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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning, everybody. We are beginning a very important week in this city, and it's going to be part of something historic. This week, and obviously, especially, next week, we'll launch one of the biggest efforts in the history of this city, bringing back our public schools. We, this city, went through so much back in March, April, May, and now we have fought back, we have fought this disease back, New York City getting back on our feet, recovering strong, and one of the great parts of that recovery is going to be reopening our public schools. So, this is a decisive week. We're going to focus on getting things ready for our kids so we can make sure they get the best education possible, and we prepare them for their future. And we're going to be ready to serve families who have gone through so much. We're going to be ready to take care of the needs of our kids, not just the educational needs, but the health needs, the mental health needs, everything our kids require, at this point, after everything they've been through. And we're going to do all of this with a focus on health and safety first, and so much effort has gone in over the last month to get our school system ready. But, really, we need to remember, it's not just the outstanding effort of tens of thousands of professionals, it's also your outstanding effort in fighting back against this disease, doing all the right things to push back this disease in New York City, to fight the coronavirus, so we could get to the day that our school system could reopen, our jobs could come back, we could be on a strong path to recovery. This is because of the people of New York City.

So, the plan we're going to talk about today – and we're going to update you on all of the things that are being done to focus on health and safety in our schools, to make sure we launch strong and we're going to be using the resources of the entire City government. Everyone is involved in this mission, it's common cause. We are all working together. Everyone who works for you to make sure our schools start smartly, effectively, safely, in a healthy manner. So, as everyone knows throughout this whole crisis, what's been the key to fighting back the disease, testing. We always talk about it – testing, testing, testing. If we had had it in the beginning, what a difference it would make. If the federal government had led the way, what a difference it would have made, but we didn't have that. We had to build on our own and we have in this city. So, now we're testing more people than ever. And we're focusing that testing on all the good people who work in our school system, educators and staff of all kinds. We're going to be focusing that testing as well on our students.

So, what do we know so far? So far, almost 17,000 school-based staff have taken advantage of priority testing that's been made available to them in the last few days. So, this is priority testing. They get quick results. Of course, it's free. It's convenient. It's fast. 17,000 of our school staff members, educators and other staff, have taken advantage. And so far, of over 17,000 tests, we

have 55 positive cases, 55 out of 17,000. That is a positivity rate of 0.32 percent. So, that tells us a lot. That tells us how much all the efforts to fight back this disease are working, and it tells us that the folks who work in our school system have been really careful and diligent, and so few have ended up with a positive case. We're going to continue that throughout this week intensely. And so, the more people we test, the more we'll know. The more people that test, the more adjustments we can make, and we can keep things moving forward.

But let's talk about an obvious reality. Some people will test positive. Those 55 people out of 17,000, they tested positive. That rate, I just told you is 0.32 percent, we could see something like that consistently. Some people will test positive and those folks will immediately get support. They'll be helped to get home, to safely separate. The contact tracing will go into effect right away. And after two weeks, those professionals will come back to work and they'll complete the entire school year. The same will happen with some students. Some students will test positive at some point in the year and they'll go home for two weeks and then they'll come back and they'll complete the school year. We have to remember that for the very small percentage of people who test positive for the coronavirus, it is a very temporary reality. People will go through that period of safe separation, quarantine, come back, and get right back into their job, get right back into their studies, and continue forward. So, we know that we can work with the incredible team, the educators, the school staff, the folks who are devoted to our kids. We can work to make this work. And even when there'll be some ups and downs, we'll make the adjustments, we'll make sure that we keep things moving forward.

Now, we do want parents to get their children tested. And this week there is priority testing available for students as well as school staff at our centers. Again, it is fast, it is free, it is convenient, and you get your result quickly. So, I want to show you where these locations are. There are 20 Health + Hospitals locations in all five boroughs, free priority testing. All you got to do is say you work for the public schools or you're a public school student, and you get priority results come back within 48 hours. And anyone who needs more information can go online, nyc.gov/covidtest. Now, testing – again, testing has been the key to every effective strategy. Testing is one of the crucial reasons New York City is coming back as strong as we are. And we are going to be very careful when we do testing related to our schools to follow up immediately.

So, we've created a new COVID Response Situation Room for our Department of Education. As I said, this is a group effort. It's a number of agencies working together to make sure that whenever there is a positive test, there's an immediate answer. So, this situation room will provide rapid response. Each and every test result where there's a need for action, it will go right to the central command headquarters. The quick decisions will be made, action will be taken. And this will be open from 5:30 AM to 9:30 PM, Monday through Friday, and on Sunday from 11:00 AM to 9:30 PM. So, this is going to be a constant operation with a group of dedicated staffers and a dedicated hotline. So, a principal or a school administrator can call, alert the Situation Room team to a situation in their school. That will immediately activate contact tracing and all the appropriate steps to make sure that anyone that does need to be isolated will be isolated quickly.

