Dear Millburn Schools Community,

At this time, we would like to share Millburn’s plans for the reopening of school in September. These plans have been designed with our overarching mission:

*To provide our standards of excellence in education, with the health and safety of our students and staff as our top priority.*

Our plans are based on many months of discussion by our educators to meet the academic needs of our students, while adhering to the NJDOE and CDC guidelines, to comply with what we feel are the strongest social distancing recommendations of 6 feet wherever possible. We have worked with our local Department of Health and community medical professionals to vet our processes and they have unanimously supported our approach in following the necessary precautions in our use of cohorts, social distancing and the health and safety protocols within our plans.

We know this is a challenging time for all of us, and we are well aware that there is no one plan that will fit every stakeholder’s needs. The District’s recommendations have been designed to provide the best and safest educational program to all of our students within the constraints of a pandemic, whether they are able to attend school in-person or remotely. We believe that the plans described below give us that opportunity, while allowing families the options to decide what is best for them.

I would like to share the latest updates on our planning for the return to school in September, and the ever-changing expectations from the State. On Friday, July 24, we received guidance from the state regarding the remote learning options that will be available to all students. We are glad to be able to provide that opportunity to our families as you begin to plan for the fall.
I want to remind you of the mission and guiding principles shared in the Board presentation that have been the basis for our decisions.

**DISTRICT MISSION:**

Provide for the health and safety of all staff and students to return to the Millburn Township Schools.

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**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1. **Communication:**
   - Provide regular communications to the community with updates and changes regarding health concerns and the school schedules

2. **Health and Safety:**
   - Provide a safe learning environment for our students, faculty & staff
   - Emphasize the importance of addressing the Social- Emotional well-being of our students, faculty and staff

3. **Instruction:**
   - Prepare to provide instruction in school, through remote instruction and/or a hybrid learning approach
   - Meet the instructional goals of our curriculum while maintaining the flexibility and nimbleness to adjust as needed

4. **Access to Learning:**
   - Provide the technology tools and equitable learning environment for all students
   - Provide for the unique needs of our special education students
   - Consider health concerns of our community
**Schedules**

In order to develop school and class schedules for September, we ask you to read through the school plans and safety procedures below. At the end of this letter you will be asked to **submit a preliminary questionnaire** to let us know which plan you are considering for each of your children at this time. A followup survey will be sent in early August. Families will need to confirm your selection by August 14.

- We will place students and develop schedules based on your responses to the questionnaire that are due by **Wednesday, August 5**. This is a preliminary survey, not the final confirmation.
- We will send another questionnaire for parents to confirm their choice by **Friday, August 14** to allow our administrators to finalize class and building schedules.
- We understand that based on the prevailing conditions once school begins, parents may wish to change their selection.
- Please note that there will be procedures for submitting a request and timelines for opting in or out of your original choice.

**DISTRICT PLAN DESCRIPTIONS**

**PLAN A: Hybrid In-Person/Remote Instruction**

In our in-person instruction model, students will receive a combination of in-school building and at-home remote learning experiences.

**Elementary Grades K-4:**

- The 2.5 hours of in-school instruction and 2.5 hours of remote learning for a total of a 5-hour day were developed based on providing developmentally appropriate instruction for our elementary students.
- The small group setting will allow for cohorts of students and for proper social distancing.
- The in-school time will allow for the core areas of Reading, Writing and Math instruction with the grade level teachers 5-days a week.
- The time in between the AM and PM sessions provides for the custodial staff to clean, as well allowing for teacher preparation time.
- The students’ placements in the AM and PM sessions will be developed at the building levels by the administrators who use a variety of factors to balance each class. Schedules will be shared with families at the end of August.
AM Group

- **8:30-11:00** Approximately half the student population will report to **school in-person** for direct instruction in Reading, Writing, Mathematics.
- **12:45-3:15** Students will participate **at home** in independent assignments in Social Studies or Science, Related Arts, and extension activities.

