



School Launch Support

You arrive in School Launch Support having already done something significant: designed a school rooted in a clear vision and community landscape, achieved or are on the path to authorization, and built the relationships and foundations that will carry your school into its first years. School Launch Support builds on that foundation. Everything in this program exists to help you bring what you've already built to life, and to ensure that the school you open is positioned to deliver on its promise to students for years to come. BES walks alongside you through the critical founding years, helping you translate vision into systems, systems into outcomes, and early momentum into **lasting excellence for every student**. School Launch Support pairs structured phases and clear benchmarks with the flexible, relationship-based coaching that meets you where you are.

A central goal of School Launch Support is excellent schools that are **system-dependent, not founder-dependent**. The measure of success is not whether the founder is talented — it is whether the school can achieve and sustain excellence as it grows, and eventually transitions leadership. From the very beginning, BES supports you in building a school that runs on strong systems — and in developing the leaders around you who will carry the mission forward.

Schools participating in School Launch Support receive **80–100 hours of support per year**, delivered through individualized coaching, structured training, communities of practice, in-person intensives, and site visits. At the start of each year, you and your coach build a customized plan aligned to your school's goals, your development priorities, and the phase of work ahead.

HOW SCHOOL LAUNCH SUPPORT IS ORGANIZED: FOUR PHASES OF FOUNDER DEVELOPMENT

School Launch Support is organized around four phases that reflect a deliberate progression with each phase building on the last. The benchmarks leaders build in each phase are **real tools they use to run their schools** — not documents produced for BES. A strategic plan, a board dashboard, a staff-facing systems manual: leaders share these with BES as a natural byproduct of the work, not as separate deliverables. BES reviews what leaders are actually building and using, and that is how we assess where each school is and what support is needed next.

Phase	Focus	Key Benchmarks
Phase 1 <i>Define & Anchor</i> <i>Year 0 (July–October)</i>	Founders establish the goals, metrics, plans and accountability structures that will anchor all work that follows.	• Personal Leadership Development Plan • School Startup Plan • Updated Facilities, Enrollment, Fundraising & Hiring Plans • Approved Year 0 Budget • Strategic Plan • Leader & Board Dashboards • Board Data Review Protocols

Phase	Focus	Key Benchmarks
Phase 2 <i>Architect Systems</i> <i>Year 0 (October-December)</i>	With goals established, founders design the instructional, operational, people, financial, and cultural systems that will bring their vision to life. A critical discipline of this phase is focus: founders identify the highest-leverage systems for Year 1 and articulate a deliberate sequencing plan for what gets built first and what is layered in over time.	• Academic Systems Design • Operational, Financial & Family Engagement Systems Design • Staff Culture Vision • Systems List & Implementation Timeline
Phase 3 <i>Activate & Transfer</i> <i>December of Year 0 - October of Year 1</i>	Systems only produce results when people execute them. This phase focuses on the transition from founder-as-designer to founder-as-leader and is aimed at enabling staff, families, and students to understand, own, and bring the school's vision to life. It begins with hiring and runs through the critical first weeks of school.	• Hiring Process & Outcomes • Student and Family-Facing Handbooks • Staff-Facing Manuals, Tools & Protocols • Leader Evaluation Process • Staff Onboarding Plan & Rehearsal • Family & Student Orientation Plans • Initial Succession Plan
Phase 4 <i>Execute, Diagnose & Adapt</i> <i>Year 1 and Year 2</i>	Once open, the work shifts to sustained execution and continuous improvement. Founders track progress against goals, use data to diagnose challenges, present results to key stakeholders, and adjust strategies based on evidence. In Year 2, the focus deepens on distributed leadership.	• Leader & Board Dashboards (populated) • Regular Board Data Reports • Mid-Year & End-of-Year Data Stepbacks and Action Plans • Annual Leader Evaluation • Annual Board Retreat/Strategic Planning Meeting • Distributed Leadership Plan & Updated Succession Plan (Y1) • Post-School Launch Support Transition Plan (Y2)

Running across all four phases is a **continuous improvement thread**: a cycle of goal-setting, monitoring, diagnosis, and adjustment that is not a separate component, but the connective tissue that ties every phase of the work together.

Goals → Dashboards → Review Cycles → Diagnosis → Adjustments → Improved Results

The data that flows through this cycle also shapes how BES deploys support. **Leader dashboards are a two-way tool**: leaders use them to drive decisions and drive improvement, and BES uses that same data to make sure no leader is navigating challenges alone. Leaders whose data indicates they need more intensive support — in enrollment, finances, academic progress, or operational stability — receive it. Leaders who are consistently on track may receive lighter-touch support in areas of strength, with coaching energy directed toward where growth will matter most.