Now, this'll be a constant effort. It will be the Department of Education team. It will be the Test and Trace team. It will be the Department of Health. Everyone together in one room to make decisions, and here you see right now this situation room. And it's being led by one of our most effective operational managers here in our administration, someone who has proven herself time and again, to be able to run big, effective – big, effective plans, big, effective operations. She did it at the School Construction Authority, and it's part of why she knows so much about our school system. She's now doing it as our Buildings Commissioner. And she'll be leading the effort in this situation room. My pleasure to introduce to you, Commissioner Melanie La Rocca.

Commissioner Melanie La Rocca, Department of Buildings: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. This is an entirely unprecedented undertaking. We're bringing together the Test and Trace Corps, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Department of Education under a single roof to ensure no cases slip through the cracks. We will act quickly, and we will get it done right. We have to. This is about one thing, and one thing only, keeping our students, teachers, and school staff safe. And the process is very straightforward. A principal calls our designated hotline to report a suspected case or an individual that's been sent home or was absent with COVID-like symptoms. We're inputting that case and we're going keyboard to keyboard giving DOHMH the case to verify the test. This is immediate. We know with documentation, this can be a matter of minutes. We're also monitoring and verifying cases through DOHMH investigations and the Test and Trace Corps routine contract contact tracing. We have established a strict threshold for quarantine, classroom closures, and building enclosures. And we will take appropriate action in each and every case, and it will happen fast and efficiently. In every case, we're communicating to principals, regardless of the outcome, and sharing information with our school communities. This builds on what we know has helped New York City fight back against the virus, rapid testing and tracing. We're now applying it to New York City schools. Together, we'll keep our kids and staff safe throughout the year and start the school year off right. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you, Commissioner – very much appreciate what you and this great team of professionals is doing in that situation room to make sure there's safety and health first in all of our schools. Now, as we get ready for the school year, just one week away, so much is being done to make sure our schools have what they need. We've talked to you before about all the different supplies, the PPE, the cleaning supplies, all the work that's been done on ventilation, the work that's being done to create outdoor learning, so much extraordinary effort by our educators, our school staff, our custodial team, School Construction Authority, Department of Facilities at the Department of Education, all of these team members working together in common cause. As we get ready in this final week of preparation, we're going to also be sending more educators into our schools. So, today I'm announcing an additional 2,000 educators will be deployed into our schools immediately. And that is members of the DOE team who are certified teachers. They'll be sent into our schools to help schools that need some additional support. We'll be hiring substitutes. We are committed to an additional 2,000 educators immediately, and we'll keep working with each school to make sure what they need is what they get, and that we're ready for opening day.

So, we see this whole plan, the situation room you've just heard about, all of the preparation to get the schools healthy and safe, the additional educators – it is part of a key concept that New York City is going to set the gold standard, the gold standard for health and safety in schools, the

gold standard for showing that you can bring our education system back no matter how tough a crisis we have been through. This school system, this city went through so much in March and April. There's still so much pain from that experience, but New Yorkers don't stay down, we get back up, and we're showing that we can take the best ideas from around the world, the best approaches to health and safety for schools, we have the best educators, we have a committed team, and we're going to come back strong. So, these additional 2,000 educators will help us to get off to a very strong start.

Now, I'm going to turn away from education for just a couple of quick updates and we'll do our indicators as well as always. But we know the city has come a long way and we know we also are going to be smart and cautious with every step we take. So, we're trying to be measured, focused on the data and the science with every move we make to make sure we come back, but we come back safely and there are some things we still can't do. We still can't have the kind of large gatherings that are some of the high points of this year and any year would normally have, the parades and the major community events. Those kinds of things still have to wait. We're looking forward to a lot of them coming back in 2021. Now one of the most beloved events every year is the Thanksgiving Day Parade. And I always want to express my appreciation to everyone at Macy's. They are extraordinarily civically minded. They care about New York City. We saw what they did on July 4th with an amazing fireworks display. Even with all the challenges we're up against, they found a way to do it in a way that celebrated our country and our city, it gave us hope, but did it safely. And they're going to do the same thing again with the Thanksgiving Parade, it will not be the same parade we're used to. It will be a different kind of event. They are reinventing the event for this moment in history. And you will be able to feel the spirit and the joy of that day on television, online. Not a live parade, but something that will really give us that warmth and that great feeling we have on Thanksgiving Day.

So, I want to thank everyone at Macy's. They are going to be talking to you later on today about the specifics of their plan. And I want to say to everyone in the Macy's organization, thank you for your incredible commitment to New York City. Thank you for always giving of yourselves to make this city a better place. New York City, the City of New York and Macy's, have a long tradition of working together, and in this case, it's really important to keep these traditions continuing to make sure that that history is unbroken. And we saw that on July 4th. We'll see that on Thanksgiving Day. We'll keep going forward, and then next year, again, I look forward to things coming back in all their greatness so we can enjoy them together in person again.

