



410 Totten Pond Road, Waltham, MA 02451 | AdvancingMilestones.com | P: 781-895-3200 | F: 781-895-3226

**Milestones Virtual Town Hall Meeting: Minutes  
August 11th 2:00-3:00 PM**

**Goal:** Our intention for Town Hall meetings is to encourage active communication between our Milestones task force and parents/guardians from across grade levels to answer families' questions about our reentry processes and protocols and to elicit feedback. Family participants include parents/guardians whose students are participating onsite this summer as well as those who are participating remotely. We are pleased to share that our onsite instruction this summer has continued to be very successful and smooth!

**Agenda:**

1. Introductory and Slide Show and Review of Milestones' Executive Summary within our Comprehensive Fall Reopening Plan
2. Review of the Models of Instruction this Fall (Fully Onsite, Hybrid, and Remote)
3. Review of pre-submitted questions from parents/guardians and an open forum for new questions (*note: all questions and answers are summarized beginning on page 3*).

**Reminder of Milestones' Task Force Participants:**

<b><u>Team Member</u></b>	<b><u>Role/Responsibility</u></b>
<b>Kim Rockers</b> - CEO, Selected Member of Maaps Reentry Task Force, Completed COVID-19 Safety Management Certification Course	Meeting Facilitator; Represent information from maaps Re-Entry Task Force and DESE; Oversee school-wide communication
<b>Alex Smith Michaels</b> - Founder/COO who supervises clinicians, Board of Directors President	Board of Directors Representative; Act as Liaison with Clinicians
<b>Deb Abbott</b> - CFO	Oversee financial approvals
<b>Kirsten Esposito Balboni</b> - Principal	Co-Lead Academic and IEP related Planning
<b>Gillian Warwick</b> - Special Education Administrator	Co-Lead Academic and IEP related Planning

<p><b>Lyn Ross</b> - School Nurse, Member of Maaps Nursing group and follows the National Association of School Nurses, appointed COVID response leader for Milestones, and completed COVID-19 Safety Management Certification Course</p>	<p>Lead Medical Health related Planning; Represent information from maaps Nursing Task Force; Act as Liaison with DPH, Waltham Board of Health and Consulting Physician</p>
<p><b>Shane Mayhew</b> - School Operations Manager</p>	<p>Oversee facilities management planning; Oversee social distancing/safety protocols</p>
<p><b>Heather Miller</b> - Human Resources</p>	<p>Oversee HR-related planning; Research and represent employee wellness activities</p>
<p><b>Amanda Leibowitz</b> - School Psychologist</p>	<p>Advocate/Consultant for mental health supports for students and staff</p>
<p><b>Heidi Warren</b> - Project Manager and Senior Behavior Counselor</p>	<p>Oversee project management (completion of action items, communication among team members, research analysis and data collection); collaborates with School Operations Manager on facilities set-up and oversight</p>
<p><b>Sarah Folk</b> - Head of Admissions *** As needed</p>	<p>Optional participant for contributing Leadership Insight and Planning for new students</p>
<p><b>Brittany Asselin</b> - Executive Assistant</p>	<p>Collaboration on Developing Schedules, Administrative Support</p>

**Pre-Submitted Questions from Families for our Town Hall on 8/11/20**

<b>Questions:</b>	<b>Answers:</b>
<p>When reviewing DESE guidelines for at-risk students during COVID-19 and the desire to ensure those students have as much in-person schooling as possible, how is Milestones handling these situations? Is your COVID-19 plan a one size fits all OR those that are high-risk will have more in-person/on-site schooling? Thanks!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>DESE’s Discretion:</b> DESE has afforded schools with local discretion to define what constitutes as high need or high priority within our local settings.</li> <li>● <b>Milestones’ Determination:</b> As all of Milestones’ students qualify for out of district placements and receive substantial IEP services and year-round programming, we defined “high need” students as our entire student body. Therefore, we equitably invited all students to participate in our onsite summer programming, and all will be invited to participate in our onsite fall programming. This also meets DESE’s goal of attempting to reach as many students onsite as safely and feasibly possible.</li> </ul>
<p>Who is on the task force, are there any parents and if so do they represent any children who have to stay remote?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Task Force:</b> Please see the participation chart above that describes our multidisciplinary task force.</li> <li>2) <b>Parent/Guardian Representation:</b> Milestones determined that the most equitable forum for us to receive feedback from parents/guardians across all grade levels and that will reflect both onsite and remote learners is through the use of schoolwide surveys, open Town Hall forums, and ongoing feedback discussions with members of our administration and faculty. Thus far this method has successfully elicited high-response feedback as we have incorporated input representing families from all 4 areas of the school (elementary, middle, high, PHS) and who have students who participate both onsite and remotely. This</li> </ol>

