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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO AND SPEAKER JOHNSON ANNOUNCE \$125  
MILLION INVESTMENT TO ENSURE ALL SCHOOLS RECEIVE AT LEAST 90  
PERCENT "FAIR STUDENT FUNDING"**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Welcome, everybody.

**Audience:** Welcome.

**Mayor:** So happy to see you. This is a good day. This is a day of celebration. We are so happy to have people from all five boroughs – parents and educators who believe in fairness for our schools. And I want to start by thanking the members of the City Council, the Speaker will introduce each of them but we are here because Speaker Johnson and the City Council made a very major priority in their response to the preliminary budget. They focused on our schools, they focused on our children and they focused on the need to continue our efforts towards greater equity. And in the Council's budget response, Fair Student Funding was a major priority. I've said for years now, I believe in a productive partnership between the Mayor's Office and the Council. We have gotten a lot done and we are going to continue to get great things done under this Speaker and this Council.

So this priority meant a lot to the Council and it meant a lot to me and it was time to act on it. The fact is we have a fundamental vision for our schools called Equity and Excellence. Remember you can't have one without the other, excellence is what we strive for but if excellence is only in some schools and not in others we haven't done the job. Equity means a standard held in common – a high standard held in common and believing that every child deserves the right to fulfil their potential. That's what we are working on today. We do not want to see some schools in some neighborhoods have what they need and other schools in other neighborhoods not have enough. We are fighting against a problem that bluntly has been here for decades, even generations but in this generation we are going to fix the problem.

[Applause]

And again I want to thank all of these leaders, these activists, parent activists, people who have been involved in every community who fought for this for a long time and I am going to mention the campaign for fiscal equity because this is a crucial part of the equation.

[Applause]

I want everyone to remember that for decades the schools in this city were not fairly funded by the State and an extraordinary effort that started at the grassroots demanded fairness, not just for New York City by the way but for upstate cities that suffered, for rural areas that suffered in the state. They took a law suit to the highest court in New York State and they won. Now that sounds good doesn't it?

**Audience:** Yes.

**Mayor:** That was about a decade ago. There's just one problem with this story. We still haven't seen the money. And all those other parts of the state that deserve more are still waiting. We believe that responsibility still has to be fulfilled by the State of New York and we are not going to let the campaign for fiscal equity end until we have fiscal equity.

[Applause]

But even when the State doesn't act we don't stand still because we are going to do everything that we can do. The entire concept of the Equity and Excellence vision is to break down that bad history, to create a strategic reality where we invest in many ways in the schools that were left behind. And whether you are talking about Pre-K or 3-K or you are talking about AP For All or you are talking about literacy for third grade students, these resources are reaching the schools that used to not get enough. They are disproportionately reaching those schools in fact. And they are helping to create a new era of opportunity for our kids. But that's not enough. I want to be very clear, we believe in this vision profoundly, we believe it's making real, profound impact on our children but we got to go farther.

And that's where we come to the question of Fair Student Funding. We have got to do that as well, we have got to address that as well. And we are never going to stop fighting for that state funding but we have to do whatever we can do whenever we can do it to address the issue. I have said many times and I am going to keep saying it, our goal is to make this the fairest big city in America. We can't be the fairest big city if a child's destiny is determined by their zip code. We have to do better, we have to do better. And that's why the Council's focus was so important to me because it signaled that they believed that of all of the important things we could do, this was one of the things that had to be one of the highest priorities for all of us.

Now I want to be clear, together with the Council over these last four years we have been acting on this issue. And we've said when the State gives us any decent amount of funding we focused on Fair Student Funding so here are the facts. From the beginning of this administration we've put \$230 million into Fair Student Funding and that's reoccurring, once we put it in it stays in the budget year after year. We also focused on other ways that we could apply this concept. For an example all 94 of the original renewal schools were brought up to the 100 percent level in Fair Student Funding. We know that we have to do anything that we can at our disposal and again I just want to give you a sense of this is taking steps. It wouldn't have to take all of these steps if that CFE mandate were fulfilled just to give you a frame of reference – what would it have meant

this year if the CFE court case were actually followed by the State of New York? We would have gotten \$1.2 billion more. That's with a B. \$1.2 billion more in funding if the highest court in the state had been honored with follow through by the state government.

But since we didn't we are going to do everything we can on our own. And so we are announcing today jointly with the Council that we are investing another \$125 million in Fair Student Funding.

[Applause]

They like it, they approve Corey, they approve.

[Applause]

The people have spoken. Now my friends the sheer magnitude of this investment – it will reach over 850 schools in this city. Every part of the city will benefit. What does it mean for our continued effort to end the days of disparity in funding? Well, when we came into office beginning of 2014, the floor for a Fair Student Funding, means the lowest a school had in funding was 81 percent of the goal. There were schools in the city that had 81 percent of the goal, and the average at that point also was 81 percent. Meaning if you average all the schools in the city, they were at 81 percent of the goal. With the actions we've taken today from the moment we came in till now working with the Council. That floor is going from 81 percent to 90 percent.

[Applause]

That means no school in this city will be below 90 percent of goal. And the average – now this is striking is going from 81 percent just four years ago to 93 percent citywide.

[Applause]

So I want to say with gratitude to the Speaker and the City-Council. Together we are putting our money where our mouth is, and we're focusing in so many ways on making up for the mistakes of the past, and putting the school system into a place of real fairness and decency for all our kids. What does it mean? It means in different schools each school will make its own choices. But it could mean more teachers, it could mean more reading specialists, literacy specialists, it could mean more guidance counselors, more tutoring, more school supplies. There is so many different ways – more technology, that schools can use this. But whatever way you slice it, it's going to help them be stronger. So, I'll conclude before turning to the Speaker with one point in English and then a quick summary in Spanish. The point in English is this. I remember as a parent, starting out as a parent talking to other parents. And there was this parlance that was common, this phrase that was common and it really pained me. People would say out loud, "oh, that's a good school" and that's a "bad school". Think about the moral problem of anyone believing a school is a bad school. What does it say if that's what people believe was the common place reality? We got to end the era of New Yorkers believing any school in our public schools is a bad school. We got to make that a thing of the past.

Briefly in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish.]

