

# Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Announces the Expansion of Gifted and Talented Programs Citywide

April 14, 2022

**Chancellor David Banks, Department of Education:** Good morning, everyone.

**Chancellor Banks:** Okay. It's a great morning. It's a beautiful day. And I first of all want to acknowledge our great State Senator Sepulveda, who has joined us here this morning, together with Assembly Member Rajkumar. Thank you so much for being here for this announcement. And without further ado, to start the program, everyone please join me in welcoming the man for the City of New York, our Mayor Eric Adams.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Thank you so much, chancellor, and I wanted to thank the parents who have really advocated for this important issue for so long, and just tell us, tell them, we hear you, we understand how important this is for you, and we will continue to fight on your behalf.

**Mayor Adams:** Before I start, I want to talk about an incident that is taking place now in the Bronx, at P.S. 69, where an intruder attempted ... When you're on camera, it's difficult to get your tie straight. I just noticed that. About an intruder who is attempting to enter a school. Of the preliminary information, attempted to assault a teacher. A heroic act by a school safety agent prevented it from taking place. She was slashed by the individual, and that individual will be brought to justice. It's unacceptable. Violence in our school will not be accepted.

**Mayor Adams:** And I want to thank our school agents, safety agents all over the city. There was an argument and conversation during the campaign of, "Should we have school safety agents in our school buildings?" And I would say emphatically yes. I said it then, and I will say it now. They provide a vital service, and I just want to commend them for their actions.

**Mayor Adams:** And when we think about school safety, you have to think about what happened yesterday in Sunset Park. Our schools were safe. Our children were safe. Chancellor Banks, thank you for taking decisive action, particularly the five schools in the Sunset Park area that were locked down during that time. I want to be clear. Children are safe because of the action of the chancellor. The teachers, the principals, all over the city responded in a heroic manner, as well as the other law enforcement. First responders responded correctly. We will provide mental health and trauma support to those who need it, especially those five schools in Sunset Park. That includes providing crisis team on top of the social workers and social-based mental health clinics already available in our schools. And I will say it again. Our children are safe and secure, and we are going to continue to ensure that that happens.

**Mayor Adams:** Today's announcement is about securing their future, and doing it correctly. For the first time, there will be a Gifted and Talented Program in every school district in New York City. We are extremely pleased about this purchase over and over again, and I cannot tell you how important this day is. For far too long, we had districts in our city that did not have Gifted and Talented Programs. We are giving every child in every zip code the chance that has been denied too often. I heard this over and over again on the campaign trail, and that denial ends today.

**Mayor Adams:** We have gifted and talented students all over the city. There's no reason these programs were not all over the city. It's time for all our students to have access to the classroom programs that develop their full personhood and their full potential. Today's announcement is about expanding equity, expanding. The chancellor has stated it over and over again. Let's expand the things that work. And this is a clear opportunity about. It's about reaching every child in New York City. Every year, the fight that parents must go through over a small number of seats of that fight concludes today. It should have never existed in the first place, and today we say, "No more."

**Mayor Adams:** We are adding more than 1,000 seats to our Gifted and Talented Programs. It's extremely exciting for us, and this is about our children receiving the opportunity from the earliest possible age. And we are making it easier for families to get access to the program, providing two entry points, kindergarten and third grade, for every child in every district. This is how we are giving and allowing our young people the opportunity to grow, to learn, to explore their talents and imagination. We are making sure no child is left behind.

**Mayor Adams:** I campaigned on this, expanding opportunities for accelerated learners in every borough and district. Far too many accelerated learners were being left behind, had to go outside their districts. Heard stories of parents leaving their homes early in the morning so their children could go to another district, or even another borough just to get the services that they need. I campaigned on this. I fought for this as borough president, and now as mayor, I fulfilled that promise. This is a big and long-sought win for parents, families, and students across our city, especially in underserved districts. It's also just one of many steps the chancellor and I are working on right now to transform our Department of Education. I have a great partner in doing so, and Chancellor Banks, I thank you for this exciting announcement, and looking forward to the announcements in the future as we move our educational system in the right direction. Thank you very much.

