



SUCCESS SIMPLIFIED

Revised Proposal for Secondary Leadership Support, Alignment, and Postsecondary Pathway Audit

Prepared for Covington Independent School District

Prepared by The Answer Key, LLC

Submitted to Superintendent Cortnei Flucas

Proposed Service Tier: Tier 1 — Discovery and Strategic Recommendations

Project Timeline: August 1, 2026–October 31, 2026

Total Investment: \$18,000

Introduction

The Answer Key, LLC is pleased to submit this revised proposal to Covington Independent School District in response to Superintendent Cortnei Flucas's selection of **Tier 1: Discovery and Strategic Recommendations**.

This engagement is designed to support the district during an important period of leadership transition, reflection, and strategic planning. The work will begin with a comprehensive audit of current structures, past efforts, existing programming, leadership support needs, middle school-to-high school alignment, postsecondary pathway opportunities, and partnership development.

The purpose of this engagement is not to evaluate individual leaders or critique prior work. Rather, the goal is to provide a thoughtful, objective review of what currently exists, identify strengths and opportunities, and offer clear recommendations that can help the superintendent and district leadership team determine the most strategic next steps.

The Answer Key, LLC will serve as a thought partner and systems reviewer, helping the district better understand its current secondary experience and identify opportunities to strengthen alignment from middle school to high school graduation and postsecondary planning.

Purpose of the Engagement

Covington Independent School District has identified several key areas of focus:

- Supporting secondary school leaders
- Strengthening communication and planning between the middle school and high school.
- Creating a more coherent student experience from middle school through graduation.
- Reviewing existing high school postsecondary pathways.
- Identifying opportunities for stronger partnerships with colleges, employers, workforce organizations, community groups, and other external partners.
- Understanding what has been attempted in the past and what current structures are already in place.

This Tier 1 engagement will provide the district with a comprehensive discovery process and a set of strategic recommendations to inform future planning and implementation.

Guiding Principles

1. Honor the Existing Context

The work will begin with listening, learning, and understanding. The audit will seek to identify current assets, past efforts, existing structures, and opportunities for greater coherence.

2. Support Leaders Respectfully

Any leadership-related findings will be framed around systems, structures, communication, role clarity, and alignment. The work is intended to support leadership capacity and district coherence, not to create defensiveness or undermine existing school leaders.

3. Build Coherence Across the Student Experience

Students benefit when middle school, high school, and postsecondary planning are intentionally connected. This engagement will examine where those connections currently exist and where they can be strengthened.

4. Focus on Practical Next Steps

The final recommendations will be clear, actionable, and organized around the district's highest-leverage opportunities.

5. Protect Trust During Transition

Because superintendent transitions can create uncertainty, this process will be conducted with professionalism, discretion, and sensitivity to relationships, history, and organizational dynamics.

Scope of Work

The Answer Key, LLC will conduct a comprehensive audit and provide strategic recommendations in the following areas:

1. Secondary Leadership Support and Alignment

This portion of the audit will examine current leadership structures, communication routines, planning expectations, and opportunities for supporting middle school and high school leaders.

This may include:

- Listening sessions or interviews with the superintendent and selected leaders.
- Review of current leadership meeting structures.
- Review of communication between district leadership and secondary school leaders.
- Identification of leadership support needs related to implementation, alignment, and strategic planning.
- Recommendations for strengthening leadership coherence between the middle school, high school, and district office.

The language used throughout this work will emphasize **leadership support, strategic alignment, implementation support, and executive thought partnership** rather than evaluative coaching.

2. Middle School to High School Alignment

This portion of the audit will focus on the current level of communication, coordination, and programming between the middle school and high school.

This may include:

- Review of current transition practices from middle school to high school.
- Review of communication structures between middle school and high school staff.
- Identification of opportunities for shared planning.

- Review of student and family communication around high school readiness, course planning, graduation requirements, and pathways.
 - Identification of gaps or missed opportunities in the student transition experience.
 - Recommendations for creating a more intentional grade 6–12 planning structure.
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3. Postsecondary Pathway Review

This portion of the audit will focus on current high school programming related to college, career, workforce, military, technical training, dual credit, and other postsecondary opportunities.

