

Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams, Schools Chancellor David Banks Introduce New and Returning Schools District Superintendents

June 27, 2022

Chancellor David Banks, Department of Education: All right. Good afternoon, everyone. If we can have your attention. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, everyone.

Chancellor Banks: A little over three months ago, I stood in this same spot to outline our vision for transforming and rebuilding trust in our city's public schools. I laid out what I see as the challenges facing our system: an unacceptable number of students that don't learn how to read, not enough of our students graduate ready for a good-paying job or college, a large number of schools continue to have safety issues. These add up to a simple fact. Our system has shrunk by 120,000 students over the past five years. This isn't just a fact that hits me emotionally as a product of our schools, but it hits our schools financially, too.

Chancellor Banks: Whenever a student doesn't enroll in our public schools, we lose money and our schools are feeling that impact. Most disappointing to me, I have heard repeatedly from parents that they feel unheard, unwelcome, and underappreciated by those in leadership.

Chancellor Banks: Over my first six months on the job, I've also seen where the solutions to these challenges come from. The answers are right here in New York City. They're in our neighborhood schools who never get a spotlight, yet are innovating and meeting the needs of their students in new ways every day.

Chancellor Banks: The answers are with our families and community members who are driven, passionate, and fully engaged in the project of making our schools the best they can be for all of our kids. To address these challenges and implement bold

solutions, we set out to build a team of superintendents who are empowered in ways that they have not been in years.

Chancellor Banks: As promised in March, we included families and communities in unprecedented ways. Every district held community town halls with candidates where parents could directly ask questions and give feedback. Parents told us they wanted input and we listened.

Chancellor Banks: Beyond town halls, each community engaged in the formal C-37 consultation process that included parent leaders and our labor partners coming together to have honest conversations and give feedback.

Chancellor Banks: As the leader of more than 1,600 schools, the final decision on who becomes a community superintendent rests with the chancellor. As a former teacher and principal, I know that without real input from parents, we would be replicating the failures of the past.

Chancellor Banks: So today I have the honor of introducing to you the 45 leaders who are charged with the duty of making their districts' schools great destinations for our students. These leaders are ready to embrace the expanded role of superintendent.

Chancellor Banks: They will be responsible for improving outcomes for students, re-imagining their learning experiences, leading curriculum and instructional design, supervising district-based staff, supporting teacher training, and developing the next generation of school leaders.

Chancellor Banks: Significantly, superintendents will be responsible for making sure that each school is welcoming and responsive to all members of their community. For families, that means the superintendent is responsible for ensuring communications to families are available in their home languages and providing support when families have issues with transportation, services for students with disabilities and multilingual learners, counseling and attendance.

Chancellor Banks: For community members, superintendents will cultivate relationships with parent groups, councils, elected officials, advocacy groups, unions,

the business community, and community organizations to ensure that the whole district is supporting its local schools.

Chancellor Banks: But just because this hiring process is over today, it doesn't mean our commitment to listening to families and communities is ending today. Each of these leaders that you see before you will engage in a listening and learning tour over the summer to hear recommendations for improving schools in their respective districts.

Chancellor Banks: I'm going to take a moment and give special thanks to Deputy Chancellor for School Leadership Dr. Desmond Blackburn, who led this hiring process. Throughout this process, he has been clear-eyed on the goal.

Chancellor Banks: We must find the leaders who will put the needs of students front and center. Leaders who live and breathe working in partnership with families and communities. He will also be leading the training and support of this team. Thank you, Dr. Blackburn, for your leadership and that of your team, including Dr. Danika Rux, Dr. Elaine Lindsey, and Lawrence Pendergast.

Chancellor Banks: With this team of leaders, our future is bright and we have laid out an agenda that is in keeping with the mayor's vision for our schools. So at this time, it is my pleasure to invite our mayor, Eric Adams, to offer his remarks.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you so much to the entire Department of Education team. Two stories resonate with me this afternoon as we stand here today. One, Ms. Pasternak, another [inaudible]. Ms. Pasternak was my third grade teacher. She took me out of South Jamaica, Queens, and brought me to Broadway to see Hamlet for the first time.

Mayor Adams: Leaving my surroundings, I was able to sit in that theater and watch a live performance and it forever changed me. It let me understand that the possibilities are far beyond 167th Street and 111th Avenue. That there was a whole universe out there for me to explore. And I stay in contact with her today.

Mayor Adams: She checks on me from time to time, asks me, how am I doing? How's the campaign doing? How are things taking place? But then I think about Mr. Morgan. I

went to Alabama to see my brother when he dropped out of college. I went there to talk him through and say, "It's time to get back to school. You have what it takes to make it."

Mayor Adams: And he said to me, in a very teary voice, he says, "[Inaudible] told me I will never be anything." That was his third grade teacher. A good teacher can lift you up and a good teacher can tear you down.

Mayor Adams: But if you don't have the right generals helping the teachers carry out the mission of lifting up children, then oftentimes our educators feel broken, denied, and don't give the right opportunity to do what they love, and that is educating children.