Before I go to indicators, I just want to talk about a friend who passed away a few days ago, and most New Yorkers probably haven't heard of them. But if you come from Brooklyn and particularly if you come from Carroll Gardens and the neighborhoods around it, you probably have heard of Buddy Scotto, Salvatore Buddy Scotto, the kind of New Yorker who should be celebrated. Maybe not the most famous name, but someone who did so much for his community. This is a man who was always there for the people of Carroll Gardens. This is a man who believed that even when this community was going through a lot of troubles, decades ago, 60s 70s, 80s, he believed that Carroll Gardens would come back, Brooklyn would come back, New York City would come back. He saw a future vision of greatness for Brooklyn, and he was right. He believed that the Gowanus Canal would go from being considered an eyesore to something that would be celebrated and be a center for a lot of positive things. And he was right. So, my

friend, Bobby Scotto, we lost him. He was almost 92 years old, but he represented the best of Brooklyn and the best of New York City. And I'm just personally grateful to him and his family for all the wisdom I received from them over the years, all the love, all the incredible stories I heard, including the times when Buddy, very bravely, took on some of the organized crime elements in the community. And that was not easy to do, but he did it. That's the kind of brave man he was. Also, a veteran of the United States military, someone who served his country well. So, I just want to say, Buddy, we miss you already, but we will never forget you. And to all the other people who do so much for this city in neighborhoods all over, you may not be famous outside your neighborhood, but New York City couldn't be great without you. There's some other people like Buddy Scotto who make this city work every day and give us hope and thank God for all of them and rest in peace, Buddy Scotto.

Now, let me go to our indicators. And as I go into the indicators, let me say on Saturday, we had a really good sign. Saturday's positive testing rate for New York City was just 0.24 percent. That is tied for the lowest number we have seen since March. So, a good sign on Saturday and let's keep driving forward. Again, we see real evidence this city can keep pushing back this disease. So, let's go over these indicators today. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold 200 patients, today's report 69 – and just about a three percent confirmed positive rate for those patients. Very, very low. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average, that threshold is 550, today's report, 261 cases. And number three, percentage of the people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold five percent, today's report 0.91 percent. A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media, and please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: We'll now begin our Q-and-A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Commissioner Melanie La Rocca, Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza, Executive Director of the Test and Trace Corps Dr. Ted Long; Dr. Daniel Stephens, Deputy Commissioner for Family and Child Health at the Department of Health, and Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. With that, our first question today goes to Juliet from 1010 WINS.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: I'm doing well, Juliet. How you doing?

Question: Okay, thank you. So last week I visited a high school where they're using a program called Go Guardian. And it allows remote students to tune into the classroom in real time. So my question is if there is such a technology that does that, why are you choosing to have additional features with a sort of a separate remote stream for the remote students?

Mayor: Thank you Juliet. As always I appreciate your question. It is a common-sense question that really relates to what everyday people want to know. And I appreciate that. Look, I'll start and pass to the Chancellor. I think the first answer to say is we're going to be using a variety of

methodologies. Different things work for different kids in different situations. So sometimes it will be more live type education. Sometimes there'll be something that's a different type of approach, but that can work really well for a child who's learning. So we're going to mix and match. And we're also going to, as per usual, in the first weeks of school, we're going to try different things and make adjustments based on what works and find the best approaches. So this is again, an unprecedented endeavor. It will take some time to figure out what we think is the most effective set of tools, but we're going to keep working on it. We saw that in the spring, educators did an amazing job, trying different approaches, figuring out what worked for their kids. And I really trust the instincts of our educators. So let me now turn to the Chancellor and he can give you a more clear, detailed answer. Go ahead, Chancellor.

Chancellor Carranza: Yes. Thank you. So I think you hit the nail on the head Mr. Mayor. There are a variety of modalities that students will be learning in this coming year. You observed one of them. I will tell you as a pedagogue, the best learning experiences is where you have a well-trained caring teacher in the presence of students, so that you have that back and forth. You can clarify, you can expand upon, you can add additional commentary, help guide the conversation. That's not always possible in a live streaming situation. That being said, we do know that there are educators in our system that have developed that capacity and have been doing it for a while and are really good at it. We don't want to stop them or get in the way of that. So that's why we provided the opportunity for them to have this kind of flexibility. But in terms of that being our long-term strategy? Again, there's an awful lot of preparation that goes into that. Obviously, you saw that there's another platform that you use for that kind of a learning environment. And quite frankly, we think and continue to feel that the children in New York City deserve to have the caring well-trained teachers in their presence. Obviously keeping everybody safe and that's going to be our primary strategy as we go forward.

Mayor: Thank you, Richard. Go ahead, Juliet.