PM Group

- **8:30-11:00**: Students will participate **at home** in independent assignments in Social Studies or Science, Related Arts, and extension activities.
- **12:45-3:15**: Approximately half the student population will report to **school in-person** for direct instruction in Reading, Writing, Mathematics.

**Elementary Grade 5 - Washington School**

AM Group

- **8:00 - 10:30**: Approximately half the student population will report to school **in-person** for direct instruction in Reading, Writing, Mathematics.
- **12:15 - 2:45**: Students will participate **at home** in independent assignments in Social Studies or Science, Related Arts, and extension activities.

PM Group

- **8:00-10:30**: Students will participate **at home** in independent assignments in Social Studies or Science, Related Arts, and extension activities.
- **12:15 - 2:45**: Approximately half the student population will report to school **in-person** for direct instruction in Reading, Writing, Mathematics.

**Integrated Preschool Schedule:**

- **8:15-10:45 (AM Session)** or **12:15-2:45 (PM Session)**: The integrated preschool schedule will remain unchanged and will operate for 2 ½ hours per day.
Middle and High School Grades 6-12:

A/B Cohorts

- Students will be assigned to an A or B cohort, comprising approximately half of the student population, in which they are in school every other day for a 5-hour session.
- All Middle and High School students will participate in one full REMOTE day, on Wednesdays, to allow the A and B groups to come together to have a combined and collaborative class experience. This will be monitored during the month of September for continuation in subsequent months.
- The REMOTE day will also provide staff with the opportunity to implement a virtual schedule in preparation for the inevitability of having to shut down again during the school year.

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<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
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<td>Group A in Building</td>
<td>Group B in Building</td>
<td>Groups A &amp; B Remote</td>
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<td>Group B Remote</td>
<td>Group A Remote</td>
<td>Learning Day</td>
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- Approximately half the students will be in the building each day
- Students will attend school in cohorts on an A/B rotation for a 5-hour schedule

High School: 8:00 – 1:02   Middle School: 8:05 – 1:06

- Students will have a full remote learning day on Wednesday
- No lunch will be served
- MS/HS Siblings will be scheduled on the same A or B day as possible
**PLAN B: In-Home Remote Instruction**

**Elementary:**
- The in-home remote learning option will follow the same schedule as **Plan A**, except that the students will be learning from home. Students will receive a combination of live direct instruction and independent assignments. Students will be assigned to follow the schedule of an AM or a PM Group.

❖ **AM Group**
  ➢ **8:30-11:00:** Approximately half the student population will be assigned to a remote learning cohort for direct instruction delivered remotely in Reading, Writing, Mathematics.
  ➢ **12:45-3:15:** Students will participate in independent assignments remotely in Social Studies or Science, Related Arts, and extension activities.

❖ **PM Group**
  ➢ **8:30-11:00:** Students will participate in independent assignments remotely in Social Studies or Science, Related Arts, and extension activities.
  ➢ **12:45-3:15:** Approximately half the student population will be assigned to a remote learning cohort for direct instruction delivered remotely in Reading, Writing, Mathematics.

**Integrated Preschool Schedule**
❖ **8:15-10:45 (AM Session) or 12:15-2:45 (PM Session):** Students will participate in direct instruction and will participate in independent assignments, extension activities, and applicable related services.

❖ **Middle and High School Grades 6-12:**
  ➢ **Grades 6-12:** The in-home remote learning option provides the same schedule as **Plan A**, except that the student will be learning from home each day. Students will receive a combination of teacher-directed live classes and independent assignments.

**Plan C: District Fully Virtual**

This plan will be implemented only in the event that we are directed by the Department of Health or State of New Jersey to close schools.
- Students will follow their regular schedule for a day of robust virtual instruction with a combination of teacher-directed lessons and independent assignments.
Important Planning Notes

❖ Special Services
➢ Information on the scheduling for Special Education students will be forthcoming from the Special Services Department to address students’ individual learning needs and programs.