With that, and with great appreciation, I turn to the Speaker of City Council and I thank him for his leadership in the fight for fairness for our kids, Speaker Corey Johnson.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** So I want to recount to everyone that when I was in the interview process with Richard Carranza, he proactively said the phrase “equity” and the phrase “social justice” an extraordinary number of times and made clear this was his personal life’s mission and his personal interpretation of the meaning of public education. And so, this is a day that certainly boosts his efforts to create a fairer City and fairer school system for all of our children, Chancellor Richard Carranza.

[Applause]

**Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza:** Thank you Mr. Mayor, I want to just say that today is an absolutely phenomenal day for the children of New York City, absolutely phenomenal day.

[Applause]

So thank you for that introduction Mr. Mayor, Mr. Speaker, thank you, I’ve appreciated our conversations and the passion. Members of the City Council thank you for your support. To our parents, our supporters, our aunts, our uncles, our neighbors, our brothers, our sisters, everybody that forms that village to support our children, many of whom are standing behind us, thank you for your always being heard.

[Applause]

I also share the Mayor’s passion and our Council’s passion about serving every one of our children, and Equity and Excellence cannot be a tag phrase, it must be lived every single day. And the only way you can find evidence that it’s being lived in our great City is by days like this where across the country there are elected officials and elected bodies that this very day are cutting resources from students in public schools, are eliminating programs, are making conscious decisions of where to put their resources and it’s not in the public schools.

But yet, in the largest, one of the most diverse cities in America, I would say the world class city, the beacon of hope, the fairest city in America, New York City. Our elected officials are choosing consciously to invest in the very future of our great City, the children of New York City, and that’s a great day for us.

[Applause]

So we've talked about over 800 schools will feel the effect of this infusion of resources, but let me give you the number of students, 588,000 students in the City of New York will feel this impact.

[Applause]

And Mr. Mayor that's a majority of students in our public schools, in one fell swoop, and while this has been an ongoing focus of our elected officials and of this administration. I can tell you as the new guy, there could be no better – there could be no better investment than in the future of New York City itself, our children and our traditional public schools, we thank you for that investment.

[Applause]

Now you are about to hear from one of my colleagues who – I have tremendous respect for our principles, and he'll tell you specifically how he plans to use this infusion of resources. Just rest assured, this is going to services and direct support of our students. More teachers, more social – economic, emotional support, with guidance chancellors and social workers, more art teachers, maybe perhaps more music teachers, maybe even mariachi teacher or two.

[Laughter]

Hint, hint.

[Laughter]

But also new materials in our classrooms, after school and extra-curricular enrichment activities and opportunities, you see if you engage a child, then you are preparing that child for the future and you are keeping that child from engaging in other activities that aren't so positive. So this is a benefit, this is also for the greater good of New York City.

Now we still won't be able to fund all of our schools at 100 percent, we're going to need additional support from the State of New York to make that happen. But I'd say to you that, while New York City is not waiting, we cannot do it alone and I look forward to be in Albany next week where I will meet with our State elected officials and make that case directly from the classroom to the Albany State Room about why it is so important for our students to have the funding they need, not for luxuries, but to be able to compete in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy, and if anyone can do it, New York can do it.

So on the behalf of all of the 1.1 million children, I want to say to Mr. Mayor, Mr. Speaker, members of the Council, all of our community leaders that are gathered here, *gracias*. Thank you.

[Chancellor Carranza speaks in Spanish]

I want to commend our Mayor who has gone through our dual language program and you can see that his Spanish is excellent.

[Laughter]

[Chancellor Carranza speaks in Spanish]

**Mayor:** Mr. Chancellor, the word of this announcement spread very quickly and schools have already been sending requests in. We have now –

[Laughter]

We have now approximately 854 schools requesting a mariachi teacher –

[Laughter]

So I just wanted to let you know that.

The – as the Chancellor said, our principles are obviously the leaders who decide how best to move their schools forward and we wanted you to understand directly from one of our great principal how this money will make a difference. Right here from Manhattan, the principal of the Leadership and Public Service High School, Philip Santos.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** Okay, we're going to take questions on this topic. After that, I know the Council members have to go – or a number of them have to go to Council-related meetings because it's a s[inaudible] today. But let's take questions on this topic then I'll do other topics after. On this topic – Juan Manuel?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, Governor Cuomo said recently that a solution to educational inequality – inequity is not more money but more data on how that money is spent. I want you to talk about that. And also, if this is so important to your agenda in a budget of around \$80 billion for the City, why [inaudible] City Council only half of what they asked for?

**Mayor:** Okay, on the second question, again, we've made huge progress since we came in here, consistently investing to address the Fair Student Funding question while simultaneously investing in a number of other initiatives to achieve equity. We need to do both and we have been putting a huge amount into education with the support of the Council.

And by the way, they used to say in Albany, oh the City's not putting a lot into education. More and more, over the last years, the City puts more and more into education. The State puts less

and less into education. So we really have to dispel with that mythology. The State is putting less in when they owe us even more but we keep doing all we can to make up the difference.

On the first question, this just has to be refuted. The Governor has not presented any specific evidence for the claim that more money does not help us educate children better. Anyone who knows anything about education understands we need more teachers, more guidance counselors, more professional development. This notion – and it's basically a classic DLC or other kind of moderate Democrat formulation of, oh, it's just about efficiency, government is inefficient.

Remember that's when Democrats were trying to cower in the face of Reaganism. I would say to you that our teachers, our educators, our administrators are doing better and better all the time because they're finally getting resources. They were starved of resources for years. They're finally getting resources.

And what do we have now? We have the highest graduation rate we've ever had and we've shown consistent progress on college readiness. A whole lot is happening. More and more kids taking the SATs, more and more kids taking Advanced Placement because the resources are finally there.

So, anyone else wants to speak to this? I welcome – but of course you need more money to educate better. You have to use the money as best possible but you do need more money to achieve a better educational outcome.

The second – on the transparency as you heard. The transparency has been there all along. We are about to abide by federal standards that require universal transparency around the country. We're very happy to do that. The facts are quite plain.

So we need to stop the excuses. I don't understand in any other place – I'd ask you to go look at states around the country where the highest court in the state ordered something and then the State government ignores it. That's not good. It's not healthy. We need those resources to finish the job.

Please. Please.

