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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO AND CHANCELLOR FARINA HOLD MEDIA  
AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Okay, everyone ready?

I want to thank Chancellor Fariña who you'll hear from in a moment and the DOE Security Director Mark Rampersant for his exceptional efforts after the horrible incident two days ago. Thank Chief Jaffe and Chief Conroy from the NYPD for their efforts and all the efforts of School Safety here at Stuyvesant and at the other schools involved.

I want to say at the outset, I think they handled a very tough situation exceptionally well. And thank you to the elected officials who are with us – Borough President Brewer, Assembly member Kavanagh and the union leadership that we met with.

The Chancellor and I spent time with the school leadership, teachers, guidance counselors, including one teacher who was injured in the attack who happened to be on the bike path and went back to work at the school the very next day to his great credit. The guidance counselors, the parent coordinator – we listened to them talk about what the students have been through, what parents have been through, what they were feeling, what the whole staff was feeling. And then we spoke with a group of students and it was very, very moving.

We've talked a lot the last couple of days about the strength and the resiliency of New Yorkers was on display here powerfully. One of the students told me that in the hours they were on lock down everyone was checking on each other to make sure they were okay, supporting each other. The students of all backgrounds, every nationality, every faith standing up for each other, making sure that everyone knew they would get through it. And the students I met with said they had great faith that the adults in the building, all the folks who are there to protect them were doing that. But he said as the incident finally was over and then students talked to each and then emailed other about the next day that they thought I was important to be at school the next day to mourn those who had been lost and to show that terror would not stop us, would not change us. I think that's an amazing thing to hear kids still in their teens thinking about their responsibility to respond to an act of terror by standing up, by being resolute and their respect for the lives that were taken that they saw it as their duty to be back at this school and to send a message. It was very, very moving.

And I want to express my appreciation to the whole team at Stuyvesant and the other schools affected. They did things exactly right. We obviously drill for these kinds of occasions. We wish we didn't have to but we understand the world we're living in. And what I heard from the school team was the moment they got the alert they went into action, they used their training and they did everything they knew to get kids to safety, to lock down the building to keep them safe and to support each other.

Obviously a very, very difficult experience for everyone involved, including some who saw the incident unfold. But the message that came through loud and clear here is that everyone had each other's backs. And they knew they had to be there for each other. And no one, no one expressed to us a sense of fear and insecurity. They simply were resolute. And it was very, very admirable. It doesn't mean people are feeling things, it doesn't mean that it wasn't a painful experience. But the solidarity you saw on that building was absolutely amazing. So I just want to commend everyone at the Department of Education, everyone at School Safety, but also these teachers and students just for the way they handled the situation humanly, the way they backed each other up. Something New Yorkers should be proud of. Just a few words in Spanish before I turn to the Chancellor.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that and with great appreciation Chancellor to your whole team, Chancellor Carmen Fariña.

**Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña:** It's often said that New York City is a very large city. I keep hearing the largest urban school system in the country. However, when it counts we are a very small community. And as a small community all the agencies come together to provide whatever services are necessary. So I am not only proud of the DOE, I am proud of the NYPD, I am proud of all the agencies that came together, and will continue to come to gather to help us. There has been an outpouring of support from all kinds of social service agencies'; whatever you need, we will give you. Yesterday I visited all four schools that were impacted by this, and in every single place that I went teachers said 'well, we're here for each other, this is what we do.' It was almost like an ordinary, matter-of-fact, this is our job. In all schools, people stayed beyond the normal hours. Teachers stayed until every child was home, until every parent got listened to, until everyone was deemed safe. I was at 89, 289. I was here at Stuyvesant. I also went to the district school where the kids on the bus are from, and the reality is that everyone said this is just our job.

But I want to talk about a little bit of this job that really to me is extraordinary to tell you how much our kids are also resilient. One of the students that was on the bus, we all assumed would not come back the next day. He went to the hospital. He was released. He wanted to go home, and what he told his mother is that he had to go to school because he was working on 100 percent perfect attendance, and he didn't want to mess up his perfect attendance. And as a result, when it came time to pick him up the bus actually didn't pick him up, thinking he wouldn't be there. So his mother took a car service and car from Brooklyn to Manhattan to deliver her child to school. And when I spoke to him yesterday, and this is something I'm never going to forget in terms of my experience as chancellor, he said to me – 'I told myself I'm going to be fine because

I lot of people want to help me.’ And he went into detail about the EMT, the first officer on the ground who helped him, and anyone else who came. And he said – ‘I knew I would be okay because there were people there to help me.’