**Chancellor Banks:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and we are all wishing you a speedy recovery, and we can't wait to get you back out here. We need you in the worst way. So first of all, let me just say good morning, and I want to also join the mayor in taking a moment to recognize the recent senseless acts of violence, which have been perpetrated all across the city, too often impacting innocent children. On Monday, I visited the schools of our students who were killed or wounded by the shooting in the South Bronx. On Tuesday, I visited our schools which were impacted by the attack in our subways. And yesterday, I spoke at a memorial for Kade Lewin, the 12-year-old who was killed while sitting in the back seat of his car with his family.

**Chancellor Banks:** Before our young people can reach their full potential inside the classroom, they must first feel safe inside and outside of our schools. Our educators and school safety agents work hard every day to create a safe and supportive environment where incredible learning can occur. As the Mayor just mentioned, as we were making our way here to this press announcement, this terrible incident in the Bronx, and one of our safety agents is now at Jacobi Hospital recovering, as well as one of our educators as well. So the details are still coming out.

**Chancellor Banks:** But again, as for me, this is personal, not only as the chancellor, but many of you may or may not know that I used to be a school safety agent. And so when I hear people say that we don't need school safety agents, today is a perfect example of why school safety agents are critically important to ensuring the safety of our children. We need a lot of other things as well: more counselors, more support, but we need our safety agents. So let's not be confused about that. So when our young people do not feel safe in their communities, they bring those burdens into the

classroom with them. We must end this gun violence. We must ensure that whether our students are walking on the street or sitting in a classroom, that they are safe.

**Chancellor Banks:** Now, we can talk about what we can do when our students do feel safe. And as the mayor just said, we're excited to announce a significant expansion to New York City's Gifted and Talented Programs. In the past, some of our families felt that they might have to fight tooth and nail to even get access or be considered for these programs. Then if families were invited to attend, some were told that their young children would have to travel a long distance, because there was no program available in their home district. And today, we are ending that scarcity mindset. By offering two entry points in elementary school, we are expanding Gifted and Talented like never before, and we're doing this because we have been listening. We have talked to parents all across the city, and we are delivering on what they asked for, and they've asked the mayor for this. Throughout the months that he campaigned, he made a promise that he was going to make it happen. It was a promise that was made, and today it is a promise that is kept. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

**Chancellor Banks:** We currently have 2,400 kindergarten seats for G and T, and we are proud to create 100 additional seats to our kindergarten program so kids in every single district have access to a program that's close to home. Additionally, we're going to continue our successful policy of screening all pre-K students for gifted behavior, and not giving four-year-olds one simple test. This way, a diverse group of young New Yorkers, all students with the potential to thrive under accelerated learning, will be identified and invited to apply, and have access to this opportunity.

**Chancellor Banks:** But the big news today is that we are now expanding our third grade Gifted and Talented Pilot Program to include all districts across the city. The top 10 percent of second grade academic performers in every school will be invited to apply to Gifted and Talented Programs, with preference being given to students applying to programs in their home district. By using academic grades from their four core subject areas, we are screening students for gifted behavior based off their total academic performance, not just a single test. When you talk to national experts on child development, they identify the third grade as the best time to identify gifted behavior. And we are following that advice by investing in this additional entry point for our students.

**Chancellor Banks:** The expansion of our third grade program is only a beginning. We will have at least one program in every district. Let me repeat that. We will have at least one program in every district. If the district has the interest and the capacity to host more than one program. We will work with that superintendent to make that a reality. So, today, we are simply setting a baseline, not the ceiling. What this announcement does today is provide families in Soundview, in the Bronx, each Flatbush in Brooklyn, Far Rockaway in Jamaica and Queens, and Port Richmond and Staten Island, with expanded access to Gifted and Talented programs, fulfilling our commitment to expand accelerated learning in our city. And you can just feel the energy in this room, around how excited people are. The doors keep opening, people keep coming in.