Question: Okay. Just switching gears here, Mr. Mayor. When would you be able to announce a comprehensive plan to restart the city's economy? You know, I'm referring to the letter from the partnership and if you'd be, you know, announcing something in conjunction with business leaders or labor leaders so that there was a path forward that New Yorkers can see or follow?

Mayor: I appreciate the question a lot Juliet. Look, I think this has been a matter of following a path so that we could get to that day. We first had to fight back the worst of the disease. Then we had to stabilize the situation. We had to go through those phases – phases one, two, three, four. We got through them on time. Every single one of them, we have never had to take a step back. And Juliet that's so important because there've been too many places in this country and even around the world, similar to the United States that unfortunately have had to freeze up again or go backwards. We're not letting that happen here. So this has been a methodical strategy to keep moving forward. Now the next crucial moment, reopening the schools, something I know parents feel, kids feel, the larger community of New York City believes the reopening of schools is one of those signature moments in our recovery. So we're going to move through that. And then the next few weeks, you're going to hear a lot more about that vision of where we go from here. Because we've succeeded as a city to go through all those steps. Now we can dream bigger. We can go farther and it will involve all aspects of our city. We've been talking to the labor

community, the business community, the arts community, you name it from the beginning. A number of different venues where we brought in their voices. In the coming weeks we're going to show you the next big steps in that roadmap. Go ahead.

Moderator: Next up we have Brigid from WNYC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I have a couple of questions following up on this situation with the Lucerne and Harmonia and subsequent shelters. As someone who's covered the entirety of your mayoralty, where you've talked about ending the tale of two cities and making New York the fairest big city, and out on the presidential campaign trail talking about putting working people first – I'm just trying to understand how this decision to suddenly displace hundreds of homeless New Yorkers squares with that?

Mayor: Brigid. I respect the question, but I just don't think there's a continuity there and I'll tell you why. We had an emergency in March, April, May – we needed to get folks who are homeless out of shelters simply because we needed people to have more space and social distancing. The whole idea of the shelter system is to provide support, to get people back on their feet, to help address the mental health challenges and the substance use challenges or whatever challenges people are facing, so they can then move forward. And you know, well over 100,000 New Yorkers who were homeless, got to affordable housing during this administration. We're going to continue that, but it goes through the work of our shelters. Now about three years ago, I announced the Turning The Tide vision, which was to stop using short term facilities like hotels, we were paying by the day. Stop using cluster sites that were substandard housing. Create shelters meant to be humane and effective in supporting homeless folks. A lot of people at the time said that that was a risky move to say, we needed 90 new shelters in New York City so we could actually do this right. But that's what we proceeded to do. And it has been working. But moving people to those hotels was a temporary measure because of the coronavirus. As the city is getting healthier, as in fact our shelter census has gone down surprisingly, we now have an opportunity to get people back to the shelters where they can get more support. Now we're going to look at the whole situation here and I want to let you know, you know Commissioner Steve Banks, our Social Services Commissioner is working on this, our Corporation Counsel Jim Johnson is working on this, both bringing his expertise to bear. Obviously, there is a litigation situation as well. But we're going to look at the whole shelter system and the whole question of what we should or should not be doing in hotels at this point. And then we will figure out quickly what next steps to take. But remember those temporary assignments to hotels, they were meant to be temporary from the beginning. And the best place to support someone who is homeless is in a shelter with the services they need. Go ahead.

Question: Just following up on that. And since you talked about the mental health part of this. Given that being homeless is in itself, a traumatic experience, is there anything new being done to address the mental health needs of these hundreds of people including children who have been affected by this series of shelter displacements? Since we know it's not just, you know, these two situations That there are knock-on effects from how people have been moved around. In addition, people who have physical limitations that have been moved to shelters that don't have the accommodations that they need. A colleague of mine spoke with a woman who uses a walker

who was moved to a shelter in Long Island City last week. She has not been able to bathe because she doesn't have a walk-in shower there. So how are these things being monitored?

Mayor: Brigid, obviously any situation where someone isn't getting the help they need, that's not acceptable and we have to fix it. I do have a lot of faith in Commissioner Banks and the whole team at Social Services and Homeless Services that are compassionate people. Commissioner Banks has literally spent his whole career, his whole life working to support folks who are homeless. And we want to make sure that each person is treated with dignity. Again, I don't think a temporary hotel placement should be misunderstood as the ideal. I don't think it is the ideal. It was never meant to be the ideal. We got to get people to the right kind of location for them. So this is why the whole system is being looked at right now. Everything is being reviewed quickly. How all the pieces fit together. Understanding again, from the beginning, the goal has been to get people to shelters with the proper support and not be in temporary hotels. And we're going to look at the whole system, again led by our Corporation Counsel Jim Johnson and Commissioner Banks, and then determine the next steps from there.