And that’s what New York is all about. We’re going to be okay because there’s always going to be people and groups of people who are going to be there to help us. So I’m proud of the city, I’m proud of everyone who works for us, and I’m proud of my partners in the NYPD.

Thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you so much. We’ll take a few questions?

**Question:** The child on the bus, can you describe a little bit what were his injuries and where he was in the bus?

**Chancellor Fariña:** The student who went to school yesterday obviously is okay physically. One of the other children went through surgery yesterday and appears to be on the mend. The bus driver is home, and the matron had another surgery yesterday, but we anticipate she will be fine. Those were the four people on the school bus.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Chancellor Fariña:** I’ll get back to you later on that.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** How old was the child?

**Chancellor Fariña:** 16.

**Mayor:** 16.

**Question:** [Inaudible.]

**Mayor:** We’ll get you all that. Minor injuries, obviously made it to school.

We’ll see if there’s a few more? Going once? Yes?

**Question:** It seems like the shelter in place strategy worked well here. Are there any ideas about changing or strengthening what happens [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** Let me start and then turn to either chief and the chancellor.

We look at every incident, whatever it is – whether it’s something as extreme as what we experienced two days ago or more everyday occasions. We constantly look to see if we have to make revisions. What I can tell you from what I just heard from the people who actually went

through it is that the training and preparation worked. They said very strikingly – they said that they called the alert immediately ‘shelter-in-place’ and that students could tell it was not a drill. And that they – very powerful what some of the school leadership said that no one stopped and questioned, they immediately went. They said that lockers were left open, whatever they were holding was left behind, they just went and got to safety. And that says to me something very powerfully – that the preparation was strong and it has filtered down all the way to the students. But of course we’re going to look at every instance to see if there’s anything else we want to add.

**Chancellor Fariña:** I think the most important thing, and we were on the phone, and I can’t thank Mark Rampersant enough for his liaisoning all the committees. When we spoke to the principals affected, this was Monday – I’ve lost track of this week already – that all of them had the capacity to do robocalls and e-blasts. So within five minutes of saying what was going to happen the next day, every parent on that circle knew about it, so parents had information. The 89 and 289 were given an option of an excused absence if the parents took – we gave them the option, and our attendance at all these schools was very high, comparable to most other days. And I think it’s the safety and the feeling that parents have that we know how to handle situations like this, but in any time there’s a situation you always go back, and certainly one of the things I’m going to be doing is – does everyone have the capacity for robocalls? Because that really, really made a difference. And all the schools are going to have some kind of interaction this week with parents – do parents want to come in? Do they want to talk to each other? So our job is to make sure everyone feels comfortable about what happened and be able to talk about what happened.

**Mayor:** Chief?

**Chief of Community Affairs Joanne Jaffe, NYPD:** We have shelter-in-place protocol in the Police Department. We train our members of the service. Our School Safety agents get the training also. Department of Education uses their protocol. We train related to it, and it worked wonderfully on Tuesday.

**Mayor:** describe what it’s like so they can understand how []. It’s yours? You want to describe it?

**Chief Jaffe:** Shelter-in-place will give exact direction based on a criteria of circumstances that are happening that will dictate: what agents should do; what a level-3, which is a higher level agent in a school, should do; how they should give direction; who they should coordinate with; and notification processes. And it’s how we collaborate with Department of Education and those teachers and administrators in that specific school when we do it.

**Chancellor Fariña:** And working cooperatively with the NYPD is one of our major goals. But there are some refinements that we put in when it comes to our schools so.

**Deputy Chief Executive for Safety and Security Mark Rampersant, Department of Education:** Absolutely so the shelter-in process is a part of a three part process. So schools are drilled under a regular basis, shelter-in is just one the drills that schools are obligated to do throughout the year. Shelter-in really talks about keeping the danger out of the school, right? So

in school, its normal activity, right – kids are in class, cafeteria, gymnasium, but we're, we're eating candy, and we're monitoring doors. It's about keeping the threat outside, right? So the shelter-in process really is about that. It's about normalcy in the building. We are increasing our awareness about what's going on outside. Getting periodic updates from the NYPD, we don't release the shelter-in until we have gotten the go ahead to do so by the NYPD. But it's about the doors and keeping the danger outside.