**Speaker Johnson:** Just on the [inaudible] it's important the budget, it looks like, is going to be somewhere between \$89 billion and \$90 billion in this adopted budget that we're going to adopt in June. And almost a third of the entire City budget goes to education. So there is a deep commitment from the City on education dollars. And I would also say that, you know, in this past State budget that was adopted less than a month ago there were a significant number of unfunded mandates that were passed along to us as a City. We had to fund over \$400 million for our part of the MTA Subway Action Plan, almost \$200 million related to the implementation of Raise the Age, \$31 million on Close to Home funding that we didn't get to see.

And so even in the midst of over a half-a-billion dollars in unfunded mandates that were passed along to us, before we even started preliminary – executive budget hearings the Council and Mayor were able to work together and prioritize a significant chunk of money – \$125 million –

which when you look at our budget response and you look at other things that were in the preliminary budget of new spending, this is a very significant commitment to deepening our resources to education in the city. We're already spending a third of the City budget on it.

**Mayor:** Amen. Amen. Okay, on this topic? Yes?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, what is the break down –

**Mayor:** I feel like I saw you on a theatrical production recently.

[Laughter]

And who's the handsome guy next to you? Go ahead.

**Question:** The break down. How much is every school getting and is every school getting an equal amount?

**Mayor:** It's different depending on the school and as we say, the classic technical briefing, we'll get for you afterwards – details on how it breaks out. But I want to reflect on the examples that people gave especially the principal that this means very tangible things. In a typical school it could mean, again, another reading specialist, it could mean another guidance counselor. It could mean any number of things that really change the lives of the kids in that school, and things that people have been waiting for, for a long, long time.

I can tell you from my experience as a public school parent that just one or two more teachers, guidance counselors, trainers makes a world of difference. We used to, you know, in the PTA meetings and everything else, just do everything we could to advocate. Just get us one more because it changes the life of the school.

So this is the beginning and I agree with everyone by the way, the goal is 100 percent. We're going to need help but we're going to get to that eventually.

**Question:** And what are you doing to get the State money that you say is due to you?

**Mayor:** It's the same thing, there's been total unity with the Council on this and obviously with the CSA and so many others. We've gone there year after year and kept this fire burning. And we believe one day we're going to achieve it. And by the way, last night's election results were important.

Another step toward – and this is not a partisan statement. I believed a Republican State Senate could have believed it was important to abide by a decision by the Court of Appeals too. But I think a Democratic Senate will feel – not just for New York City, for Buffalo, for Rochester, for Syracuse, for Albany, for upstate rural areas that haven't gotten their fair share – I think a Democratic Senate will decide to prioritize this –



**Speaker Johnson:** We both, the Mayor and I – you know the Mayor was the first person on the budget day in, I believe it was February. He testified at length about getting more money on education, foundation aid, and getting our fair share on the CFE lawsuit. I did the same thing. I was not the first of the day. I went after the Mayor so I was there towards the end of the day but I think the alignment on needing more education funds from Albany was there between the two of us – the Council and the administration – and I really want to thank Speaker Heastie and his members who fought really hard to get us the funding that we got.

I think there was an additional \$370 million in new funds that came in on top of what we got last year in education funding from the State but still did not keep pace with what we're owed from the CFE lawsuit.

**Mayor:** I'll do this side then I'll come to that side.

**Question:** I understand that you're raising the floor but there could still be pretty big inequities between different schools with different budgets especially since some schools receive more than 100 percent in the Fair Student Funding formula. Some schools [inaudible] could be more than a 20 percent difference within what schools are owed. I'm wondering if this does anything to equalize, you know, potential gaps in school budgets even within the threshold that you've established.

**Mayor:** Look, the vision I think we've all shared is we've got to keep bringing the floor and the average up. We have not said let's take schools that are doing a good job and take resources away from them. That's not our goal. Our goal is to keep – it's an additive approach to keep bringing the floor up and keep bringing the average up.

So at a 90 percent floor and a 93 percent average, we're in striking range. We're literally just a few years away from achieving full equity where every school is at 100 percent. That's the vision.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, the Education Chief just said that he's seen a lot of trauma in children in schools. So how specifically are these funds going to be invested to fight against that? And I also would like to know if that is going to be extended – those programs to fight the trauma in [inaudible].

**Mayor:** I'll start and if the Chancellor or any of the – the Speaker or any other Council members want to join in, of course. Two answers. One – before this funding the Thrive initiative is being applied in all our schools. Now every school has access to mental health support. That was not true just a few years ago and that is making a big difference.

The second – each school under this approach gets to decide the priorities that are its focus. A lot of schools I believe will focus on guidance counselors and social emotional supports as one of their priorities because we hear it more and more from educators and we hear it more and more from students – some of you may have been at the town hall we had with students a few months back. Actually one of the strongest messages they gave us was they wanted more focus on guidance and social emotional support.

So I think you'll see this used for that in a number of schools.

**Chancellor Carranza:** So adding to what the Mayor has talked about. So, the notion in New York City where we've taken an approach that is not only an academic approach but is also a social emotional approach and providing the wrap around services for students is a critically important one. We've talked about community schools. So, I fully expect that many of our school communities that see an increase in funding are going to make their community schools approach a little more robust. And I've often said, when you see one community school, you've seen one community school. It's not a cookie cutter approach. So it's based on the need assessment for each individual school. So, we know that schools already have a wish list – if I had a little more resources this is what I could do to invest in creating that wrap around services network in schools. To your question about how will this then expand citywide. We're not interested in boutique programming in our school system. We are looking at everything that we do. How do we take that to scale, how do we have metrics to show that that's being effective. And as I recently met with Commissioner O'Neill from the NYPD, the New York City Police Department is also working closely with us to have safe routes to school so that we eliminate some of those trauma issues for students in terms of getting to school and getting home from school. So what we're really talking about here is a multi-dimensional approach to providing those safe systems for students to get to and get back home from school. But also as they've experienced trauma and the trauma that comes from living in the big urban city, we have ways to connecting them to the services – the Mayor has already mentioned thrive. We're going to ramp up with those connectivity – those connected tissues are around our thrive initiative. But then we're going to continue to expand our community schools concept. And what I love about this ability to raise the floor is that our talented leaders in our schools along with the teachers get to make decisions that are locally based and locally effective.

