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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY ON COVID-19

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. Here we are, in the middle of this crisis but we are also in the middle of a holiday season that is one of the anchors of our year, any year, even in the time of pain and sorrow and challenge. Our Jewish community continues to celebrate Passover and our Christian community prepares for Easter, we are all feeling the strange pull of traditions that we cling to and care about and ground us on the one hand, and then pull of this crisis contradicting that, working against it feels like all the time. We are trying to have our deep connection that we all cherish to our traditions, to our faith, to our family and at the same time, working against so many things that hold us back from being connected to each other. I think one of the toughest parts of this is for all of us who are parents and I know even in some ways even more deeply for grandparents, who are not going to have the same connection that they might have and would have in a normal year to their children and grandchildren because people can't travel, people can't gather. I think there is a deep, deep yearning and a deep pain when on top of everything else, we are kept apart from the people we love the most and the people who give us so much joy. And all the adults are feeling this crisis and particularly when they can't be near their children and grandchildren, it just makes it even worse, even tougher.

But again, we keep reaching back for our faith, for our beliefs, for our values, for our traditions to help us see our way through. At the same time, we got to think about what our children are going through. This has been such a tough time for them. Such a disorienting time. Our kids, we all know are resilient and we all know that our children can feel our love even if we can't be in the same room with them or even in the same city with them. They can feel our love. But for so many children right now, this is a really difficult, challenging time. And think about what we've asked of our children. It's a lot, nowadays just in normal times, to deal with all the challenges of modern society. I can say as a parent, our children deal with challenges today that I never dealt with when I was growing up and they grow up kind of faster nowadays and there's too much information available, too many real difficult things put before our children, even in normal times. Now think about what these last weeks have been like for our children. Think about the disruption. Think about the confusion and in so many cases the trauma.

A lot of our children have lost a loved one. A lot of our children have seen their families racked by disease. A lot of our children know that someone in the school community they come from, has been real sick or even has passed away because of the coronavirus. I know our children are resilient, but I also know they feel that fear and they feel it in a different way than the rest of us. On top of that, think of what children are going through when they can only spend a little bit of time outdoors. They can't really see their friends the way they are used to. They can't go to school, they can't play team sports. It's been a tough, tough time. But at the same time, we know

everything we're doing is to protect our children, our families to help end the pain and the trauma. We've all been through so much, but we have to work constantly to make sure that this ends. This is the thing we all have to be focused on. I know every New Yorker feels this. People are always asking when will this end? And to get to that point we have to work together and we all have to do our part. We all have to support each other. And in this season of faith and this season of love, the highest love we can show for each other is to protect each other, support each other, practice these new rules, these new realities that have actually started to help us get safer. The social distancing, the shelter in place, the things that have been really difficult for everyone and probably in some ways the most difficult for our children are also how we protect our children and our families and we get to that point where we can start to turn the page and work towards a day when we get back to some kind of normal. We get back to the lives we once knew.

So, this conversation about how to protect everyone and how to really keep bending the curve of this disease and how to move us forward. It's been something we've been talking about every day, every hour here at City Hall. And I've been having these conversations with Chancellor Carranza particularly in terms of our schools. And we all have felt that the real pain of knowing that our kids are missing out on so much of what they could have if they were in a school building. But we've also been more and more sure every day that keeping this policy, this strategy of social distancing and shelter in place, keeping that going and deepening that is the best way forward to protect all of us. At the same time, we've seen really heroic efforts by everyone at the Department of Education, by our educators, by all the people who work in our schools, to find every way to keep educating our kids and keep supporting them even through these extraordinary times. And I have to remind everyone, our educators were asked to learn an entirely different way of teaching. And they weren't given a year to get ready. They weren't given a month to get ready. They had a week to quickly retool and turn to distance learning, online learning and make it work. And it's been really an amazing story. And I think when this crisis is over, this is going to be one of the heroic passages. This is going to be one of the amazing moments that will be looked at with admiration. The New York City Public Schools, even in an hour of crisis, managed to come back so strong and create a new reality online to support our kids.