This may include:

- Review of current pathway offerings.
 - Review of available course sequences and student participation patterns, as available.
 - Review of advising structures related to postsecondary planning.
 - Identification of pathway strengths, gaps, and opportunities.
 - Recommendations for strengthening student-facing and family-facing communication about pathways.
 - Recommendations for expanding or refining pathway opportunities based on district priorities and available partnerships.
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4. Partnership and Community Opportunity Review

This portion of the audit will examine current and potential partnerships that could support student success, postsecondary readiness, and pathway development.

This may include:

- Review of existing partnerships with colleges, universities, employers, nonprofit organizations, workforce groups, and community agencies.
 - Identification of underutilized or potential new partnerships.
 - Recommendations for organizing partnership efforts around district priorities.
 - Suggestions for next steps in building more robust postsecondary and career-connected opportunities.
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5. Final Findings and Strategic Recommendations

At the conclusion of the engagement, The Answer Key, LLC will provide a written summary of findings and recommendations.

The final report will include:

- Summary of audit process.
 - Key strengths and existing assets.
 - Major findings across leadership support, secondary alignment, postsecondary pathways, and partnerships.
 - Identified gaps or opportunities.
 - Recommended next steps.
 - Suggested priority areas for future implementation.
 - Optional recommendations for future support beyond Tier 1, if desired.
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Deliverables

The Tier 1 engagement will include the following deliverables:

1. **Initial planning meeting with the superintendent**
A launch conversation to confirm goals, priorities, communication expectations, requested documents, and key stakeholders.
2. **Document and artifact review**
Review of relevant district materials, including strategic plans, school improvement plans, pathway materials, course catalogs, transition documents, partnership documents, and other available resources.
3. **Stakeholder interviews or listening sessions**
Up to 8 interviews or listening sessions with selected district and school leaders or staff members.
4. **Secondary alignment review**
Review of current communication and planning structures between the middle school and high school.
5. **Postsecondary pathway and partnership review**
Review of existing pathway offerings, student support structures, and partnership opportunities.
6. **Final written audit summary**
A written report summarizing findings, strengths, opportunities, and recommended next steps.

7. Final presentation of findings

A meeting with the superintendent and designated district leaders to review the final findings and recommendations.

Scope and Sequence

The following scope and sequence outlines the proposed timeline for the engagement from August 1, 2026 through October 31, 2026.

Timeframe	Focus Area	Key Activities	Anticipated Outcomes
August 1 through August 9, 2026	Project Launch and Planning	Conduct initial planning meeting with Superintendent Flucas; clarify goals, priorities, communication norms, key contacts, and requested documents.	Shared understanding of project goals, process, timeline, and expectations.
August 10 through August 23, 2026	Document and Systems Review	Review district-provided documents, including strategic plans, school improvement plans, pathway materials, transition documents, course offerings, partnership information, and prior initiative materials.	Initial understanding of current structures, past efforts, and existing assets.
August 24 through September 11, 2026	Stakeholder Interviews and Listening Sessions	Conduct up to 8 interviews or listening sessions with selected district and school leaders, including individuals connected to secondary leadership, middle school programming, high school programming, counseling, pathways, and partnerships.	Qualitative insight into strengths, challenges, communication patterns, leadership support needs, and system opportunities.

September 14 through September 25, 2026	Middle School to High School Alignment Review	Examine current communication, planning, programming, and transition structures between the middle school and high school. Identify gaps, duplications, and opportunities for stronger grade 6–12 alignment.	Clearer understanding of how students currently move from middle school into high school and where alignment can be strengthened.
September 28 through October 9, 2026	Postsecondary Pathway and Partnership Review	Review high school pathway offerings, advising structures, college and career readiness supports, and current or potential external partnerships.	Identification of pathway strengths, gaps, and opportunities for partnership expansion or refinement.
October 12 through October 23, 2026	Findings Development and Recommendation Design	Synthesize document review, listening session feedback, and systems analysis. Develop key findings, priority recommendations, and suggested next steps.	Draft findings and strategic recommendations organized around leadership support, secondary alignment, pathways, and partnerships.
October 26 through October 31, 2026	Final Report and Presentation	Provide final written audit summary and present findings to the superintendent and designated district leaders. Discuss recommended next steps and possible future implementation priorities.	Final audit summary delivered; district receives clear recommendations to guide future planning and decision-making.