**Chancellor Banks:** Welcome, to our elected officials, continued CEC member. People are really, really excited about this because it demonstrates that you have a mayor, you have a chancellor, who are listening to the people of this city. We're not coming to this with our own ideology. We are responding to what our community and our families have been asking for, and today is the beginning of delivering that. And so, at this time, I want to introduce to give remarks, our new council member and chair of the education committee, Rita Joseph. Thank you.

[...]

**Chancellor Banks:** Yes. Before I bring up our final speaker, I do want to acknowledge a couple of people that we have here in the room as well. Our First Deputy Chancellor Dan Weisberg; our Deputy Chancellor for Family and Community Engagement Kenita Lloyd; and our Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning Experiences Carolyne Quintana. And Deputy Chancellor Quintana is really the person that will be driving the work of this Gifted and Talented Program and the expansion. And she is really going to be our leader in the face of this, on behalf of our parents and our family. So, want to thank her. And at this time, we couldn't have all the parents speak, but we asked Mike Garcia to come here. He's from Queens, and he's a parent at P.S. 56 in Queens. Please welcome him.

[...]

**Chancellor Banks:** Thank you. Deputy Chancellor Quintana, if you would just join me here, please. We're going to get ready to open up to Q&A, but before we do, I would just simply like to say this; this is still very much a work in progress. We are continuing to

listen to these same families, and they have a whole host of opinions around how this program should be strengthened, the way it should be structured. And we will continue to listen, that's why we said today is simply a baseline, but we will continue to improve on the program as well. So, at this point, I think we've got a few minutes. Whoever's... Okay. So, Senator Sepúlveda, would you please come and say a few words, please? Thank you.

[...]

**Chancellor Banks:** Thank you. Council Member Oswald Feliz, would you please join us?

[...]

**Chancellor Banks:** Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar, would you please join us?

[...]

**Chancellor Banks:** Thank you, Assembly Member. And finally, Assembly Member David Weprin. Thank you.

[...]

**Chancellor Banks:** Thank you, sir. So, at this time, deputy chancellor, if you join me, we'll take a few questions at this time.

**Question:** Chancellor, there have been lots of proposals to change gifted and talented education, over the years, to address the fact that the demographics of the Gifted and Talented Program don't look anything like the demographics of the city's school system, which is more than 70 percent Hispanic and Black. The Gifted and Talented Program is essentially reverse. And they used multiple measures before they used the test. The test was supposed to help, it didn't go that way. How sure are you that these changes will give more equity to the program? And is that a concern to the demographics of the program?

**Chancellor Banks:** Well, certainly, the demographics were a concern to the mayor and myself, and is part of the reason why we've rolled out this new plan, which is to, in fact, have a program in every district. We were working from a scarcity mindset before, and we had parents at each other's throats just to try to get to a handful of seats. One of the first questions we asked was, "Why does it have to be so limited? Why can't it be expanded? Why can't you have a Gifted and Talented Program in Ocean Hill, Brownsville and Bedford-Stuyvesant." And so that's why we are here today to make this announcement. We believe that we will greatly increase the level of diversity in this program, as the mayor said, expanding equity and access is critically important for us. It's a big part of what we believe in as well and we think that today's announcement does that.

**Question:** Chancellor, I hear you talking about the scarcity, I guess, just looking big picture, so you're moving from about 2,400 to 3,500 seats. Last year I believe there were 10,000 students who were eligible and entered this lottery. There's 65,000 kindergartners. As you know, the previous administration decided that the only way to really address that was to do away with the separate classes altogether and provide what they described as some enrichment for all 65,000 kids. And so why did you move away from that approach and can you say that this is addressing the scarcity when it's still such a small number relative to [inaudible].