**Question:** [Question asked in Spanish]

**Chancellor Carranza:** [Chancellor Carranza speaks in Spanish]

**Mayor:** English version for those who do not hablar.

**Chancellor Carranza:** Sure, okay. So the question about how do we create safe environments for our immigrant students, our immigrant families in our schools many of whom feel that sense of trauma just being targeted by what we've heard in terms of national immigration policy. I want to reiterate what has been said by many speakers here. We've – many of our schools have already used whatever funding they have to create safe environments, additional counselors, additional social workers. They've created these environments where students and families feel safe. We are a community and a nation of immigrants. So I want to reiterate, and the Mayor has been very clear about this as well that our schools are safe zones for all families, including our immigrant families, including our DREAM'ers. So I am fully confident that many of our leaders will invest these resources around programming that increases that safety zone.

**Mayor:** Amen, yes?

**Question:** With the additional 125 million, what will the average amount spent per student be?

**Mayor:** Again, we're going to give you the quote on quote technical briefing showing you how it will play out with different schools and different amounts. But again we know the dollar figure, we know what it'll do to the floor, we know what it'll do to the citywide average.

**Question:** Just historically, why aren't all school – I'm new to this. Why are all schools not at 100 percent?

**Mayor:** I'll give you my you know, 30 second history of New York City education. Because it was 32 balkanized 32 school districts. With entirely different leaderships and budgeting approaches, and it was all about politics. I mean look, you know – very clear there are areas where I energetically praise what Michael Bloomberg did. And this is one of them – getting us to Mayoral control education, and getting us out of a system that was incredibly uneven. There were some school districts and school boards that worked well. There were a lot that unfortunately did not. But you didn't have a single standard of equity. And so, so much of it came down to politics, and influence and the rich got richer. That's why it's so powerful, and I want to thank the Council. We have said now consistently, it's the fifth year we've said were going to break down that history and create systematic equity. Yes?

**Question:** I have a question for the Chancellor. Chancellor on Friday, City government put data about sexual harassment.

**Mayor:** Can we just stay on this; we'll come to that for sure. Can we just finish on this and we'll certainly give you a credit for that question. Is there anything on this announcement first?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, you used to be a school board member way back in the day.

**Mayor:** Back in the day is right.

**Question:** What are the issues about equity that was odd in city is the more affluent schools often have like this whole fundraising apparatus that goes on. So what you see is, like some of them are amazing.

**Mayor:** Yes.

**Question:** It's like literally millions of dollars are raised. But then a school that's like whatever 300 yards away has none of that. Is this going to be factored into the distribution of this money?

**Mayor:** It's a very good question, but I want to say it this way. Again, we are taking an additive approach. We want to not only make sure that every school soon in a matter of only a few years is at 100 percent. And we've proven it now over the last four years. But we want to support school communities in building as much capacity. I've often felt, and it's something the Chancellor and I have talked a lot about. We've not done a good job supporting our parents to build up their own capacity to hold the educators accountable in the right sense and to bring in whatever resources they can. And we know that's going to be different by community. But there

is an ability to create more capacity school by school. It's a classic organizing point about helping each group of parents to have the most ability to do that. I do not believe we should in any way push back those who are bringing a lot of resources into their schools. I get the – lord knows I focus on the question of equity. But if some school communities are bringing a lot of resources to me that's additive too. I want every dollar I can get going into public education because the needs are vast. And even schools in communities that are more affluent tend to support kids of all economic backgrounds. And I could certainly say that from district 15. So it's very different in the matter of what street the school is on versus where does the entire student body come from. And district 15 is a classic example. My neighborhood is a neighborhood where people's incomes are pretty strong. Not far away and in the same district is Red Hook, not far away and in the same district is Sunset Park where incomes are a lot lower and in Red Hook's case a lot of public housing. So I think in a lot of ways when that money comes in from even private sources, it helps a broad swath of kids.

**Mayor:** Other on this side now. Yep, please, please.

**Speaker Johnson:** So Councilmember Chair Treyger has [inaudible] a bill on this which would require that schools report to the DOE how much fundraising has been done every year to understand school by school how much is being raised. So that's one thing you could probably talk to him about separately. The second thing is I think the classic example of what you've talked about – in Chelsea in my district you have P.S. 11 on 21<sup>st</sup> Street, between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, five blocks north at 26<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue is P.S. 33. At P.S. 11 the PTA raises I believe \$800,000 a year. At P.S. 33 five blocks north the PTA I think raises less than \$100,000 maybe \$50,000 within five blocks of each other. It's important for us to understand this so we know how to direct resources.

**Mayor:** Okay, last call on this side, and then we're going to that side?

**Unknown:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** No, we're doing media only today. Next time for you, go ahead Henry.

**Question:** [Inaudible] and how did you determine that you would only spend this amount and not double it or even [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** On the first one I'm going to let the technical folks give you that because I am not an expert on how that is determined. On the second point, look, you're going to hear tomorrow the whole shape of things, but I want to point to what the Speaker just said, one of the headlines tomorrow is yes we sustained an over half billion dollar hit from Albany, it's one of the biggest hits we've taken in recent years, that certainly affected our capacity to do things. And I'll be clear, we all – I think this group here knows something about politics, I don't know a single person who did not expect education aid to shoot up in an election year in Albany. I think everyone was surprised it didn't go farther. So, before you even talk about the CFE case, which really should be driving this, we thought maybe other factors – wink, wink – would be judging this – driving this and we were surprised of the outcome.

But – so that’s one thing effecting our decision. And then, as we’ll talk about tomorrow, a whole host of competing needs. We also, structurally, do not believe this is just the City’s responsibly. The State historically is supposed to be the core of education support. And we can’t just say oh, no worries State of New York, you don’t have to do that anymore. Which some people in Albany would love to hear. We’re not going to allow that to happen. It’s not fair to our students.

Last call on this side – going to this side.

**Question:** Mayor, you said at the start of this press conference that even when the State doesn’t act we – meaning the City – don’t stand still. I’m wondering how you square that position or how you decided to put money up for the State here but how that squares with your opposition to doing that on issues like the MTA or on Fair Fares where you don’t want to put money in for the State?

**Mayor:** Well because they’re apples and oranges would be a good beginning. I mean, come on, the history of MTA funding verses the history of education funding – totally different animals. The City has historically put – and I want to give – I’ll give another credit to Michael Bloomberg, they put a lot of money into education. We put a lot more money into education. That’s been going on for quite a while.

The MTA – I don’t know if you’ve heard about this, it’s run by the State of New York, and they have responsibly. Of course, straphangers, taxpayers have been paying a huge amount from the City into the MTA already. So they’re very structurally different.