Moderator: Next up we have Andrew from WNBC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, and everyone on the call. My question has to do with the staffing situation in schools. You mentioned today that you're going to be supplying 2,000 additional teachers. But we're one week away from in-person and we've been hearing from principals, parents, and teachers that the staffing situation today is a mess. They don't know who's teaching remote, who's doing in-person. How certain are you today that school will actually open one week from now?

Mayor: Of course it will open Andrew. Again, every year you got to go into the beginning of the school year, make adjustments. In a year where there is no pandemic there still are weeks that go on in the beginning of the school year, where final adjustments are being made in staffing. This year, extraordinary effort has been undertaken to make sure that schools have what they need. It's never going to be perfect, but it will be what schools need. And this balance between the remote and the in-person, it's complex, it's unprecedented. But I have faith in our educators that they'll get it done. So, the 2,000 additional educators we announced today, there'll be moving in immediately. And I think they're going to make a big difference. Go ahead.

Question: My second question is on behalf of my colleague Melissa Russo. As you'll recall, a few months ago, the Governor was making it clear he was in charge, not you, of decisions about whether to open or close schools. Has that changed and has the State Health Department signed off on the City's plans that the Governor was making a big deal about you submitting?

Mayor: Yeah, I'll certainly turn to the Chancellor and he can give you his insights from talking to State officials constantly throughout the last weeks. But yes, there was a process for all school systems to submit their plans to the State. The State did not request any major change in our plans. We've been approved. Obviously, the level of the virus in the city has gone down in the course of this time. And one of the central concerns the State had was to make sure that we weren't dealing with a worst situation disease. Thank God we're dealing with a better situation. So we are all set now to keep moving forward. Richard, would you like to add?

Chancellor Carranza: Yeah, I think you're right on point, sir. I would only add that in all of our discussions with the State officials, various agencies of the State, New York City continues to have the most rigorous plan, not only in the State of New York, but across the country as well. So everything that needs to be signed off on has been signed off on and more.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead.

Moderator: Next up we have Reuvain from Hamodia.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I would like to ask you a couple of questions about the Open Restaurants program. First of all, we know that the indoor dining is going to resume on September 30. What specifically is taking place between now and September 30 that we have to wait another couple of weeks?

Mayor: Look, I think it's the whole overall picture Reuvain. And again, I really want to say this clearly – we went from having the worst situation in the country, the epicenter of this crisis to firing our way back. Stabilized our health situation, went through phases one, two, three, four successfully, on time, held each one. And we are able to restart the biggest school system in America when most school systems have given up trying to do that. And our economy and you can see it. You can see the level of activity out on our streets. You can see the amount of traffic and that's a double-edged sword, but it certainly indicates a lot of activity. More and more people have been using mass transit. Everything's moving forward, but we have to watch each step carefully. And these next few steps are big steps, bringing back the whole school system, starting to have indoor dining which has been a very sensitive matter around the world. And some places, a lot of places have had missteps with indoor dining. So, I think it's smart to do it carefully, slowly, step-by-step, make sure it's working. Look, my hope is that we can keep expanding indoor dining because we keep driving down this disease. But at this immediate moment, we have to be very smart about each move we make and make sure it's based on the data and the science. Go ahead.

Question: Also, you've mentioned that even after the pandemic is over next summer you would like to bring back the Open Restaurants. So, my question is, is that only for the sidewalks or even for the streets and considering that it will kill parking spaces?

Mayor: Thank you for asking. I think the whole thing's been a success. And I – we're definitely bringing it back next year. And I think we should make this a permanent feature in New York City. Look, you've got – Open Restaurants were a stunning success, 10,000 restaurants, you know, 90,000 or more people got jobs back. Communities have loved Open Restaurants. Open Streets have been a great success. The combination has been beautiful where you have an Open Street and Open Restaurants and those weekend days have been amazing. It's been joyous. All of that I think should become permanent in New York City. Because you know, this horrible crisis has taught us some things and some things came out of it where people created something new and good even in the face of adversity. So, I think this has been a great victory for New York City and we should continue it going forward.

Moderator: Next up we have Yoav from The City.

Question: Hi everyone. I just wanted to get clarity on where these 2,000 additional educators are coming from? What roles had they been filling up to this point and why are those roles no longer necessary?

Mayor: Yoav, I'll start and I'll turn to the Chancellor. You're talking about Department of Education employees who do play other roles. You're talking about substitute teachers, many of whom have been working in our regional enrichment centers. But folks who are ready and willing and able to serve in classrooms and bring a lot to the table. To begin it's really important to make sure that we support every school. So, these 2,000 additional teachers will be crucial to getting every school up and running the right way. Again, we'll continue to make adjustments as we go along, as we learn more. But I want to remind everyone, this is one school year, the most challenging school year in the history of New York City, but one that really has to be extraordinary to help our kids come back. And we're going to start strong by getting these educators into play. And then again, we'll continue to make adjustments going forward. But what's most important is that our schools can be there for our kids, given everything our kids and families have been through. It's really important that we are there for them and have the support they need. Go ahead Chancellor.