Mayor Adams: There's something about a teacher that realize education is a calling. It's not for everyone. You cannot do it just because you want a job. You have to do it because you want to do a good job. And what the chancellor did today, when we sat down and spoke throughout the campaign, he stated, "I'm going to pick the right generals. I'm going to pick the right people that understand that it's about empowering our educators to do the job, but hold a new scope and a new approach."

Mayor Adams: The principal is the quarterback of the entire community. Every agency must respond to the play calls from the principal. That is what we are doing and what we are going to do. So the principal must know the precinct commander, must know the ACS, must know the person that's in charge of the Department of Sanitation. So if she needs the buildings cleaned around her school, then when she calls the person that's responsible for it, I dare them not to pick up the phone and respond to them directly.

Mayor Adams: The power is in the principal. That principal that creates the right environment for their teachers is going to be able to uplift the entire community. We've been disjointed. We've allowed the school community to carry out the whole role without the support of every agency involved.

Mayor Adams: We are now sending clear orders today that every agency in this city must stop talking about how children our most powerful investment and start doing something about it. Everyone must march in a direction of making sure our children have an opportunity. And that's what's behind us. That's what's behind us.

Mayor Adams: I tell my team all the time, "You have to be crazy to work for me." Because we are so focused from sun up to sun down. We are committed to using the next four years to turning around a system that has failed students, parents, teachers, administrators, and leaders.

Mayor Adams: We have to go from what we felt to what we are going to feel. And we have to be ready to make that transition. That is why we need the 45 that's here today. These are the leaders that we need, and we're going to expect so much from them.

Mayor Adams: We're going to expect them to change the culture of these communities that have surrendered to our school system. I know we can do it. I know the possibilities. And I know there are naysayers, because we're all burnt out. We all feel betrayed.

Mayor Adams: We now started the point of we're almost just going through the motions. We don't believe that it's possible. But we have brought together a group of 45 believers, and they're going to reach into our school system and tell the principals to believe.

Mayor Adams: And those principles are going to tell the guiding counselors, the students, the employees, "Let's start believing again." That we can turn our city around, starting with one child at a time, one opportunity at a time.

Mayor Adams: This is a new day for our school system. And it's all going to start with our belief. I believe in this chancellor, I believe in the 45 men and women that he has brought together to be the leadership in all of our superintendent districts.

Mayor Adams: I know some of them from the work they have done and what they will continue to do. This is our opportunity to muster all of our resources to place our schools on the right pathway. So that in some third grade class, there is a Ms. Pasternak reaching out to a young man or young woman and showing them what is far beyond the scope of what they thought was possible. Let's make this happen and let's get stuff done in our city. Thank you very much.

Chancellor Banks: And so I want to introduce to you the superintendents. I am beyond thrilled with this group, their connection, their sense – spirit of collaboration. We were all

just gathered in a room upstairs and just the hugging and the love and the support that they show for each other, I didn't want to leave and come out here.

Chancellor Banks: But they will work to New York's great benefit and they will work together. And that is the clear message that we have said to each one of them. And so some of them have already been in these spaces, but they recognize that this is a new job and they've got to bring their A game.

Chancellor Banks: And many of them are new faces as well. And they're going to bring a spirit of innovation and out-of-the-box thinking that the system desperately needs. And so they will just wave their hand and please recognize them.

Chancellor Banks: The new superintendent for Community School District 1, Carry Chan. District 2, Kelly McGuire. District 3, Kamar Samuels. District Four, Kristy De La Cruz. District 5, Sean Davenport. District 6, Manuel Ramirez. District 7, Roberto Padilla. District 8, Jennifer Joynt. District 9, Harry Sherman. District 10, Maribel Torres-Hulla. District 11, Cristine Vaughan. District 12, Jacqueline Rosado. That was the Bronx right there, right?

Chancellor Banks: District 13, Robin Davson. District 14, David Cintron. District 15, Rafael Alvarez. District 16, Brendan Mims. District 17, Shenean Lindsay. District 18, Celeste Douglas. District 19, she's not here today, but please join me in welcoming her, Tamra Collins. District 20, David Pretto. District 21, Isabel Dimola.

Chancellor Banks: District 22, Julia Bove. District 23, Khalek Kirkland. District 24, Madelene Chan. District 25, Danielle DiMango. District 26, Danielle Giunta. District 27, David Norment. District 28, Tammy Pate. District 29, Crystal Bonds. District 30, Philip Composto. District 31, Marion Wilson. District 32, Rebecca Lozada. District 75, Ketler Louissaint. District 79, Glenda Esperance

Chancellor Banks: Manhattan High Schools, Gary Beidleman. Bronx High Schools, Renee Peart. Bronx High Schools, Fia Davis. Brooklyn High Schools, Janice Ross. Brooklyn High Schools, Michael Prayor. Queens High School, Hoa Tu.

Chancellor Banks: Queens High School, Josephine Van-Ess. CConsortium, International and Outward Bound, Alan Cheng. High School Superintendent for CUNY

and Urban Assembly, Fred Walsh. High School Superintendent for New Visions, Richard Clintron. And our final High School selection for Transfer Schools, John Sullivan. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming the new leadership for our New York City public school system, all of our superintendents.