**Chancellor Banks:** I appreciate it. It's a great question. We do think that we are in fact addressing the scarcity because our approach on this is really going to be, it's not this or that, it's going to be this and that. There have been people who have argued for, we need to increase quality across all of our schools and across every single classroom, including those students who are not part of a G and T program. And we are fully committed to doing that. And really that's where I spend most of my time, effort and energy. But there are some students who are really accelerated learners and we've not always addressed their needs and we wanted to make that we ensure that that happens. And we think that there can be an expansion even beyond these numbers. We will look and we will see how it looks this year, how students and families experience this program and its expansion and we will be guided by the responses that we get. We're watching, we're testing, we will be looking at the data, but I think above all else, we'll be listening to families.

**Question:** I have a question for both you and the mayor. I know that you said that you're going to take the top 10 percent of every second grade class and they can apply to get into this Gifted and Talented Program, given the fact that there are a limited

number of seats, how will those people be selected? I would imagine that the top 10 percent of every single second grade class, there's going to be thousands and thousands of kids. You only have 3,500 seats. How would they be selected?

**Chancellor Banks:** Deputy chancellor, you want to speak to that?

**Carolyn Quintana, Deputy Chancellor of Teaching and Learning, Department of Education:** Sure.

**Chancellor Banks:** Quintana.

**Quintana:** Thank you. Thank you. And I appreciate, chancellor, thank you for the question. And I appreciate chancellor you suggesting too that this is a yes and approach. We want to make sure that we are providing accelerated options across schools, across the city. And we have some principals here whose schools we've already visited, and we've seen where they had a G and T program, it impacted other classrooms as well.

**Quintana:** As far as that question specifically, the way that the enrollment process will work is we'll take the top 10 percent based on those four core grades across at each school, and then those two students will receive, the parents can elect to opt into wanting to apply for the program or not. And those children will all be part of a citywide enrollment process. From that citywide enrollment process we'll give the priority to the children in that particular district. And so we'll have an opportunity for kids who may not have been nominated otherwise to be nominated. And it creates diversity no matter what because you're starting at the school level and then at the district level for a citywide program.

**Question:** I'm just wondering if you were concerned that there will still be a lot of disappointed parents who were going to say "My kid was asked to apply, but we didn't get in."

**Chancellor Banks:** There may be. We hope that there are, because that would indicate that there's that great of an interest in the program. And then it would set a new baseline for us to continue to expand. So again, as we said, we want to really emphasize, this is just step one. The mayor was very clear when he established this program, which was



to say this is our baseline, just the beginning. It'll give us an opportunity to see what the demand is. The demand will vary from district to district. There are some parents that don't want their children necessarily to be a part of a Gifted and Talented Program. And we respect that as well. And so we are going to just continue to listen and follow where the interest is and the demand is and we'll be guided by that.

**Question:** The press release says you're going to do something in fourth grade and fifth grade, what's that? Going on the next year, what's that going to be?

**Quintana:** This is our first year and I think really important too that we are starting with the number that we're starting with so that we can make sure that we're getting it right, we're providing adequate supports to the teachers. I have a fantastic team led by Jen Yonkers who's actually going to ensure that we have the right criteria in place. We already have professional learning set up for folks to begin in the spring. And so we want to make sure that we're building a robust program in the third grade, and then we'll use what we're learning as we go to already begin to build that fourth grade program.

**Quintana:** As I mentioned before, we've already visited many schools. There are folks here in the room who have already embarked on that journey to create fourth, fifth, sometimes even sixth and seventh grade programs. And so we're going to learn from those to pull what works and make sure that we can replicate in the specific context of each of the schools. And so we'll continue to build up. We don't want it to be an entry point in third grade that just ends in third grade, but rather that you can continue to build until you have other opportunities.