Chancellor Carranza: Well said, Mr. Mayor. I would just add that we are in a pandemic. We are the only large school system in America that is in a position because of the medical indicators to be able to have in-person learning. But that also means that we can't be all things to all people. And I think there's a healthy dose of just realism that needs to be not only recognized, but also talked about. So, there are some really good things that New York City schools have done. The literacy coaching, the early childhood literacy coaching, the master teachers. These are all certified teachers that by the work that they're doing outside of schools is an indicator that they are excellent teachers. We need them in our schools because we are coming back in very challenging circumstances and they are teachers at the end of the day. So that means that we're going to stop doing some things. And it doesn't mean that the things that we're stopping doing weren't good things or aren't good things. It's just a matter of prioritizing what we need to prioritize right here and right now. So many of those folks that will come back into schools are coming from some of those programs, some of those initiatives, some of those support services for teachers and administrators and the schools that we're pausing because the number one priority is having a safe, organized in-person learning experience for our students who we know need it. So, in a pandemic, it's all hands on deck. We're also working with a number of our partners and we'll have more to say about that in the coming days as well. But we also listened to our schools and we've heard that there's a need for staffing. And again, I want to thank the Mayor and the City for pulling out all the stops to allow us to be able to do this.

Mayor: Go ahead, Yoav.

Question: Okay, thanks for that. On a different issue, Gale Brewer did an assessment of the police precincts in Manhattan and found that the vast majority had some type of barricades in front of them and including a number that even until now are still closing off entire streets, which obviously impacts some of the businesses on those streets. And I know the community board, I

believe, has asked for the block-long barricades to be removed. I believe it's the 1-3 and 1-7 Precinct. What is the status of that now? And, I guess, one question is, does every precinct that has the barricades up, are they responding to a specific threat or is there just kind of a general threat that they're all responding to here?

Mayor: Look, Yoav, good question. Here's what I'd say – we've been – I've said this previously – constantly reducing those type of measures and they will continue to be reduced. There are some specific precincts that have had specific situations reoccurring and that's why they've kept them in place, but any place that doesn't need them anymore, of course, they should pull them back, because we want, you know, to continue to support communities. So, the simple answer is, you're going to see less and less of that. I'll check personally into the situation with the 13 – the 1-3 and 1-7 Precincts, but the overall approach is, unless there is a specific recurring situation, you know, to continue pulling back those measures.

Moderator: Next up, we have Jillian from WBAI.

Mayor: Hi. Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Jillian, good morning. And look, this number is getting real low now. So, I hope you are reporting on this, because I know you care about it.

Question: I do care. We all do. So, I'm asking a question that is totally out of left field, as usual. Several City Council members recently sent you a letter, criticizing what they called sweetheart deals the City made with assorted sports venues, noting the Garden hasn't paid property taxes since the 80s. Also, once the public has permitted back into the Barclays Center, Yankee Stadium, and Citi Field, all which received funding through pilots – tax exempt bonds from the [inaudible] their payments to the City should be commensurate with the assessed property value. They asked the City to revoke MSG's tax break, increase the amount of pilot payments, work to keep any new stadiums from achieving those tax breaks, and pay the City an appropriate amount for renting public land in contrast to what's currently occurring. This seems like a win-win way for the City to add desperately needed revenue. Can the leases be renegotiated and what's your position on the suggestions?

Mayor: Thank you, Jillian. I haven't seen the letter, so I'm going to speak broadly, because I haven't seen the specifics and I don't know all the legal specifics about lease negotiation and things like that. I can say as a question of right and wrong. I think they're what they're saying is the right direction. Back when I was Public Advocate, I was talking about the fact that Madison Square Garden should be paying more in taxes. Let's be clear, sports franchises have gained incredible value over the years. They clearly have the resources. I think the history in this city and pretty much all over the country was that stadium deals were not good deals for the public by and large – some of the more recent ones have been better, but mostly they haven't been that good. And everything should be reevaluated, especially at a point where the City's going to need resources for our recovery. So, I think it's time to look at all of that.

Question: Following up on that same thing. And you've already answered some of what I'm going to ask you – and I'm not raising this because I was raised to hate the Yankees – the

executive director of the bid around the Yankee Stadium wrote you in June, saying while the team's still earned millions in commercials and sponsorships, despite COVID, little is trickling down to the struggling neighborhood, which is one of the poorest in the city. He asked not only to renegotiate that lease and I've seen everything from \$1 a year to other numbers, but also they should pay the fair market rent as area businesses do – between \$60 and \$120 per square foot, which could bring in as much as \$100 million. Again, what's your position?

