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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS, SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR DAVID BANKS
ANNOUNCE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF PROJECT PIVOT**

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you. Thank you. This is just a significant moment for those of us who know that there's a term called intangibles. Intangible, those things that are not commonly seen but are very much attached to the educational experience. And far too often, we go in and we want our children to be academically smart and not emotionally intelligent. By the time they sit in the classroom their experience to get there is different from other students. When you are leaving a household where you didn't understand if you were going to have a meal or not, if you just experienced violence the day before, if you are dealing with some learning issues, just some emotional issues, and by the time little Bakim gets in the classroom, he has to navigate all of those things, so that he can start the process of learning. And that has been historically ignored. We constantly ask, "Why can't Johnny read?" Because maybe Johnny has missed-meal cramps, or maybe Johnny just lost his friend or loved one, or the day before — because of gun violence.

And no one dealt with those intangibles. Those external things that impact the internal learning experience. Well, today, Chancellor Banks, his team, and the partners from all of these local community based organizations that have been historically locked out of the educational experience, today, we have Pivot and we have opened the doors to the entire village to educate our children. This is a significant change in how we educate in this city, and it's quite different than what you have witnessed in the past. And I cannot thank the chancellor enough for seeing the importance of this, and some of the men and women who have been here for years, saying that we could do a better job and produce a better qualitative product than what we have seen over and over and over again. And today, with Project Pivot, we are going upstream to prevent the downstream problems that we are facing. An upstream approach to education, an upstream approach to violence, an upstream approach to dealing with the issues that our young people are facing all over the city in general, but specifically Black and brown communities.

There is no greater abandonment and betrayal than the \$38 billion we spend every year. And people are eating off the dysfunctionality of our children, and they have normalized that our children can't learn, and we say no to that.

So this project will bring community based organizations into our schools, to connect with young people at a pivotal moment in their development, through counseling, mentoring, violent interruptions, intervention, and turn towards reaching these young people, turning them towards reaching their full potential.

We're thinking about our children and the right they have to succeed, like all children have that right to succeed. And in the long run, we will keep them safe and keep their schools safe. But safety is not a police job. It is a village job. And the village is here today. And don't be frightened by the drum beats. It's all right. The drums are awakening our spirits. And we understand that.

And what we must fully understand — we cannot be afraid to do the things that work. We can't be afraid because it doesn't fit into the traditional pathway of education. The traditional pathway got us 65 percent of Black and brown children never reaching proficiency. The traditional pathway got 30 percent of our children at Rikers Island being dyslexic. The traditional pathway has failed us. We are now going over the traditional pathways of how we have a full scope of empowering every aspect of our children, their full development, and completely acknowledging that.

We're going to bring CBOs who are also going to maximize the use of our school buildings. We talked about this all the time. 7 a.m., 3 a.m. — 3 p.m., we tell our children, "Welcome." 3:00 p.m., we say, "Get out and don't come back." No, that changes. We're going to do what we did in Brooklyn with extended use. We're going to find the dollars to keep our school buildings open, so we can use the gymnasiums, the classrooms, the swimming pools in some of our buildings — the fields that they can use.

And so, it is imperative that we acknowledge the fullness of what we are doing to develop the fullness of our children. And the five pillars of Project Pivot, those five pillars are purpose, integrity, voice, optimism, and tenacity. We tear down tenacity and we dim the lights of our children because they want to be tenacious. We look at it as being too brash, too outspoken. That is part of the spirit that they may have. Being outspoken does not mean that you don't have a full understanding of what you're doing. There was an outspoken third grader in P.S. 140, Queens. Now, we call him the mayor of the City of New York — being outspoken.

And so, I just want to turn the mic over to the chancellor. I know this is just an important day for him, because this is something that he envisioned. And to see a vision materialize and come to full use is what you always ask for. I'm so proud of this chancellor and this team and all of these men and women who I've soldiered with for years. We fought for me to become the mayor, so that we can implement these programs that no one thought about before.

And so, give yourselves a hand, give our chancellor a hand. Let's pivot in the right direction. Chancellor Banks. (Applause.)

Chancellor David C. Banks, Department of Education: There's an old adage that it takes a village.

Audience: Right.

Chancellor Banks: To what?

Audience: Raise a child.

Chancellor Banks: It takes a village.

Audience: To raise a child.

Chancellor Banks: Is the village here today?

Audience: Yes it is.

Chancellor Banks: Is the village here today?

Audience: Yeah.

Chancellor Banks: Give yourselves a big round of applause. The village is here. It's important that the village is here. (Applause.)

Audience: That's right.

Chancellor Banks: Because for far too many of our young people, they have had experiences which have not affirmed who they really are. It's important that we know for all of New York and all of America to represent these grounds that we are making this announcement from are hallowed grounds. This is African burial grounds. Africans who were brought here through the Middle Passage, who survived slavery, who were directed to help build America and build New York and build these very streets that we are on right now. We know who we are. We know what our history is. Far too many of our young people have no idea.

The history that has brought us all to where we are, and that is a history that everybody needs to know. Black children, white children, Asian children, Latinx children, we all need to know not only the history of the African story, but that all of us have made contributions to this place that we call America and this place that we call New York City. Today, you see the representation primarily of the African American experience here. And I hope that you get a good picture of this, because this is not something that you will see on a daily basis. These are community-based organizations representing every borough in New York City who have come together to say that old narrative that our children cannot learn, that our children cannot achieve, we do not accept that.

We do not accept that. We know that excellence is who we really are and what we're supposed to be about. and each one of these groups is going to help us to get there. We've got groups here today like Elite Learners, Love Mentoring, the Umoja Network, Focus Broadcasting Network, and my own organization, 100 Black Men. There are many more organizations, and some others will be mentioned in just a moment, but I think the important point to note here is that we talk often about safety and many of these organizations are going to provide a deeper level of safety in our schools. Some of them are going to be providing mentoring. They're going to be big

brothers and big sisters to our boys and our girls. There are a whole host of resources that they're going to bring to these schools.

We've identified 138 schools, some of the most challenged schools in the city, who are crying out for additional supports, additional resources. They have children in their schools who are brilliant. They're every bit as talented as any other child. They just need the additional supports, and the supports are going to be provided through Project Pivot. The mayor told you what each one of the letters actually stands for, but just the very notion to pivot — to shift from one position to another. And that is why all of these organizations are here today. I am so thrilled to be a part of this because I am a part of this broader community. My being the chancellor at the appointment of our Mayor Adams, but I'm the representation of everyone that you see behind me. They are the ones who sent me here. They're the ones who gave me this assignment, and I'm very clear about that.

And I want to ask at this moment that a woman who has been out here for our community for decades, she is the epitome of beauty, grace, and excellence. Many of you know her many years as the face of Essence. And her essence, her own personal essence is beauty, integrity, and a woman that we love. She is our queen. Her organization is here as part of this group, National Mentoring Cares. And I asked that she come today to speak on behalf of all the organizations who are here today to tell you why this moment is so critically important. Please welcome our very own, our queen, Ms. Susan Taylor...

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