**Question:** Yeah, so we're all aware of this enrollment crisis and one that exists pre-pandemic, but picked up with the situation of right now. But I've spoken with some parents who are concerned that third grade entry point comes too late in their child's educational career. They may have already opted for parochial schools, for private schools. What would you like to say to those parents who are trying to do some family planning at the beginning of their child's educational career?

**Chancellor Banks:** Yeah, I think that's part of the reason why we are emphasizing that we have these two entry points. We will continue to have the kindergarten entry point as well as the third grade entry point. What we've also heard from families is that the decision on starting it comes a little late. Many families also, some families have opportunities to send their kids to private schools and the decisions have to be made

earlier. So we are hearing that as well and going forward, we intend earlier in the calendar year to give decisions so that families can make the proper choices for their children. Listen, what we've just continued to hear over and over again is, "I don't want to leave the public schools, but you've got to give us more options, more programs that would keep us." And I've heard that from every community across the city and we're responding to that. We've lost in the last five years, well before this mayor came into office, we lost 120,000 families who've left our system.

**Chancellor Banks:** And so it's not about what my philosophy is or the mayor's philosophy is, parents have been voting with their feet and have said if you're not going to listen to us and be responsive that we will make other decisions. And they have been doing that. And that is a great loss to our school system. And we need to provide as many opportunities. This is just the beginning. We have many more exciting announcements that will be coming in the coming weeks and months that we think will continue to change the narrative on our public schools. There's some wonderful and amazing things that are happening in our schools. We have to celebrate that. We have to lift that up. We have to scale, sustain and restore what works. And today is an example of one of those things.

**Question:** Can you talk more about the teacher training component and the redesign in current schools, like what that's going to entail?

**Quintana:** That's still under development. Thank you for that question. It's probably the most important part for us in terms of developing this Gifted and Talented Program. One of the things that we found was that there was not consistent training. Long ago, teachers could actually receive training through colleges as part of their teacher development or their teacher licensing. And so we're looking into different opportunities, different programs, and a consistent curriculum that has criteria, not only for teachers, but also for leaders so that we can really establish something that is at the very least common standards.

**Quintana:** We've also seen some really, really fantastic practices at our schools. And so we want to incorporate some of that. We're going to create networks of schools that can connect teachers to teachers, solve problems together so that they can share practices, visit at one another's classrooms and become a source of support for each other. And so while we're still developing all of that, we know that we need them to learn

from one another, and again, to scale what is working where it's working and also grounding our work in both research and evidence.

[Crosstalk]

**Question:** I just wanted to know what needs to happen before this plan is implemented? Does the plan require any approvals? Yeah.

**Chancellor Banks:** I think I kind of understood some of the things, the steps that have to take place before we actually begin to activate. Again, you may want to speak to that.

**Quintana:** Sure. No problem. Thank you. And I don't know, Dan Weisberg... So a lot actually needs to happen in order for this to take hold. And so I appreciate that question. Thank you for asking. We've already started, one we've engaged the community. So we've started having conversations with parents, but we've also been visiting schools. We will continue to visit schools. We've also reached out to leaders across the city, having conversations about interest in hosting this program or other advanced programs that we will support as well. That's a really big part of it.

**Quintana:** We're working together with the Deputy Chancellor of School Leadership Desmond Blackburn, to make sure that during this reorganization and with superintendent support that our superintendents are a big part of this work as well. We need to make sure that our enrollment processes are strong and that means working with folks like Sarah Kleinhandler to make sure that the enrollment processes are clear, that they're accessible to parents, and that they're going to ensure that we get a diverse range of students. But then we also need to provide ongoing support once the programs are launched in September.

**Quintana:** It's not just a matter of September, we're good, go. We'll need to continue to provide that development, that support, to have check-ins. And that looks like job embedded support as much as trainings offsite because it needs to happen in the context with the students, with the teachers. So there's a great deal that I probably missed in the process, there are resources and materials and all kinds of other things that happen, but it's multi-pronged. And the beauty of this particular administration is that we work across our divisions. This is not siloed work, it doesn't belong to my division alone. This is something that necessarily requires everybody. It's why we're

here at city hall today. It's a citywide effort. And so we're really happy to be part of this together.