But there is a common link, the State has been trying to find ways to get at New York City’s money for years. Remember the CUNY – remember they tried to get CUNY money, remember they tried to get Medicaid money. It – it is dangerous to the future of New York City. This is something the Speaker and I have talked about a lot. That – and I want to thank him because he really is a – he’s a progressive who’s fiscally responsible, and we have to be the guardians of the future of this city because bluntly some of our predecessors decades ago were not.

So we have to protect the city’s long term interest. If we let every one of these State forays come through we’d have nothing left. They’ve literally tried it in, you know, subject after subject after subject. It’s quite clear. So, no, we’d have to be very careful not to change the paradigm unfairly against the City’s needs and interests on the MTA. But on education we’ve actually proven we were willing to do more and more within our means, but we’re not letting them off the hook for their legal obligation.

**Question:** So this is \$125 million, is this an annual, recurring –

**Mayor:** Yes.

**Question:** – commitment –

**Mayor:** Yes and like everything before. When I talked about that growth, everything that we did was baselined.

**Question:** And so then what's the total – you know, how much money is in this bucket compared to student funding that goes to the schools every year.

**Mayor:** Everything that has been put in since the beginning – let me get you the total number. How – I'm – I'm going to rephrase to make sure I'm getting it right. Everything we contributed to bringing Fair Student Funding formula up that is now baselined, you want that total number? We'll get that for you after.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, two questions. One, the parallel with the MTA funding is you believe the State has misappropriated I think it was \$468 million. The State was asked –

**Mayor:** \$456

**Question:** \$456 million. The State was asking you to put in more money and you adamantly refused –

**Mayor:** Yes.

**Question:** In this case you feel the State owes the City money in the case of the CFE –

**Mayor:** Yes.

**Question:** But in this case you're saying we're going to plug in part of the gap. So there is kind of a discrepancy in how you're approaching each issue.

**Mayor:** There – what I was trying to say in the previous answer is they are totally different areas of endeavor with totally different imperatives. So it's not strange if you have different approaches if they are very different things. So if you want to argue to me that the history of the City's funding especially in recent decades to the MTA parallels what we've done in education, I'll have that argument all day long. They're totally different.

In this case, we felt that even though the State did not come through it was important to keep the progress going. And it was important to also show the State that we would always carry part of what we thought was fair to do, as we have with so many other elements of education. But to also make clear that we are close to this goal and we can only get there with them and they should join us in getting to this goal. That's the theory of the case.

**Question:** The other issue – about two weeks ago when the Council said they wanted to prioritize Fair Fare. They were looking for about \$200 million a year. You said there wasn't enough money for that. So, how did you find this money and is it a question of priority then and not enough money.

**Mayor:** We will tomorrow go into the latest on what has changed since the preliminary budget, both new expenses and new revenue. And what the impact of Albany was with the State budget. And then it will be clear where this fits in the equation. We still have to be very careful fiscally, but we decided in light of the Council's focus that this was the right thing to do. But you'll get a fuller explanation tomorrow when we unveil the whole budget.

Yes?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor just looking for some more clarity on the funding formula. So schools that are currently at 100 percent and don't qualify for this extra funding –

**Mayor:** Correct.

**Question:** How did they get to 100 percent? Is it all independent fundraising? Is there another –

**Mayor:** So no, no. Not at all, not at all. And again, we'll let the folks – the budget folks go over some of that detail with you, but the simple historical fact is we're all dealing with a coherent school system right now, right? There's mayoral control, mayor chooses the chancellor, chancellor runs a unified school system. That is really new. That's only the last 15 years. For decades and decades before it was totally balkanized, highly political, unfortunately in often cases quite corrupt, and the money was not distributed evenly.

That was not erased when mayoral control came in. We are still making up for those mistakes of the past and we've been systematically addressing them.

**Question:** Can you give an example when you say highly politicized. Where's there extra money coming from?

**Mayor:** Again, someone can give you a more perfect example from the history, but you got to go back to – there was the Board of Estimate, there were the 32 school districts, there was a Chancellor chosen by a School Board. I mean there's all sorts of things that don't resemble today and there was a lot of horse trading and resources – I'm sure you're not shocked by this, in politics there was horse trading, and resources followed and they didn't flow fairly.

This is an entirely different paradigm where not everything is being put on a universal basis steadily, and you can actually get to a day where you're at 100 percent in every school. That doesn't mean some schools won't have more because of either that history or because they do some extra fundraising. We don't want to take from them. We don't think that's good practice. But we can bring everyone up to 100 percent.

Okay let's see if there is anything else – yes please Mark.

**President, Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, Mark Cannizzaro:** I'm a former history teacher so I can kind of give a little bit of the history of FSF here briefly. So Fair Student Funding was born out of the CFE movement because, as the mayor noted, historically

this was just never really accounted for. Equity, fairness, the needs of kids, that was all out the window, it was just politics back in the day.

So FSF was a formula created to try to assess the needs of our kids. So when we hear from Albany that poverty is not accounted for in the City of New York when it comes to schools, actually it is up to the third grade. Beyond that if a student is English language – English language learner there is a certain added weight to that formula. If the student has an IEP there's an added weight to the formula. If the school is a CTE school there's an added weight to that formula. And there was a point, as the CSA has a good history on this as well, that schools were at 100 percent back in the prior administrations but because the State and others have kind of fallen behind their obligation to schools those numbers have been dwindling and there's been inequities in where schools are 100 percent and where schools are below 90 percent.

So again, the Mayor is addressing, together with us, addressing historical inequities and trying to get our schools all to 100 percent FSF – back to 100 percent FSF. But to be clear, this was born out of the movement to create fairness and equity in our schools system. This was born out of the CFE movement, and the State of New York is still not complying with court orders and just basic decency here. That's the history of FSF.

**Mayor:** All right last call because these people have been standing here a long time – good activists. We're going to give you your hall pass so you can go. But let me see if there's one more on this and then these guys can cut out. On this topic. We're coming back to you when we transition off of this topic. Go ahead.

**Question:** [Inaudible] transition question.

**Mayor:** Let me see if there's an actual – just anything else on this specific announcement?

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** Related enough. Okay, go ahead.

**Question:** Equity and budget. Okay so some advocates for middle school summer camp were upset that that \$20 million for that was not in your preliminary budget –

**Mayor:** Yep.

**Question:** And they say if you want to sustain the gains from the Equity & Excellence program they need to have summer camp to avoid learning loss. Is summer camp for middle schoolers in your executive budget tomorrow?