❖ Changing to/from hybrid model to remote model
➢ Parents can opt for their child to move from Hybrid Plan A to the Remote Plan B at any time by notifying the school.
➢ If parents opt to have their children start in the Remote Plan B and want to change to Hybrid Plan A, they will need to submit a form to make that request.
➢ The forms and the procedures for making a change will be available at the start of school.

❖ There will be specific timelines for making a change to opt back into the Hybrid Plan A from the Full Remote Plan B:
➢ MHS/MMS: Change will be made as of the first day of the next month (i.e. Start the year fully remote in September and then opt to be in the Hybrid starting in October)
➢ Elementary: Change will be made at beginning of the 2nd Trimester (December)
➢ Parents must give two weeks notice to change from Remote Plan B to the Hybrid Plan A.

❖ First Day of School - Possible Calendar Change to September 8, 2020
➢ We are looking at changing the opening student start date of school in order to give our teachers more time to prepare their classrooms, participate in required COVID-related Professional Development, and prepare for both in-school and remote teaching.
   ■ The Board of Education must approve any calendar changes, so I will be recommending that we change the opening day of the school year for students to Tuesday, September 8.
   ■ This will be proposed for approval at the August 10th Board of Education meeting.

Health & Safety Protocols

❖ All plans were designed with social distancing and building capacity limits of approximately half the student population in the building at one time.

❖ Protocols are still in development for daily screenings of staff and students, handling of symptoms in and out of school and contact tracing. More details will be forthcoming on these procedures once our plan is approved by the Board and by the NJDOE. The questions will include whether students/staff have this set of symptoms:
➢ Fever or chills
➢ Cough
➢ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
➢ Fatigue
➢ Muscle or body aches
➢ Headache
➢ New loss of taste or smell
➢ Sore throat
➢ Congestion or runny nose
➢ Nausea or vomiting
➢ Diarrhea

❖ We are working with our local Department of Health, school nurses and doctors, as well as local community medical experts to devise the most safe and effective procedures for our schools including:
  ➢ Daily health monitoring for students and staff examples are as follows:
    ■ We will require all parents to attest on a daily basis that their children are fever-free and are not exhibiting any COVID-related symptoms. The CDC advises against temperature checks on site.
    ■ Staff members will also be expected to attest to their health on a daily basis with the CDC required questions.
    ■ We will provide more information about these procedures before the start of school.
  ➢ Protocols for staff/students who have been in contact with a suspected COVID patient
  ➢ Procedures for staff/students who are symptomatic
  ➢ Required masks during the school day for both students and staff. District will provide one mask for each student and staff member. Families should purchase additional masks for their students.
  ➢ Multiple/staggered entries/exits and times
  ➢ Signage/directional signs for hallways, stairways, entries
  ➢ Hand washing measures
  ➢ Cleaning and disinfecting protocols: The early dismissal/single session allows our custodial staff time to properly clean the schools for the next day of classes.

❖ Your school Principals will be providing many more school-specific details about schedules and procedures in each building over the next few weeks.

COVID Cases

❖ Standard protocols with regard to cases of Covid-19 in a classroom or school have NOT been established by the CDC and NJDOH in the school setting. Their current guidance is that we must notify our public health officials and work closely with them in our response.
❖ We are in the process of reconfiguring our nurses’ offices so that if a student or staff member displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19 at school, we have an isolation area.
❖ The student/staff member will be isolated, away from others in the school building, until released to a relative.
❖ We also have secured PPE for our nursing staff so that they may effectively and safely manage anyone who might have COVID-19. The isolation area will be properly cleaned and disinfected after each use.
Outdoor Spaces

❖ Teachers will be encouraged to take their classes outside if possible. Doing so could impact the technology for remote lessons, but we will make efforts to get students outside.
❖ We are exploring the purchase/use of tents, shades, and awnings.
❖ If teachers go outside with classes, it will be in a suitable location on school property.