Project Timeline

The proposed engagement will begin on **August 1, 2026** and conclude on **October 31, 2026**.

This timeline allows for a thoughtful review process that includes planning, document review, stakeholder input, analysis, and final recommendations without placing unnecessary pressure on district leaders during the early part of the school year.

Investment

The total investment for this Tier 1 engagement is:

\$18,000

This fee includes the full scope of work described in this proposal, including planning, document review, up to 8 stakeholder interviews or listening sessions, analysis, final written audit summary, and presentation of findings.

Payment terms may be finalized in the independent contractor agreement. A recommended payment structure is:

- **50% due upon contract execution:** \$9,000
- **50% due upon delivery of final audit summary:** \$9,000

Alternative payment arrangements may be discussed if needed to align with district purchasing or payment procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Answer Key, LLC will:

- Conduct the audit process with professionalism, discretion, and respect for district context.
- Review provided documents and materials.
- Conduct selected interviews or listening sessions.
- Analyze current structures, strengths, gaps, and opportunities.
- Provide clear and practical recommendations.
- Maintain communication with the superintendent or designated district contact throughout the engagement.
- Deliver the final written audit summary and present findings.

Covington Independent School District will:

- Identify a primary district contact for scheduling and communication.
- Provide requested documents and materials in a timely manner.

- Identify participants for interviews or listening sessions.
 - Assist with scheduling stakeholder conversations.
 - Provide relevant context as needed throughout the audit process.
 - Review final findings and determine next steps for future planning or implementation.
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Recommended Communication Language

To support clarity and protect trust during this leadership transition, The Answer Key, LLC recommends that this engagement be described internally and publicly as:

Covington Independent School District is partnering with The Answer Key, LLC to conduct a secondary alignment and postsecondary pathway audit. The work will review current programming, leadership support structures, middle school-to-high school transition practices, and partnership opportunities in order to identify strengths, gaps, and recommended next steps for future planning.

Additional language may include:

- Strategic review of secondary alignment and student pathways.
 - Audit of middle school, high school, and postsecondary readiness structures.
 - Leadership and systems support for grades 6–12 alignment.
 - Review of current programming and partnership opportunities.
 - Strategic recommendations for strengthening the student experience from middle school through graduation.
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Anticipated Outcomes

At the conclusion of this engagement, Covington Independent School District can expect to have:

- A clearer understanding of current secondary programming and structures.
- A summary of existing assets and prior efforts.
- Identification of communication and planning opportunities between the middle school and high school.
- A clearer picture of current postsecondary pathway offerings and partnership opportunities.
- Recommendations for strengthening leadership alignment and support.
- Recommended next steps for building a more coherent student experience from middle school through graduation and postsecondary planning.

- A practical foundation for future implementation work.
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Proposal Validity

This revised proposal is valid for 45 days from the date of submission. If additional time is needed for district review or internal planning, The Answer Key, LLC would be happy to revisit the proposed scope, timeline, and pricing in partnership with Covington Independent School District.

Immediate Next Steps

Should this revised proposal be approved, The Answer Key, LLC will prepare an independent contractor agreement reflecting the agreed-upon scope of work, timeline, and pricing.

Once the agreement has been reviewed and signed, The Answer Key, LLC will schedule an initial kick-off call with the superintendent or designated district contact to confirm priorities, establish communication expectations, identify needed documents, and begin the discovery process.

About The Answer Key, LLC

The Answer Key, LLC provides strategic consulting, leadership support, and implementation guidance for schools, districts, and education organizations. The company specializes in helping education leaders clarify priorities, strengthen systems, improve communication, and design student-centered solutions that are practical, sustainable, and aligned to local context.

The Answer Key brings a thoughtful, relationship-centered approach to consulting. The work is grounded in listening, strategic analysis, clear communication, and a deep understanding of the leadership dynamics that shape successful district improvement efforts.

Closing

The Answer Key, LLC appreciates the opportunity to support Covington Independent School District during this important moment of transition and opportunity. This Tier 1 engagement will provide the district with a thoughtful review of current structures and a clear set of recommendations to guide future planning.

The Answer Key would be honored to partner with Superintendent Flucas and the Covington Independent School District team to begin this discovery process and support the district's continued work to strengthen leadership alignment, secondary programming, and postsecondary opportunities for students.

Submitted by:

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