**Mayor:** No.

**Question:** And why not?

**Mayor:** No.



**Question:** Why not?

**Mayor:** Because as meritorious as it is, it is not as strategic an approach as we want. The Council, there's a lot of support for it in the Council. It will be part of the discussion with the Council.

Everyone who's been around here any period of time knows that in the final stages of negotiation some of the most important priorities of the Council, of course, emerge. I don't know if that will be one or not. But it's not in my executive budget very clearly because we think the other investments – the Equity and Excellence investments, the FSF investments are more strategic. It's as simple as that. Okay, on this. Go ahead.

**Question:** Similar question, advocates have also raised the \$10 million for homeless students that was left out. I am wondering if that will be –

**Mayor:** We will speak to that tomorrow. Let me not get ahead of tomorrow's announcement. We obviously want to make sure those students are served but they'll give you specifics tomorrow.

Alright, I'm going to transition. So anyone who needs to go, this is your chance to escape. If you want to stay, you're very welcome. But thank you everyone.

[Applause]

[...]

**Question:** [Inaudible] Department of Education [inaudible]. Who did you speak with here at City Hall and what [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Respectfully, we're just not going to do the tic-tock of every meeting and who talked to who. We can speak to what we're doing but we don't do all the internal –

**Question:** [Inaudible] –

**Mayor:** I'm giving you – you try this every time. We don't do this.

**Question:** Why is that –

**Mayor:** We just don't believe it's pertinent.

**Chancellor Carranza:** I think it's important to be very clear that we take any allegations of sexual harassment or any kind of harassment very, very serious in the Department of Education and we've increased the number of investigators. We're working very closely with the City of New York. And under our administration we will continue to take that seriously and we will investigate fully any incidences that we are made aware of.

**Question:** But let me just ask you simply, why are so few cases substantiated [inaudible]?

**Chancellor Carranza:** With all due respect that's a B-R question which means Before Richard. I wasn't here. I've only been here a short time so I can't speak to why it was and why it wasn't. I can tell you that since I've arrived, we will take every allegation of sexual harassment, every allegation of harassment, every allegation that comes forward extremely seriously. As I work with my team, we will continue to work closely with the City of New York and we will take it very, very seriously.

**Mayor:** But I want to speak to the larger phenomenon which is what's abundantly clear is there was not a single standard for "mayoral" and "non-mayoral" agencies. So remember the history here. We've got the Department of Education still under a State law rubric as a non-mayoral agency. Obviously NYCHA is a free-standing agency. Health + Hospitals is also not a mayoral agency.

Those had very different realities than the mayoral agencies. We are going to align all the standards to the single mayoral agency standard. NYCHA, for example, had a standard based on federal guidelines – the federal guidelines on sexual harassment are not as rigorous as the City guidelines.

So one thing that has come out of this very important movement, this emerged from a social movement in this country that demanded clearer answers from every segment of this society, is we're aligning all standards on sexual harassment across all agencies. And I think that's going to make a big difference.

**Question:** This is not a tick-tock question. This is a transparency question. So, the Department of Homeless Services is required by law to report on what is called on critical incidents. And they made a decision not to report on arrests that take place within shelters. And as we reported today there are hundreds of arrests at shelters all over the city that they do not report to the public. Can you just tell us what is the public to make of this and isn't there a better way?

**Mayor:** We believe your interpretation is incorrect. Let me make that as plain as I can. The NYPD believes your source is inaccurate and we do provide arrest data. There is different classifications for different things but we provide the arrest data. The fact is that for decades the NYPD did supervise shelter security. In the last few years we created a paradigm – and I'm talking about since modern homelessness began in the early 80s. It was only in the last few years that we brought the NYPD fully into the training and supervision of shelter security.

We are very comfortable being transparent about arrests in shelter. So I dispute the assumptions that you're bringing to your story.

**Question:** [Inaudible] the arrests, as I understand it, to the State but you don't report it to the public –

**Mayor:** Again, I'm going to ask you to ask the NYPD for their full explanation of why they contest your source. I think they're the experts on safety and security, print –

**Question:** [Inaudible] that they do not separate out this information because it would create a stigma for the shelter residents therefore it is –

**Mayor:** Again, I'm not going to take your interpretation. I'm directing you to the NYPD for their interpretation.

**Question:** [Inaudible] –

**Mayor:** I'm comfortable that the NYPD is committed to transparency. I'm comfortable that we have stronger shelter security than we've ever had. We are very comfortable giving people a picture of what's going on in the shelters and it's also causing – because there is better shelter security, it's helping us get people off the streets who used to not come off the streets for the fear of the shelters.

**Question:** [Inaudible] questions about the sexual harassment stats. Since the DOE [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** I think there's a different reality for every one of the non-mayoral agencies. So I mentioned three. They all have a different reality and – hey, let me just ask folks from our team maybe to help get people quieter over there so that everyone can hear. That worked.

So, as I mentioned, NYCHA was working off a federal standard. That was an entirely different standard and a broader less rigorous standard. Health + Hospitals has its own different reality, different numbers than the other two. The Department of Education, one, needs to be united with the mayoral agency standards. Two, we are retraining everyone in City employment in how to properly address these issues.

But three, there is a distinct reality at the Department of Education, and I'll say it gently. There has been a history, it's pretty well known inside the education world of some people bringing complaints of one type or another for reasons that may not have to do with the specific issue. And this is not just about sexual harassment. This is about a whole host of potential infractions.

Any sincere reporting whether it regards sexual harassment or cheating on tests or anything, we take very, very seriously. We act on it. And we have to investigate everything but it is a known fact that unfortunately there has been a bit of a hyper-complaint dynamic sometimes for the wrong reasons. So I think that has inflated their numbers.

We need to address that cultural reality within the DOE. It's a thorny issue, something the Chancellor is going to have to look at but I think that is part of the reality.

**Question:** [Inaudible] within the Mayor's Office, there were five [inaudible] whether agencies are dealing with the substantiated cases [inaudible] to know whether there are individuals who [inaudible] punished in any way. Your office is declining to provide [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Because we've explained this but I'll explain it again. So, first of all, in the stances, it's five or fewer in the entire Mayor's Office – as you said 500-plus people and this is over the four

years. In each case it was substantiated. In each case there was discipline. So I just want to make that broad statement. This is going to be an ongoing discussion because we are going to move to a system as I said of training and retraining every City employee.

