United States that offer school choice; this is our serviceable available market. We are targeting all schools (District, Charter, Private) within the states that offer school choice to parents and students.

Is this market growing? How fast?

The market is growing steadily and has been for quite some time. From 2004-2014, the market grew by 219%, and that's only within the charter school sector.

Who is in the market already? What is the nature of competition – direction, indirect, substitutes?

There are several players within the school marketing, automated enrollment, and school directory industries, but none of these companies offer a complete solution like Schola does. We are a one-stop shop for schools to take care of every aspect of their marketing campaigns while also catering to parents and children by offering them an automated school finder so that they can be matched to the perfect school for them.

Part 3: Go-to-Market Plan

Who are (will be) your customers? Describe your engagement / discussions with them to date. Have you validated their needs? Prove they are buying (or will buy) your product from you.

Our target customers are K-12 schools that wish to retain and/or increase their enrollment. We currently operate as a marketing agency. We help schools increase enrollment by creating individualized recruitment and/or retention campaigns through the use and analysis of metadata. By late January 2017, our engagement with schools will shift from a service agency to a SaaS company. We will go from helping individual schools market themselves to marketing for all schools by helping them get matched to students based on their needs and interests.

We are confident that our solution has been validated and know schools will subscribe to our SaaS platform since we'll provide a cost-effective alternative to what they're currently using. Our solution has been developed from our experiences in working with over 60 schools and thousands of students across the country in the past seven years. In just six months of providing agency services to schools, we have generated over $350k in revenue serving 11 clients.

Describe how you win customers today. Describe your future customer acquisition strategy.

We currently acquire clients through word-of-mouth, active networking, and conferences at which we present. Our future client acquisition will look much different as we will target parents and students rather than schools.

How will you displace any incumbents/competitors? How are you better/different than your competitors? What's your channel/partnership strategy, if any?

The displacement of our competitors will happen organically since we provide a comprehensive solution that is also cost-effective. After seven years in the educational industry, the Schola platform is a product of recognizing the need for a comprehensive solution for parents and schools along with understanding the shortcomings of our competitors. We have established strategic partnerships with companies, organizations, and government entities to facilitate our growth within the education sector.

Part 4: Technical Product Description and Plan

Briefly describe your product or service.

Our approach to tackling K-12 enrollment and recruitment is three-pronged. First, our SchoolFinder is a platform that parents can use to find the best school for their child; all that's needed is their zip code, the grade of the child, and the child's needs and interests, and they will receive 5-10 matches within their area. Our second product is EasyEnroll which allows parents and schools to have an automated solution to enrollment. Once a child is matched with a school where they wish to attend, the entire process can be completed on both ends through our platform. Finally, MarketHub is an online marketplace where schools can find every possible marketing service they would need to effectively market themselves. Their online dashboard also allows school leaders to monitor how every dollar of the school's budget is spent and how much is being spent to recruit each student.

Technology Validation. (What evidence can you present that your product works as advertised? Future validation plans?)

Our product will be launched in Spring 2017, and we are looking to do a beta in late January. We decided to launch our product as a web application instead of in a mobile application because we feel that our target base will find this more user-friendly. Most parents will use our platform infrequently while on the school side, leaders and other admin will likely be using a desktop computer.

Describe the remaining product development risks and your plans to overcome them.

User acquisition is a concern we have. We need parents and students on the platform in order to attract schools. This implies a big upfront expense in marketing to get people on the platform which will connect us to several schools. We plan on using targeted ads on social media and use our current school partnerships to create greater awareness of our beta test.

Describe your product's advantages (features, for example) for end-users vs. substitute solutions (not just direct competitors).

Schola provides an easy way to not only search for a school, but also become 'matched' to a school by including the interests and needs of the user. The user can then automatically begin the enrollment process with said school. Current competitors only tackle a portion of Schola's overall feature set, like the ability to only search for a school, or search for a school based on interests and needs.

Describe your company's current intellectual property status and plans for the future. (Issued patents? Licensing agreements? Pending patent applications? Trade secrets?)

Our biggest piece of IP is our school marketing estimator. Using current student population data and a holistic approach to student availability, we've created a way to estimate how much a school should pay per student.

Discussion of any non-IP barriers to entry for your market. Include what you have done to make it difficult for others to challenge you as well as what challenges you may face such as manufacturing arrangements, distribution contracts, partnerships, etc.?

We face a great challenge in amassing data to create reports for schools across the nation. This sort of data collection is quite easy if you want 2+ year-old data, but becomes extremely difficult when collecting current data. We've been proactive in collecting current data and are striving everyday to gain access to more.

Part 5: Risk vs. Talent Narrative

What risks has your team mitigated so far (business-related and technical as it relates to your business)? What are the next few major risk-reduction milestones?

Our team is constantly assessing risk regarding the safeguarding of the sensitive of the information we handle. Investing in cybersecurity is something reduces our risk significantly. As we roll out our beta test, we're identifying Response Plans for several issues that may arise while using our platform. Our goal is to have a full Risk Management Plan at the conclusion of our beta test.

Briefly list and describe your key team members.

Jaime Martinez, M. Ed is our CEO and Co-Founder. He boasts over seven years in the education industry, first as a teacher and then as a marketing director. He also spent some time working with Teach for America. He is a husband and proud father of two.

Michael Justice is the CTO. He's a technical wizard who is responsible for keeping Schola's platform at the forefront of the educational software field.

Kamila Alberti is the Client Success Manager. She has a Bachelors of English Literature from Arizona State University. She enjoys working with clients and adjusting metrics to ensure their continued success within our platform.

Carlos Melendez is the Operations Manager. He has a Master's in Intl Business from Thunderbird/ASU and a law degree from URU in Venezuela. He keeps the wheels greased by fine-tuning operations and managing projects to use the team's hours more effectively.

Briefly describe any holes in your leadership team. What are your plans to address any recruiting needs in the next 18 mos.?

We would like to find a financial manager and a sales team.

Briefly list and describe your key advisors, and their contributions to date.

Jesse Randall - Jesse has helped us put together our financial model and advises on overall company finances.

Fred von Graf - Fred helps us with technology and IT questions.

Scott Salkin - Scott mentors us based on his experience in turning his marketing agency into a SaaS company.

David Paul - David is an expert in funding and investments, so he has been a huge help in that area.