Mayor: Again, not knowing all the details, I directionally agree with those local community members and store owners that they deserve more support. Look, a sports franchise nowadays is a vast business enterprise, a very profitable enterprise. No one has to even pretend – when it comes to the Yankees, they're a big business, they make a lot of profit. Of course, they should support the neighborhood right around them. And that's a neighborhood – you're right – that has gone through a lot over the years and deserves that support. The Yankees should be good neighbors, reach out to those businesses, see how they can provide them financial support in this tough time. And we all hope and pray that next year baseball will resume in-person at some point in the year and the fans will come back and the businesses will thrive, but of course the Yankee should help them through. And, I assure you, they have the money.

Moderator: For last two, we'll go to Kevin from WCBS radio.

Question: Good morning, Mayor. Just to go off your announcement, how are these 2,000 teachers going to be deployed? Do some schools get priority? I know we've talked a lot about full staffing and some schools struggling to actually do that to start. But for the 2,000 that are deployed from the onset, how are they deployed exactly?

Mayor: Good question, Kevin. I'll start and pass to the Chancellor. So, we have a variety of situations, talking about roughly 1,600 public schools, some multiple schools in the same building. So, number of buildings, number of schools is different, but let's say roughly 1,600 public schools is our universe. We have hundreds of public schools that now already have the teaching compliment they need. And we have others that need more help. Very typically, schools that let us know they need just a couple of teachers. So, that's a very common request we've gotten from a lot of schools. Hundreds of schools have said they just need one or two more, for example. So, we're to be able with this 2,000 additional educators to fill a lot of those gaps and it will be on that priority basis just like you're saying. A school that already is settled and has what they need, of course, that's great. A school that has a greater level of need, a school that needs three teachers versus a school that needs two teachers, we're obviously going to lean into the one that needs more. And we're going to move these folks in immediately. And principals are very good at plugging in new talent. They do at the beginning of every school year, they do it when they have to use substitutes. We have a lot of really capable principals. They know how to move around their personnel. So, they're going to get their compliment of teachers today and put them into action right away. Go ahead, Chancellor.

Chancellor Carranza: Mr. Mayor, you answered it right on – nothing to add.

Question: And staying on the topic of schools, there's over 100,000 students who are homeless and they've gotten iPads at the moment. They're getting busing, but what other resources will the

City be making available for these kids who, in many cases, you know, we're struggling already, especially when it comes to remote learning. How do you make sure that they're not left behind?

Mayor: Yeah, it's a great question, Kevin. So, look, first of all, very important to clarify to people when that measure is put forward of the 100,000 kids, it is kids who are in shelter, but it's also a lot of kids who are in a home with their family, but unfortunately in crowded conditions like a doubled up a family home. So, I just want to be clear – homeless, when you use that phrase, it might be a little misleading to people. Thank God, a number of kids do have a home within that group, but it is, in many cases, a very crowded home and we want better for them, going forward. What we do for kids who have those kinds of needs is a lot of extra support. The schools that have a lot of kids dealing with challenging home situations get additional resources, counseling, teaching, tutoring, resources. We have initiatives in our shelters to provide support. It's not perfect. It's a very tough situation, made tougher by the pandemic. But for years under this Chancellor, it has been a priority to focus on the needs of those kids. Chancellor, you take it from there.

Chancellor Carranza: Yes. I think the question actually illuminates the urgency with which we feel in a safe environment, students need to come back to in-person learning. It allows our guidance counselors, it allows our social workers to continue to make the connections with our sister agencies and other community-based organizations that support services. It allows us to have a real check with students to make sure that they have the food that they need, the technology that they need, the support system that trauma-informed supports that they need. So, you just made a beautiful case of why it's so urgent that how, because we're able to do this, that we have in-person learning. Those supports will not only continue, but with the addition of nurses in every building, we're going to – we're strengthening that support system for our students. We call them our most vulnerable students, not only students that are in temporary housing, but students that are students with disabilities, our immigrant children, our students that are learning English – all of these students make up a significant portion of our 1.1 million students in New York City and that's why we feel such a sense of urgency to make sure that we're able to continue to serve them and increase what we're doing for them to the greatest extent we can.

Mayor: Thank you, Richard. Go ahead.

Moderator: For our last question, we'll go to Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor. How are you doing today?

Mayor: I'm doing well, Henry. How was your weekend?

Question: It was good. It was good. I wanted to ask you about the reaction of UFT President Michael Mulgrew, who issued this extremely angry video. I'm wondering whether – first of all, whether you saw it and how you would respond to the substance of it in which he really complained that a lot of classrooms have not been cleaned, especially District 75 classrooms that were in State-owned facilities, but he felt the City DOE should have cleaned up. And he was

incensed that when he asked about this some DOE officials said wasn't really their problem, because the facility was owned by the State.