We're going to go to a system of annual reporting and we want to show cumulative numbers that give people a sense of what's going on. When you get to a very granular level, there is an honest and meaningful problem of exposing the victim's identity.

If the information is so specific that anyone of you would then pursue it and then portray the specifics of the case, there's a very good likelihood the victim's identity would come out. You all know for a fact once it's starting into the public domain, there's no guarantee otherwise.

A lot of the victims, a lot of the complainants do not want their identity out and we have to honor that too. So, we're balancing confidentiality concerns with transparency concerns. We think we're hitting a balance point here.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, just to follow up to Yoav's first question about the DOE and [inaudible] are you saying that people are lying when they're reporting sexual harassment –

**Mayor:** No, I'm not specifically talking about sexual harassment. I'm talking about, as I said, and I want you to please –

**Question:** [Inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Excuse me, I was really clear. I said a wide range of infractions at DOE that people might put in complaints on. Some are absolutely sincere. Many, I'm sure, are absolutely sincere. We take them very seriously. We have to investigate everything. We treat everything with equality when it comes to an investigation. But I'm also trying to be honest about something that is different at DOE than a lot of other places and it's a pretty well-known thing in the educational world.

Some people, inappropriately make complaints for other reasons. Not just – I'm not even sure it's ever about sexual harassment but it is unfortunately a part of the culture and it has to be addressed separately.

**Question:** [Inaudible] and if you're not why you would use that –

**Mayor:** Because the point – I'm not, again, if some people – it's a well-known thing that some people engage in that practice. I can't parse out for you who was sincere and who was insincere and what type of offense. I can't get there. I can tell you the fact it's unfortunately a part of the culture of an agency that is changing that we need to address.

Imagine if you were a teacher and whatever the complaint was, someone filed a complaint against you for ulterior motives. Unfortunately that's a known fact that that happens more in that agency than some other places. It's another one of the complexities we have to deal with but we

have to look at every complaint assuming sincerity and substance and follow through on every one.

It's just something you need to understand as part of the numerical reality.

**Question:** [Inaudible] charter commission [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** They're different concepts. We talked very openly about the goals of each commission – very productive conversations. They are trying to achieve different things. We have some immediate things that we think need to be on the ballot for November while simultaneously looking at bigger issues as Chairman Perales has pointed out.

The Speaker wants to do a multi-year approach that focuses on big structural issues and would take more time to address. So I think they're two good efforts proceeding in parallel. We'll keep talking as they both progress. Of course, whether someone was a supporter or donor was not a factor.

We looked for people who we thought could bring a lot to the process – diverse perspectives by geography and demographic background, diverse perspectives by profession and area of focus in terms of life of the city, folks who had achieved a lot and brought something to a discussion of the civic needs of the city, some people are particularly focused on the democracy issues that are central to the mandate. Cesar Perales is a great example – huge swaths of his life's work has been about ensuring that the Democratic process was actually representative and inclusive, going back to his days at the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund, right up to his last job as Secretary of State, which is all about voting rights and voting participation, among other things. So, that's what we looked at in creating this commission, and I think we put together a very strong group and I'm looking forward to what they bring forward.

**Question:** Was there ever, in the process – did you ever consider [inaudible] money to your campaigns –

**Mayor:** I just don't even get that theory. It's like, the campaign's happened, they're all over. Some people gave money, some people didn't – it's just, I don't even understand where that line of reasoning goes. I want people who I think are good, publicly-minded people who bring perspective to the process, who are willing to put in a lot of hard work, who clearly share the aspiration of improving the democratic process in this city. If they were involved in political campaigns for me or anyone else is not relevant.

The last one, and then I'm going to move on –

**Question:** [Inaudible] you don't think that appointing donors to City commissions creates [inaudible]

**Mayor:** No, because, first of all, if you look at these folks – I mean, it's interesting that some of the media coverage looked back as far as 2001 to see if they had ever donated to anything I've ever done. I mean, it's getting a little silly. No – if they are people who have an independent

profile of important public work, I don't care if they gave to me or they gave to someone else, or they gave to multiple people – I don't care – it's not pertinent to the decision.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** I think it's a really complex idea, meaning I think there's some real merit, and I think there's some big challenges at the same time. So, I grew up with it since – born here, but a lot of my upbringing was in Cambridge, Massachusetts that had them, and I could give you the case for them, but I also have to caution – this is the most complex environment for traffic anywhere – certainly in this country – and there are a lot of downsides too. So, is it worth studying? Absolutely. I don't know if it would actually be supported in Albany. I think you're right that some of it at least would require State authorization. But we'll look at the proposed legislation. We'll give it serious consideration. I just want to caution people, this is a classic – sounds good, and there are some good things, but there's also a lot of unintended consequences.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** No, it's not. It's literally – I can see pros and cons. I'm not comfortable yet. But I think it's a really important thing to discuss.

**Question:** Two questions on the sex harassment – to follow up with what Jillian was saying, it sounds as if you're saying the culture of [inaudible] at the DOE led administrators to look more suspiciously at sexual harassment complaints and therefore unsubstantiated more at that agency than in other agencies –

**Mayor:** No, I understand why you'd get to that conclusion, but that's not what I'm saying. I appreciate the question. I'm saying you have – and again, this is based on a broad analysis for what we've experienced for years and years at the Department of Education – you unfortunately have a different culture than we see in most other agencies. So, I don't for a moment think you guys should be responsible for trying to understand life inside the government. You have to live it to fully understand it. Every agency is different, every agency has its own culture, and this is an unfortunate thing that has to be addressed. It's very broad, but it means that on many fronts we get a certain number of complaints that are not real. I can't give you the breakout – I'm not trying to give you the breakout. I'm saying, based on what we know, we believe it's probably a contributing factor, but it's also the past. The #MeToo movement, and all of the other related movements, have, to their great credit, required of all of us that we come up with a single, strong, common standard, which we will now have for the entire government – again, pushing 400,000 people – we'll all be under one standard, an entire government-wide retraining, annual reporting, and very rigorous follow-up, and I think this is going to make us better. But it would be unfair to the public to not acknowledge that there's something different at DOE, and that's another problem also we have to address more.