**Question:** Good morning, everybody. I just wondered on the launch of the program using academic assessment of second graders, is there any concern that the academic assessment right now is somewhat muted because of the pandemic? A lot of teachers have been maybe not using the same rigorous standards that they would pre and post pandemic, that may be launching the program may not be an accurate snapshot of your gifted and talented population?

**Chancellor Banks:** We're not overly concerned about that. We've been out visiting schools all over the city and our teachers, our principals, our kids are fully engaged around the city. And we know one school may look a little different than another school, but we think, by and large, looking at 10 percent across four core subject areas will still give us enough data as a baseline for students who can, in fact, at least apply to the program.

**Question:** What are the four core subjects?

**Chancellor Banks:** Math, science, reading, and social studies.

**Question:** Hi, chancellor and mayor. Thank you for taking my question. In terms of the access for the third grade program, since this is pretty much a brand new program, will you be conducting outreach to parents across the city in different languages, having workshops? How do you plan to let families know about this?

**Quintana:** Great, thank you. Thank you for this question. So again, working very closely with Deputy Chancellor Lloyd, and the entire department, family, and community engagement. We have been working with our partners across the city as well, just making sure that we can use every avenue to share the highlights of this program, to encourage parents to apply. We'll be looking at social media as much as we will, launching messages through the schools themselves. And because we work very closely with family and community engagement, we'll make sure that it's interpreted in the language, translated rather into the languages that it needs to be translated and provide support for enrollment as well.

**Chancellor Banks:** And now that it's been announced, that will activate this work in a whole nother level. Now it's real. It's been announced, the mayor has said it. It's going to happen. And now a lot of work will begin and engagement with families and communities across the city will be elevated to a different level.

**Question:** Thanks very much. Good morning, everybody. Couple of quick questions here, first on the pre-K screening, I understand we're doing away with the test. So I wanted to see if I could better understand what kind of criteria we'll be looking at for those pre-K kids and how they'll be judged on this. And second, on the prospect of mayoral control, just wanted to see how that may have played into this process, knowing that some changes could be on the way in the next few months. Thanks.

**Quintana:** Great. Thank you for those questions. I'll tackle the first one. So the pre-K, we will utilize what is almost like a checklist, but it's grounded in research that comes from assessments that have been used in the past for problem solving, looking at topics like perseverance, looking at curiosity and other topics. There is a training that goes with this process. It's the process that was used last year for our Gifted and Talented Programs in third grade. And I want to emphasize that these are the means that we'll use this year, because we are going to continue to research other ways to assess for Gifted and Talented entry. And so for this year, we will continue with this medium for pre-K and with the grades and second grade for third grade entry.

**Chancellor Banks:** The other part too, around mayoral control, I don't know if the mayor wants to speak to that.

**Mayor Adams:** Our lawmakers in Albany are still, are going through mayoral control and we have to pivot and shift based on what rulings are given to us, but we are prepared. And I see there's no other reason that the first African American mayor, the first African American chancellor serving at the same time, both public school educated. The former mayors that had mayoral control were not public school educated. And so this is an opportunity of two African American men that are public school educated to have the same layout as the previous administration. So I am extremely hopeful that we are able to continue to have control of our school systems, to move forward with a bold process of reforming our schools. And I believe Albany is going to hear that and we will continue to dialogue with them to secure mayoral control.