	<p>method is also efficient for parents/guardians, as we recognize your busy and challenging demands.</p>
<p>What measures are being taken for students who need to stay home, what safety measures are in place, is there any option for the remote students to come and have socialization outside with students at school, what gear has been purchased to protect staff and students?</p>	<p>1) <b>Measures to support students who are staying home remotely:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Processing</u>: When students have had difficulty during remote instruction, we have processed with students and collaborated with parents/guardians through the inclusion of our clinical team and case managers. Some students have also required individual intervention planning.</li> <li>● <u>Coaches</u>: Morning “coaches” were assigned during the spring to help students plan for their school day, and these assignments will be reinstated again in the fall for students who participate in full remote instruction.</li> <li>● <u>Family Partnership</u>: Beyond what Milestones provides, we recommend that it is very important for parents/guardians who opt for remote instruction to specifically inform your student about your family’s specific circumstances and reasons for pursuing remote learning. Our team is available to help mediate conversations and reinforce information, but this transparency is critical for your student’s thorough understanding.</li> </ul> <p>2) <b>Safety Measures In Place:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Fall Safety Measures</u>: Procedures will be described in detail within our fall comprehensive reopening plan that will be submitted to DESE by 8/14 and shared with families this week. The plan will also be posted to the COVID-resources page of our website. Safety procedures will be similar in many ways to measures that have been in place during summer onsite instruction (e.g., mask use; continued daily attestation forms for students and staff; regular</li> </ul>

handwashing/hand sanitizing practices; small class sizes with 6 feet of separation and cohorting as much as possible; continued building restrictions (e.g., art/music virtual instruction; rooms that are closed or repurposed); assigned desks, computers, supplies; limiting rotations, monitoring hallways, and guiding entry/exit procedures to promote social distancing etc.

- Examples of restrictions that will be more flexible this fall: elementary students will have access to the playground; meals will be available for pre-purchase in the cafeteria; DESE is not restricting school capacity but is instead requiring that a minimum social distancing is achieved (3 or more feet; Milestones is continuing to plan for 6 feet); onsite instruction is permitted to include full school day hours.

**3) Opportunity for Remote Students To Come Onsite for Social Participation:**

- We love this parent generated idea! A parent has volunteered to work with our team to identify optional opportunities this fall. Please stay tuned for more details this fall.
- Separately, students who participate remotely this fall and are due for 3 year reevaluation testing, will have the opportunity to come onsite for assessments, if parents/guardians choose.

**4) Safety Gear and Supplies:**

- Disposable face masks
- Disposable nitrile gloves
- Disposable gowns
- Reusable Eye goggles
- Reusable Face shields
- KN95 ventilating face masks
- Hand sanitizer throughout Milestones and ample hand soap

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning supplies: cleaning wipes, spray cleaners, and paper towels are available in all student areas</li> <li>• Nightly deep cleaning (Monday-Friday) by a third party will continue throughout the school year and regular cleaning of high touch surfaces will continue during the school day by custodial staff.</li> <li>• Contactless faucets were installed throughout Milestones.</li> </ul>
<p>Is a doctor's note needed for exemptions to mask-wearing?</p>	<p><b>Mask use will remain a priority safety measure at Milestones and in schools across Massachusetts this fall.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Definition:</u> According to DESE, all individuals, including employees, students, visitors, and vendors, are required to wear face coverings while in the School or performing work on behalf of the School, except where wearing a face covering is unsafe due to a medical condition, disability impact, other health or safety consideration, or reason permissible under state guidance applicable to schools.</li> <li>• <u>Exploring Alternatives:</u> Students who are unable to wear face coverings due to medical condition, disability, or other health or safety considerations may wear face shields where it would not otherwise be unsafe to do so due to a medical condition, disability impact, or other health or safety consideration. Our staff will work with each student who is experiencing trouble with their masks. Our school nurse and clinicians may make recommendations to case managers/ families in the event that they think another form of face covering would be more beneficial for the student. Face shields are shown to be good alternative options for students experiencing more difficulty with a normal face mask. Staff are happy to assist with the fitting of the face shield.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Encouragement and Strong Compliance:</u> To encourage mask use, all students receive positive feedback for participating safely and responsibly though mask use, and classes take safe mask breaks to support the tolerance of masks. We have had very high mask compliance this summer. In the very limited instances when students have chosen not to wear a face mask, our staff have done a great job listening to students' concerns and assisting. We focus on science/health safety and the importance of following our core values of safety, respect, and responsibility at Milestones and as part of our broader community.</li>   <li>● <u>Response to Inquiry about Doctors' Notes:</u> Onsite instruction opportunities may not be denied if a student is unable to wear a mask as DESE acknowledges that students with developmental, behavioral, health, or sensory challenges are often among the highest need populations. This does not require a doctor's note. A reasonable interpretation is that a mask exception is intended for medical or disability constraints and not due to a disagreement with the safety practice. Staff are asked to maximize 6 + feet of distance and have PPE available, in any circumstance when mask use may not occur.</li> </ul>
<p>Is there any plan to require routine COVID-19 testing for staff and students at Milestones? What is the contingency plan if an on-site staff member or student tests positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19 at any time during the school year?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Testing:</b> DESE is not recommending routine COVID-19 testing for staff and students. This is because testing represents a moment-in-time and may produce unreliable results.</li>   <li>2) <b>Contingency Planning:</b> DESE has issued very explicit guidelines to schools regarding how COVID-19 potential exposures or cases must be handled. These will be outlined in detail in our fall comprehensive plan.</li> </ol>

Emailed inquiry regarding: (1) our building's ventilation and the potential use of portable HEPA Air Filters (with a potential offer for parents/PAG to potentially contribute if a second line of defense would be helpful); (2) the Effectiveness of Face Shields, and (3) whether parents can be notified if there are students in the classroom who aren't wearing masks.