**Question:** [Inaudible] at the NYPD, many of the largest settlements with the City over sexual harassment [inaudible] retaliation in the face of some of these complaints. Are you comfortable with the way that the complaints of sexual harassment have been handled at the NYPD.

**Mayor:** I think every agency has to examine itself and figure out the ways it can be better.

**Question:** What about the NYPD?

**Mayor:** Absolutely, NYPD does as well. I'm not familiar with all of the chapter and verse. Of course, retaliation is absolutely unacceptable anywhere. And by the way, not just in terms of sexual harassment claims – any kind of claim that then leads to retaliation is unacceptable and we would punish if substantiated. So, I think agencies have to do better across the board. I'm certainly going to talk to Commissioner O'Neill about how we can continue to improve the practice at the NYPD. But I believe that, again, this movement has helped us all to set the bar higher, and that's going to be universal. No agency will be excluded.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, can you address the letter that you and the Speaker sent to the MTA, demanding accountability?

**Mayor:** I happen to have a copy. So, look, this is one of the most common-sense things you're going to hear in a long time. I said this the other night on NY1, we were asked by the State to contribute to the Subway Action Plan over \$400 million. We make the contribution, and then, just days later, it comes out that the East Side Access Project – already long overdue, already greatly over budget – is an additional billion dollars over budget. Same funding base as everything else the MTA does. So, I found that disingenuous to say the least – had that information been provided to the public and to the legislature, if they heard that the MTA had blown another billion dollars, I'm not sure they would have been so quick to demand that the City put in the money that we put in. So, we're not going to keep contributing the taxpayers money into a sinkhole. We're not going to be the fall guys for the MTA's inefficiency and ineffectiveness. So, what we're saying with this letter – and I want to thank Speaker Johnson – this is a joint effort – is we want a full accounting the Subway Action Plan that we're contributing to. We want to see exactly how the money is being spent. We want to see there's really a lockbox that's now State law – it says there has to be a lockbox. We don't believe there's a lockbox until it's proven to us there is a lockbox, because the MTA has baited and switched us all so many times before. So, we want to see how the money is spent. We want to ensure it is spent on our subways. We want to see what's working and what's not. And we want this accounting to be public, and transparent, and regular, and consistent, because it's outrageous that the MTA would take our money but not agree to transparency.

So, this letter went to Chairman Lhota, and we expect to hear a clear response and a quick response guaranteeing the people of this City will have that transparency, and our board members are making very clear that we're not going to continue to accept a lack of transparency at the MTA or ineffective spending of money. We all know that compared to other cities with big transit systems, the MTA is not using its money as well. We all know there's been huge waste of money. We're not going to continue to accept that.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, going back to the sexual harassment numbers, can you just elaborate what about the DOE culture you believe –

**Mayor:** I think I said it a bunch of times, I don't know what's missing.

**Question:** You just referenced the culture, but what about it – the DOE culture – you think leads to hyper-complaints?

**Mayor:** I'm just saying it's a reality. I can't give you the sociological reasons, I'm saying it is a reality we have to address. And again, I'm going to say it 12 times, it far transcends any one type of infraction of complaint. It is a generalized culture we have to address where people use the complaint process for reasons other than a legitimate complaint.

**Question:** There was also a set of numbers that [inaudible] could not explain what was done in terms of discipline. Was there a reason why you can't say what happened?

**Question:** Okay, if I may. We had a separate topic in our story this week that showed that three quarters of the housing that you built under your affordable housing plan is being built in black and [inaudible] neighborhoods and I just wanted you to speak to whether you think that's helping segregation in housing or it's –

**Mayor:** I think we are building housing, let's separate the building and the preserving – 60 percent of the affordable housing plan is preserving and that's happening very broadly. Look at Stuy-Town and Peter Cooper is an example and all sorts of other locations around the city where we are preserving housing. On the new building – central consideration is where is there land to do it? And that has tended to be farther out in the outer boroughs and in many cases in communities of color. But the lottery system guarantees that 50 percent of the people who get those apartments can come from anywhere in the city so I believe that does forward the work of a more integrated city. Yes?

**Question:** The Department of Education is floating a desegregation plan on the Upper Westside for the middle schools and I went to a meeting yesterday where a lot of parents, the vast majority of whom were white were very vocally opposed to this plan saying it could hurt their children's chances of getting into the top middle schools on the Upper Westside. What would you say to those parents and is DOE committed to this plan despite the efforts of –

**Mayor:** So let me do two parts, the first is I always will say to you when I know the details of something and when I don't. I have not seen the details of the plan – I will only refer to the previous effort in CC3, which I think is one of the better things that has been done in the last few years in this city to address diversification of our schools. And there was a lot of opposition to that in the beginning. I think we ended up in a very good place where we had a clear way of improving the quality of many schools while creating diversity.

I can't speak to the new plan because I haven't seen it. But the notion that there is initial hesitation or opposition is pretty standard, I think when the more that we have a community conversation – I think a lot of people actually buy into the notion. They want diverse schools, they also want really good schools and those two goals can happen in concert. The mistake in the past in my opinion going back decades of American educational history is opposing those two concepts – opposing desegregation and school quality rather than saying we have to achieve both



simultaneously. And what I think CC3 did was a very positive model of how you can show the two can go hand and hand. Last call.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor in regard to the payments to the MTA, are there further payments due that you are going hold up or are we just talking about some sort of an accounting of what's gone in [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** We are being very clear that we have allocated this money, it will be in the budget that we present tomorrow. But we are going to hold the MTA accountable, work with board members, work with advocates, work with the general public to break this cycle. The MTA has continued to waste money. I mean you talk about in broad daylight – the State loves to criticize the City, well you know look in the mirror. You know right now the State is hemorrhaging money at the MTA and I don't hear a lot of apologies, another billion blown on Eastside access and who knows how much more it will take.

So we are not going to let that happen to our money. We need a full accounting and I think it is the beginning of a bigger movement and you will certainly hear from our board members on this to stop this blank check approach at the MTA – that we want everything accounted for and they all say the MTA has had a habit of blending different things together. You know a lot of us were outraged at the notion of you know, a couple of hundred million dollars for lights on bridges when the trains weren't running on time. They sort of throw it in one omnibus. We got to stop that. We got to be able to say we don't need the lights on the bridge. We'd love to improve stations but only after all the money has gone to getting the trains to run on time. Everything has to be about accountability. And that's never been the case at the MTA and I hope we are sparking that now.

Thanks, everyone.

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