**Chancellor Banks:** Let me just say, also, we refer to it also as mayoral accountability, because this mayor will be the one ultimately held accountable. It's mayoral control in the law, but the mayor has said, "Hold me accountable." And we believe that that's the way that should work best. And what I have heard from talking to parents and families and elected officials all across the city, that the number one pushback has been that parents have not felt involved. They have not felt engaged. They have not felt respected. They have not felt as though they have had a seat at the table. But under this administration, that is changing and we are engaging parents like never before. We've only been here a few short months, but you have a full-on commitment that this administration is fully committed to listening to parents. Now I've said to the parents often, there's not one single voice for parents. Not every parent agrees with the parent standing right next to them. Say, amen. Somebody.

**Crowd:** Amen.

**Chancellor Banks:** But I do believe that parents feel, even if I don't always get everything that I'm looking for, I want to know that I was listened to, and that you see me and you respect me and you are engaging me. And that is something that we are fully committed to doing.

**Question:** Hi, mayor and chancellor. Thanks for taking my question. I want to ask about the third grade programs. And if you can provide more information about where they will be located? My understanding is that every district already has a gifted program because of these third grade programs and the ones that already exist, I believe that where they do exist, maybe enrollment is a problem because they require parents to transfer schools, to join at the third grade. So can you tell me a little bit more about the third grade component, where they'll be located, how that will work for enrollment?

**Quintana:** Thank you for that question. So specifically we are still figuring that out. We're still having conversations with leaders to make sure that we identify the actual locations of where those programs will exist. Currently not every district has a program, not every district has kindergarten or third grade. And so we want to make sure that we have a program in kindergarten and third grade in every district. And as the chancellor said, at minimum a program. But we have not identified each of the specific locations yet. That will come in upcoming announcements and we want to make sure that we have them distributed so that folks have access. That's the biggest piece for us is making sure that all of our students in every district have access.

**Question:** I guess the question I would ask you, Mr. Chancellor, since you've talked about the fact the system was 120,000 students over the last several years, what effect do you think this will have on changing a parent's decision to vote with their feet and leave the New York City schools?

**Chancellor Banks:** I think if you spoke to, even when this press conference is over to many of the parents here, I think they would let you know. I think the energy that you're feeling this morning is a collective sigh of relief and a sense of celebration. Not that we have fully arrived, but that we are on a trajectory toward the right place. And I think that is what you would hear, not just because of what I said, but I think if you talk to parents across the city, they would feel really good. It's a huge signal that we are moving in the right direction. There are many more announcements that we have to make. There's a lot more work that has to be done.

**Chancellor Banks:** This notion of dyslexia that the mayor has talked about throughout the campaign is something that is going to be a huge effort. We are spending a lot of time preparing that. The use of technology across our schools, virtual learning, people have said, "Oh, should it be all in school? Or should we use virtual learning?" It's going to be both. We're going to figure out a way to create and develop virtual and distance learning in a way that is perhaps different than anything that we've done before. We're looking at new, innovative, creative ways for our kids to be engaged and for our families to be engaged. And so you do that best by listening and some of the best ideas that we get for the system come from our families and then young people themselves. And so if you're listening, they will chart the way forward. And today is simply an example of that and it's representative of what they have been saying. And we will continue in that vein.

**Question:** Yes. Hi, chancellor. I'd like to go back to the issue of diversity and how the program has not traditionally represented a cross-section of New York. I know you say that expanding it to more locations, we'll go a long way to solving that. But I also want to address the issue, how will the selection process go a long way to making sure this program is representative of the city?

**Chancellor Banks:** Well, when we say that we're going to place a significant priority in a particular district on the students who live in that district, I think it kind of goes without saying, if you've got a Gifted and Talented Program in East Flatbush, it's going to be representing a lot of the kids who live in that district, in the particular demographics. New York City is a beautiful city. The whole world lives here. And if you say, you're

going to put it as we are in every district, by definition, we fully expect to represent the beautiful diversity of our entire city. And that's the goal and that's what we intend to see happen.

**Chancellor Banks:** Final word. Let's just ask everybody to join us in wishing our mayor a speedy recovery. We need him back out here. All right.

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