- 1) **Building Ventilation:** Milestones leases our space, but we have remained in active communication with our building management company prior to our summer reopening and during our summer to verify proper engineering controls in accordance with DESE guidelines. Our building management company has confirmed compliance that air filters within our HVAC system have been appropriately changed in accordance with the building's preventative maintenance schedule, and have affirmed proper ventilation of 410 Totten Pond Road, Waltham. As part of their reentry planning prior, the building management increased the flow of outside air to run "24/7" as a valuable building upgrade. The HVAC runs continuously, and therefore, is prepared prior to the reentry of staff and students.
- 2) **Portable HEPA Air Filters as an additional precaution for consideration:** We appreciate this recommendation and our task force will review the data/research on these items and discuss this with HVAC consultants.
- 3) **Face Shields and Mask Compliance:** Although face shields are considered a viable alternative within schools if students are having challenges with mask use, we continue to have very high compliance schoolwide with students' mask use (see table above). Milestones has face shields available as extra PPE for faculty, if needed. For confidentiality reasons, we would not disclose if there are specific students in a class who are not wearing a mask, and one's mask use may not be a consistent representation (i.e., a



	<p>student may have a difficult time occasionally but not always). Parents/guardians are always invited to speak to your case manager if you have specific safety questions regarding your own student and their environment.</p>
--	---

**Additional questions that were raised:**

- 1) Q: **If someone in the Milestones community is suspected of having COVID will families be quickly notified? Particularly important to high risk students.** A: Yes, proper notification would be made after consulting with the Waltham Board of Health. Our comprehensive fall plan also outlines DESE’s guidance regarding COVID exposures and cases.
  
- 2) Q: **What will the policy be around bathroom use this fall?** A: There is a section on bathrooms in our final comprehensive document. We will continue the protocol from the summer about 1 student in at a time. Bathrooms are cleaned during the school day by our janitorial staff as well as deeper cleaning at night (Monday-Friday) by a third party cleaning company.
  
- 3) Q: **Regarding transportation, what happens if the van isn’t safe (ex: van driver isn’t following safety protocols)?** A: Notify both your out of district liaison (as public districts coordinate and oversee transportation) and your Milestones case manager. Milestones would follow the “see something, say something” practice and provide follow up outreach to your sending district to discuss safety concerns.
  
- 4) Q: **We are seeing technical issues with remote learning while the teacher is on site at Milestones. How is this going to be addressed for fully remote students?** A: Milestones has a Technology Committee that works with our faculty to best support integrating our onsite and remote learners. Committee members are also available to offer technical support to families and have had success doing so during remote learning. We recommend that you notify your case manager if you are experiencing technical challenges and would like technical support.
  
- 5) Q: **Can you talk about how the student cohorts were developed? Student learning profile, good social matches, other factors?** A: To support social distancing/limiting

contact, students will be assigned to cohorts this fall (to the extent feasible). Cohorts were assigned based upon what requirements students need academically as well as consideration to social groupings.

- 6) **Q: You indicated that students should not be bringing in personal electronics** *(note: this pertains to lockers not being available and limiting personal items being transferred back and forth to school).* **Does that include phones and CD players?** A: These are allowed if they remain in a student's backpack during the day.
- 7) **Q: Can you please share your plans if a teacher needs to quarantine due to exposure?** A: If they are healthy enough to teach, they will be permitted to instruct remotely. Otherwise, Milestones would provide substitute coverage. Regardless, the employee would be in touch with our school nurse regularly regarding their health status and in order to receive clearance to return to school in accordance with Board of Health guidance and DESE regulations.
- 8) **As an out of district program, how do you address students coming from different towns with different rates of COVID?** DESE has acknowledged that this environment is not similar to "snow cancellation" circumstances. During inclement weather, Milestones closes school if the Waltham Public School district is closed because the local environment is considered unsafe for travelling. However, with COVID-19, the circumstances are different. A student may reside in a community that has been identified as high-risk and that district may not feel it is safe to open onsite in their community. But this does not mean that every individual residing in that town is unhealthy to attend school. Instead, Milestones will continue to rely on daily health attestations from all staff and students, and individuals should not come to onsite school if they don't pass our daily health attestation requirements (in which case, remote learning is available, and those staff and families should stay in active communication with our school nurse). *\*\*Note: As of the evening of 8/11/20, DESE issued metrics that can be used by local school districts to follow the incidence rates within towns to help guide local school planning decisions. DESE intends to separately issue follow-up guidance to programs that draw on students from different areas. Milestones will stay abreast of any new DESE guidance, as it becomes available.*