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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC'S
POLITICSNATION WITH REVEREND AL SHARPTON**

Reverend Al Sharpton: Now we go to New York City Hall. Joining me now is Mayor Bill de Blasio. Thank you, Mr. Mayor, for joining me tonight. You announced today the closing of the schools of the City of New York until the end of the term. The support of the City workers union, the teachers union and others as you have made this decision. Explain to us how you came to this decision?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Rev, it was a tough one. And anytime we have to do something that doesn't allow us to give everything we want to give to our kids, it's tough. But the Schools, Chancellor Richard Carranza and I, we've talked this through the last few days. We decided last night, it really was time. When you look at what's going on out there, we are far from over with fighting the coronavirus. We've got a weeks and months ahead where we're going to have to keep our guard up, keep those tight rules with social distancing, with shelter in place. And the more we looked at and we looked at the health concerns of our kids, our parents, our educators, we've – it was just crystal clear. The right thing to do is to keep the school systems shut. Focus on distance learning. Make sure we can give the kids the best quality online learning experience that they can have. And that really means making sure that every child, regardless of income has the devices, has the internet service they need. And that's something we are guaranteeing.

Sharpton: Let me stop you right there, Mr. Mayor, because one of the things I don't think has been covered a lot since you announced this is that you actually said you're going to get 300,000 iPads and give them free to students. Explain that because that could be a game changer?

Mayor: Thank you Rev. I agree. And I think, look, Rev, you and I and so many other people fighting for a more equal society have talked about finally overcoming this digital divide. Well, this crisis is you know, despite the horror of this crisis in this moment, a door is opening to achieve some justice. And so we're going to get 300,000 kids iPads. I just talked to Tim Cook, the CEO of Apple today. They are rushing the order to make sure we have everything we need this month. By the end of the month, every child will have the iPad and the internet service to go with it. And then they'll be able to keep using them, Rev. They'll be able to keep using them for everything in their education. And this is so important. We're talking about 300,000 kids, overwhelmingly kids who come from families that have not been given fairness in our society, that grapple with poverty. Many immigrant families, including families that had been put through hell these last few years by the policies of the Trump administration. So, here's a small act of justice in the midst of this crisis. But if we really all pulled together and our educators have been great, our parents have great, we can get kids, you know, a quality education. We can make

sure our seniors still graduate this school year, so they can continue with their future. But what we will not do is put our kids, our parents, our educators in harm's way. And what we will not do is reopen the door for a resurgence of the coronavirus. That would be the biggest mistake.

Sharpton: Now, there's been a lot of do about what the Governor said, Andrew Cuomo about not so fast, and back and forward, but I know you very well. I know him well. And I know that both of you have the concerns of the health of the citizens. Will you and the Governor, you think come together on this and really – because what you're talking about in terms of those iPads and the internet coverage that many communities did not have in order to do this is really shifting a lot of the questions we have of what is available based on income and based on where you live. This can be a national model.

Mayor: It sure can be. Look, Rev, this horrible, painful crisis has pointed out the disparities in our society more starkly yet again. And we're dealing with a crisis, the worst health care crisis in a hundred years. The worst economic crisis since the Great Depression and the disparities have a spotlight on them Rev. And this is a moment that we need to fight for a more fair and just and equal society as we get to the recovery. It cannot be recover by replacing what we had with, you know, just another status quo. We actually have to see this as a moment to change our country, our city, create equality where it did not exist. So this small act of giving every child the opportunity to connect to that world of learning and in supporting them through it, supporting their parents, we're going to do a lot to make sure parents get real educators on the phone to help them through, understand how to support their kids best. This could really be transcendent even amidst this pain. But look, I'll always work with the State of New York. I'll always work with the Governor. But the bottom line is my responsibility – and my responsibility is not to the federal government, the State government, my responsibility is not to another elected official. My responsibility is to those kids, those parents, those educators who need to be safe. And my responsibility is to protect my people and I have to do what I think is right to stop the coronavirus from holding this city in its grip, to fight it back. And to make sure that we get out of this horrible moment in our history and move forward. And the only way we're going to do that is by being vigilant and smart and not taking our foot off the gas. Rev. I've said Mew Yorkers, you've seen it with your own eyes. New Yorkers are the heroes here, not just the amazing health care workers who've been fantastic. The first responders have been amazing, but the people who have practiced social distancing, even with all the challenges in New York City who have practiced shelter in place. That's why you see these finally, these improvements in our hospitals, these, you know, these small indicators of progress. That's because the people did that Rev. And I'm going to make sure I protect them and help them close the door on this disease once and for all.

Sharpton: Do you and the Governor – do you think you all can talk and work through whatever? I mean, if you need me, I have a phone. I can connect the two of you together. I know both of you well. I'll offer to mediate if necessary.

Mayor: Rev, you'd be a fine mediator. No, look, I think we're always going to work things through in the common interests of our people. But the – I'm just being real clear. And our Schools Chancellor, he runs the biggest school system in the nation. He's a great educator. We're saying this is what has to happen to protect our people. And that's the bottom line. We're doing

what we know how to do. I run the school system under mayoral control education with the Chancellor. We are the people charged with protecting our kids, our families. And we're saying this is the right direction to go and this is what we're going to do.

Sharpton: Alright Mayor Bill de Blasio, thank you very much for being with us.

Mayor: Thank you, Rev.

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