Lunch and Cafeteria

❖ No lunch will be served at school.
  ➢ We will provide meals to those families who qualify for Free and Reduced meals.
  ➢ More information and the application for Free & Reduced Lunch can be found here.
❖ Recommendations from the CDC and local health officials do not recommend large groups of students gathering in a common space.
❖ To start school, we will also be dividing up common spaces to use as classrooms.

Child Care

● We understand that the various elements of our plan will provide challenges to working parents, family routines and schedules and we have tried to keep these in mind as we have made all of our decisions.
● We are in discussions with our childcare providers to find appropriate space for families who may be interested in childcare.
● Both of our providers are willing to help our families with this need. We will be providing more information as soon as we know if we are able to provide a solution.

Transportation

❖ Please be reminded that we will not be offering subscription busing in the fall.
❖ On mandated routes, (K-8, 2 miles/HS 2 ½ miles) social distancing will be maintained on all buses, 1 child per seat. (Siblings may sit together.)
❖ Students will be required to wear face coverings while on the bus
❖ Best practices will be implemented for cleaning and disinfecting buses
❖ If you qualify for district mandated busing, transportation and know that you will not use it for whatever reason, please complete this form by August 7. Thank you very much in advance for doing so, as it will enable us to better space students and schedule our bus routes.
Travel Advisories

- We will require families to adhere to the current state and federal travel advisories for travel from the identified high risk states with a significant spread of COVID-19.
- Under the 14-day quarantine travel advisory announced by the Governors of New Jersey, New York and Connecticut, individuals traveling to or returning to New Jersey from states with increasing rates of COVID-19 are advised to self-quarantine for 14 days. This includes travel by train, bus, car, plane and any other method of transportation.
- According to local health officials, students must self-quarantine for a full 14 days prior to starting school.
- A negative virus test does not supersede the quarantine period. Please pay attention to your travel locations and dates in order for your child to start school on time.
- **To start in school on September 8, a student would need to begin quarantine on August 25.**

Please know, this planning is a work in progress and represents our opening phase of school. We will continue to monitor all local conditions with the Department of Health to evaluate our ability to scale up in-person schedules. We will take each month at a time and make determinations as to whether adjustments may be made. Any changes will be communicated to our school community.

We have read the many emails and suggestions that parents and staff have forwarded. We appreciate your input, and have taken them seriously into consideration as the plans have been developed. We need to be flexible, creative and persistent. As we have learned over the last six months, things can change on a daily basis, and we are always in the mode of being able to pivot to the next plan. I want you to know we are prepared to modify our plans at a moment’s notice.

We are always monitoring community COVID cases. We know that the number of cases in town and the state, as well as guidance from the Governor, is ultimately what will drive our plans as we approach September. It is worth repeating that our mission is to provide our standards of excellence in education, with the safety of our students and staff as our top priority.

Once we have a sense of how many students will be attending in-school or remotely, we will be able to finalize schedules, along with our school building health and safety protocols.

**Please submit the PRELIMINARY SURVEY HERE by Wednesday, August 5**
Timeline of Next Steps

❖ **August 10**: We have added an additional Board of Education Meeting on Monday, August 10 where I will provide more details about our plans. We will be using a different online platform that will allow for expanded community participation.

❖ **August 14**: Parent survey due to confirm students’ status on their return to school

❖ **August 24**: Town Hall Meeting in advance of the previously scheduled Board of Education meeting

❖ Additional parent meetings are being scheduled with the PTOs at individual schools

We will be providing additional details over the coming weeks. If you have questions, please send them to us here.

We would like to acknowledge all who are celebrating Eid al-Adha.

Enjoy the lazy, hazy days of summer!

Be well and stay safe,

*Christine Burton*

Dr. Christine Burton  
*Superintendent of Schools*