Mayor: First, thank you, Henry. I did not see the video. What I can tell you is, I've been in constant touch with Michael Mulgrew over the last days, and my First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan has been, I know our Chancellor has been – any concern he has, the union has, we're working on immediately. I share frustration about those 17 buildings. I have to be straightforward about that. You know, this team at the DOE and all the people I've talked about – School Construction Authority – they did an amazing job with well over 1,400 buildings, getting all those inspections done, getting things ready. The 17 buildings State-owned or owned by other folks in all of the activity they didn't get the attention they deserve. They should have. They've gotten that attention now. I'll be getting an update in the next couple of hours and I believe all of those buildings have been addressed, but I'll be able to say more on that later today or tomorrow. But it obviously should have been in the first wave, that was a misstep, but it can be fixed. So, I haven't seen the video, but I can tell you for sure, Henry, what I've said to President Mulgrew is give us any situation that is not what it should be, and we're going to address it immediately, because it's a massive, massive operation – again, well over 1,400 buildings, if something's wrong, even in a single classroom, we want to know about it so we can fix it right away. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Alright, thank you for that, Mr. Mayor. My second question has to do with this letter that was issued by the Partnership for New York City last week. Today, there's been another letter, you may not be aware of it, that the Partnership sent to the Trump Administration – actually, directly to the President – along with a similar business groups on Long Island and Westchester, calling for the President to support significant fiscal aid to State and local governments and to the MTA. So, my question to you really is, number-one, I'd like to know what your reaction is to the fact that they've sent a second letter to the President of the United States imploring him to release federal funds. And then, I'd also like to hear you respond to the letter that was directed to you.

Mayor: Well, first of all, I'm very pleased to hear that they're using their power and influence to try and move the President on the stimulus. The thing we've all needed for months and months and months is a federal stimulus to help cities and States back on their feet. And I've been making this case from the very beginning. The House of Representatives did the right thing. The Senate has not, because of Mitch McConnell. Donald Trump has not lifted a finger to push that stimulus forward. Let's be real about that. So, hopefully people who he does have a relationship with and who he might listen to differently, because they're business leaders, them weighing in for a stimulus is very helpful. I commend them. We don't know if that's going to happen though, Henry. In fact, tragically, since the House voted months ago, there's almost no real indication that the Senate takes this seriously or the President takes it seriously, or they're going to act. They've said no many, many times to aid for cities and states. So, therefore, I'd say to the Partnership, use your power and influence in Albany to help us get long-term borrowing. You say you want to help New York City recover, the thing we need immediately is the long-term borrowing capacity so that we can, in fact, bring back some of the services that have been cut back because of the fiscal crisis. Everyone, we lost \$9 billion in revenue. When you don't have \$9 billion you had before, you are going to see cuts, you are going to see painful cuts, you're

going to see services not there that used to be there. But if we want to move forward as well as we can and should, we need to get those services back and we need to protect our workforce, which has been heroic. Let's remember something – I think our colleagues in the private sector maybe don't fully understand the strength and the ability of public sector workers, but I've seen only heroism. Whether you're talking about first responders, health care workers, our educators bringing the schools back, we need to make sure we can protect our workforce and God knows we have to avoid layoffs. So, what I would say is, if they really want to help us, help us get that long-term borrowing in Albany. They could have a big impact on that. And I'll work with them. I'll work with the business leaders. We've been working with them throughout. But, let's be clear, if the stimulus isn't coming, we must have support from Albany, or else all those services people are talking about are going to be endangered and we can't have that.

Everyone, as we conclude, I'll go right back to that point about the people who serve us. And I want to just commend our educators and all the folks that custodial teams, everyone who over the last months have been preparing for the opening of school. I want to commend everyone who's going to be in that situation room with Commissioner La Rocca, all the folks are working night and day – our health care team, extraordinary effort, the test and trace team – everyone's working in a common cause. Now, these are public sector workers who give of themselves every single day to protect the people of this city. And they're giving their all right now to bring schools back safely and to help this city forward. And I want to honor – I want to honor that hard work, that commitment through thick and thin. I also want to honor our parents who have gone through so much, who are really demanding and pleading for school to come back so that our kids can get the best education possible and so parents can get back to work. Parents have been through a lot, but they've held the line and I say, God bless him. I want to commend our kids, our students who have been through so much, but they're ready to come back strong and they want to see their friends and they want to see their teachers and they want to move forward with their lives. This is something to celebrate about this city – the strength of our people and the strength of the people who work for us. And we will come back as a city. In fact, we're going to come back more fair, more just, more equitable, because we can. We have it now within our grasp. And there's a sense of mission – people ready to give their all to bringing back the greatest city in the world. So, today, is another step in that direction and tomorrow will be, and the day after that, and New York City will come back strong. Thank you, everybody.

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