**Question:** [inaudible] kids [inaudible] cafeteria [inaudible]

**Deputy Chief Executive Rampersant:** School is operating as normal.

**Mayor:** Alright Rich,

**Question:** So in this case [inaudible] location of the school, did anybody see what was taking place first hand? And [inaudible] Can you tell us a little bit about –

**Mayor:** Yes. Some of the kids did. And some of the staff did. And obviously for them, this was a particularly painful experience. And we are making sure they have any counseling that they need. It wasn't most of the school but some of them did for sure. And I said one of the teachers was even out happened to be out of the bike path and was injured but to his great credit, wanted to show his colleagues and the students, that you know, they would not be deterred and came back to work at school yesterday. So, know this is something that people felt directly.

**Question:** Do you guys consider not holding class [inaudible] other affected schools yesterday and talk about that conversation.

**Mayor:** Sure.

**Question:** And then on the shelter-in place – I don't understand at all because somebody said they called the shelter-in place, people left their lockers open. People were together giving support. But this gentleman just said everything went on as normal so I don't understand –

**Mayor:** So again I think those are not inconsistent statements, Mark will come up in a second. When you are told to get to the locations were you are supposed to shelter, the idea is not to wait, not to hesitate, not to litigate but to get there.  
[Inaudible] And that's what we heard people did, that's what kids did. Mark will talk about it.

On the first point, on Tuesday evening we had a discussion. It was in different pieces. It wasn't everyone in the same room because we were all in different locations but, discussion as to whether we should modify anything about the school schedule. I ultimately made the decision to keep schools open in these, in this immediate area. I thought it was important to send the same message that the rest of the city was sending – that we would not be deterred by terrorism, that we would continue our work as normal. I had a lot of confidence that the teams in the schools could support the kids. And that's, we thought through a lot of factors but that's what we decided in the end. Do you want to speak, Mark, to how it specifically works?

**Deputy Chief Executive Rampersant:** So there are three actions that our schools drill on, evacuations, lock downs and shelter-ins. The shelter-ins are called when the threat is outside of the building. This was obviously a threat outside of the building – doesn't directly affect what happens internally. School goes on as normal, and students – the general response protocol dictates that the BRT members, Building Response Team, mans the doors to ensure that the threat remains outside of the building. That's what they did in this respective case, right. On a lock-down, obviously it requires a different approach and that is where kids are going into classrooms, lights are turned off and they are out of sight, right. In this respective case it really called for students to, us to man the doors and students to go on with their regular day, right. So that's what transpired here.

**Mayor:** Okay, last call on anything else. Go ahead.

**Question:** Sir, [inaudible] I was down here right after the incident happened [inaudible] students [inaudible] happen right away whatever, I don't know exactly what time dismal time is here, but I think it was around that time, is there anything in place to handle you know, a situation that [inaudible] right after the [inaudible] should kids come back where you know [inaudible]

**Deputy Chief Executive Rampersant:** So that is a part of our shelter-in process so if there is a danger that occurs immediately while, while the transition to exit the building happens, the school staff are trained to look outside, get students in, and then lock doors and that's what happened in this case.

**Chief Jaffe:** And in fact the school safety agent who was notified from the inside went outside with other people, other adults and brought kids that were right on this block back into the school.

**Mayor:** Good, alright last call. Okay yes.

**Question:** Do you consider the suspect an enemy combatant?

**Mayor:** Look, I'll leave it to the lawyers to determine that. I consider the suspect an enemy to New York City and someone who did great harm to the people of this city and to folks who were visiting us as I said we will remember as New Yorkers as well. But what is exceptional here is the fact that New Yorkers were undeterred. And that people are quite certain that we are not going to change who we are. Last question.

**Question:** President Trump said yesterday that he would consider sending the suspect to Guantanamo Bay to be imprisoned and also called for the death penalty for him. I just wanted to get your comment on that, thoughts on that.

**Mayor:** Again, I'm not clear on all the legalities and I'm not a lawyers, I'm not someone who believes in the death penalty in general. I just don't. I believe this is an individual who should rot in prison for the rest of his life. Thanks everyone.

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