What Really Is Our Mission?
What if we re-envisioned our mission as the opportunity to provide as many qualified and deserving students with a transformative “Winchendon education” - without having them have to come to Winchendon, MA?

What if we could make The Winchendon School stronger, enhancing its long term viability, by making it part of a much larger network of schools - rather than staking our future to only those students who we can attract to Winchendon?

What if we could attract and retain even better teachers because they saw more dynamic growth opportunities in joining our organization?

Established in 1926 - Leading the way in 2026
What if potential donors, both individuals and organizations, could fund an initiative that was closer to their backyard and serving deserving kids from their region rather than just those kids from wealthy families who can come to Winchendon?

What if there were eight to ten satellite campuses spread across North America, serving as brand “outposts” and referring prospective students to the Winchendon campus?

What if, when attracting prospective students and teachers, the Winchendon campus could emphasize a satellite network of campuses for educational opportunities?
The Framing Question

Wouldn’t we be doing a better job of serving our mission, our founders and predecessors, and, most importantly, many more students,...

...if we could successfully deliver our Winchendon education to 10 times as many kids each year on a less expensive and a more accessible basis?

Established in 1926 - Leading the way in 2026
The Winchendon School - A small 250 student boarding school 65 miles west of Boston, MA.

➢ Almost 100 years old.
➢ Challenging location.
➢ Distinctive program.
➢ Challenging demographics.
➢ Changing markets - significant regional competition.

Established in 1926 - *Leading the way in 2026*
The Proposition

➢ Take our program to the students (rather than dragging them to the country),
➢ while moving away from very high-cost delivery system,
➢ thereby allowing us to reduce cost/tuition to families, and
➢ increasing access to many more families.
The Journey

➢ **2014-16 - Brainstorming** - testing concepts through inhouse projects.
➢ Spring 2016 - Formalization of plan - key constituent buy-in
➢ Fall 2016 - Lot’s of field research
➢ Spring 2017 - start to commit real resources - time/$$ - refine plans
➢ Sept 2017 - Sign first lease - after several misses
➢ Sept 2017 - Start marketing
➢ Spring 2018 - Enrollment harder than expected - parents interested but kids less interested in very small school - have to get creative
➢ Oct ’17 - June ‘18 - documentation with state
➢ Nov ‘17 - June ‘18 - space improvements - CO received 4 days before open!
➢ Sept ‘18 - Open with 24 students versus original plan of 35-40 students

Established in 1926 - **Leading the way in 2026**
What did we get wrong - or didn’t go as expected

➢ Harder to find space
➢ Legal structure altogether different
➢ Enrollment ramp more challenging and slower
➢ Kids much less concerned about program than who their friends will be
➢ Will need ~150% more capital than anticipated
➢ Been harder to raise money for

We are solving problems and addressing missed assumptions every week.
➢ But we are open, it is as least as compelling as we had hoped, we are getting smarter every day, and kids are having an exceptional experience - and almost all are happier and more engaged than at their last schools.

➢ Record enrollment on MA campus - not a coincidence

➢ Greater opportunities for employees and students on both campuses
➢ Started burning real cash in early 2017
➢ In more than $1 million by summer of 2018 - before even opening doors.
➢ Expect to be through $2 million cumulative investment by winter 2019
➢ Total of $4 million+ by time we break even
➢ That is just for the first satellite campus

Viewed by Board as most strategic investment that we could possibly be making.
Takeaways

➢ Planning is fun, comfortable and interesting - and has limited benefit on kids.

➢ Doing is hard, frustrating - and has a much bigger impact on kids - sooner.

➢ Don’t waste time trying to plan to perfection. No one has ever done it.

➢ Get it to good enough, and then iterate, iterate, iterate. It will come out better than you could have ever planned.
One Last (Uncomfortable) Question

Are we really serving our students (and staff) as well as we can if we are not always “pushing the envelope” to try to serve them much better?