WHAT SCHOOL LAUNCH SUPPORT INCLUDES

School Launch Support delivers support through the following integrated components. Throughout all of these components, **instructional leadership is a through-line, not an add-on**. Even as the operational demands of launching a school compete for attention, BES coaches protect space for instructional work throughout School Launch Support in order to help leaders hone their own eye for excellent instruction and build the school-wide systems that develop teachers and drive results across every classroom. Site visits are a primary vehicle for this: every visit includes direct classroom observation, with coaches focused on deepening the leader's capacity not just to see, name, and develop excellent instruction, but strengthen systems to ensure excellent instruction is systematically achieved throughout the school.

COACHING

Coaching includes a combination of support for the school leader, governing board members, and other members of the founding school leadership team. In addition, coaches may convene small group coaching sessions when they identify a shared challenge or learning opportunity across a subset of leaders — organized by school stage, geography, or specific domain.

Support Area	Description	Frequency
School Leader & Leadership Team Coaching	School Leader Coaching: Data-driven and responsive coaching on instruction, school leadership, nonprofit management, organizational leadership, talent development, and student recruitment and enrollment. Each coaching session is anchored in a review of the leader's dashboard, recent benchmark artifacts, and site visit observations, ensuring support is grounded in the actual state of the school. Leadership Team Coaching: Coaching may extend to founding leadership team members where it will have the highest impact on student outcomes — deployed based on school need and leader priorities.	Biweekly minimum across school leader and/or leadership team members; At least monthly with the school leader directly. Frequency and structure with leadership team determined with the leader.
Governance	Tiered support on board strategy and management, board recruitment and development, board meeting facilitation, and navigating the board's role as holder of the charter contract. Governance coaching is most active in Year 0 and progressively shifts to thought partner for the board chair and leader as they build confidence and capacity.	~5 hours of committee action planning post authorization; At least quarterly touchpoints including at least 2 board meeting observations in Y0 and at least 1 per year in Y1/Y2
Finance	Technical assistance on budgeting, contingency planning, financial planning and management, and building the leader's capacity to manage their finance contractor relationship — reviewing data critically, asking the right questions, and making informed decisions.	At least quarterly touchpoints; At least 1 joint meeting per year with school finance team or back office provider

Facilities	Technical assistance on securing and managing local facilities partners to ensure a strong facilities plan.	As needed
SUPPORT		
Support Area	Description	Frequency
Site Visit	On-site observation and coaching on instructional, cultural, and operational practices. Every visit includes direct classroom observation, a written feedback summary, and a co-developed action plan. Finance or governance coaches may join for targeted purposes.	Up to 4 visits in Y1 (opening, fall, winter + optional); 2 required + up to 2 optional in Y2
Artifact Review	Review of school artifacts including benchmark deliverables, videos of practice, and other documents.	Regular review of each key benchmark as well as other artifacts as needed
Resources	A bank of exemplars, tools, templates, and resources to support leaders at each phase of the work, including models from high-performing schools and BES alumni.	Leaders receive access to a core set of materials aligned to the School Launch Support Phases and can work with coaches to identify additional resources
LEARNING		
Support Area	Description	Frequency
In-Person Intensives	Two-day in-person sessions combining structured training, communities of practice, and school study visits to high-performing schools. The August intensive focuses on strategic planning; the October intensive deepens systems design and bridges to people leadership.	Twice per year in Y0 (August and October). Y1/Y2 leaders may attend BES Leadership Intensives.
Communities of Practice	Virtual peer learning sessions using structured protocols — tuning, dilemma, and data presentations — where leaders bring real work for feedback and peer analysis. Some sessions are cross-cohort, connecting Y0, Y1, and Y2 leaders to deepen learning and build lateral networks.	At least quarterly across Y0, Y1, and Y2
Training	Cohort-based virtual training on core topics sequenced to match the phase of work leaders are in — including strategic planning, systems design, governance, financial management, hiring, and family engagement. Select sessions open to board chairs and leadership team members.	Primarily in Y0; ongoing as needed in Y1/Y2
Fellowship Showcase	An opportunity to refine your pitch about your school and practice presenting to external stakeholders including successful school founders and representatives from foundations and charter support organizations.	2 opportunities each year