When I made that very tough decision, and I know the Chancellor felt the same way, it was literally a painful decision to close our schools because we feared that moment that we would not be able to bring them back. And I said it bluntly from the very beginning that if we close the schools, there was a very strong likelihood we wouldn't be able to bring them back for this school year. We knew that would be a really huge problem in terms of what we would lose and the education of our children, what families would lose. So many families who depend on, depended on, and still depend on our school system for food, for their children, for a safe place for the kids to be. We knew a lot was being lost, but we also knew, painful though it was, it was the right thing to do to protect everyone, our children, our parents, our families, our educators to protect everyone. And I had a real faith that even though we were asking our educators to do something they'd never done before, that they would rise to the challenge. And they have. You know when you make a decision, it's with the information that you have at the moment. I felt my gut, and I know the Chancellor did too, that our educators would find a way, even with the little time they had to prepare, they'd find a way to do something amazing with distance learning. They have surpassed every expectation. And everyone at DOE, all the folks who are in the

leadership at the Department of Education, all of the technology people, everyone who had to put together this amazing system and all the companies we turn to for help who really, really stepped up. Everyone went above and beyond because they realized they had to help our kids. And we didn't know how long this crisis would go on.

So, before I go on to tell you how we're going to go forward, I just want to say a real thank you. Thank you to Chancellor Carranza, thank you to the whole team at the DOE headquarters that work so hard and I can tell you everyone, whether I called them at midnight or I called them at seven in the morning, they were all working. Because they knew this was sacred, if you will, to make sure that every child got the help they needed. I want to thank all the educators who have done so much who just never gave up, including all those educators who came in and continue to come into our regional enrichment centers to protect and teach the children of first responders and health care workers and essential workers that we need so desperately right now. I want to thank parents. This has not been easy. As I said, it's not easy to be a kid nowadays. It's not easy to be a parent nowadays and parents have really had to dig deep and create and deal with really challenging situations. It is not easy to have a child cooped up at home, I assure you. But our parents have really stepped up and they've been great partners in the distance learning that the DOE has done and we're going to work with them to become even stronger partners. And I want to thank our kids. I want to thank the children of the New York City public schools. There's no, I've said to people for years and years and years, there's nothing more wonderful than a New York City public school education. Not only for what it gives you academically, but for what it gives you in your heart and soul, how it teaches you to deal with every kind of person, the whole world. And our kids, they're finding a way as well.

So, everyone, thank you. Thank you for stepping up and I'm going to ask you to keep stepping up. I'm going to ask you to dig deep and help us through to the end of this crisis. We originally said the best-case scenario would be to come back on Monday, April 20th at the end of the spring break. We could see already, that was not going to be possible many days ago. And then the State put the pause on until April 29th. But we've had conversations in the last few days to say, is it viable? Is it safe? Is it smart? Would it work? Would it help our children? Would it be fair to the entire school community to bring our schools back at this point, at any point between now and the end of June? And after very careful consideration, I announced today that the New York City public schools will remain closed for the remainder of this school year.

Again, there is nothing easy about this decision. I can't even begin to express how much for all of us, the goal of making our schools better for all our kids and fighting against the inequalities that were so clear in our school system. You know, that was the first mission in so many ways of this administration and making sure that kids, including so many kids who have been left behind, got much greater opportunity. That's what we've been so focused on for six years. So, Lord knows having to tell you that we cannot bring our schools back for the remainder of this school year is painful. But I can also tell you it's the right thing to do. It clearly will help us save lives because it will help us to guarantee that the strategies that have been working, the shelter in place, the social distancing, all the focused strategies that are finally beginning to bear fruit, they need the time to continue to be effective. And when I talked to you the other day about the stages we would go through, I reminded everyone, the worst mistake we could make is to take our foot off the gas and end up in a situation where this disease had a resurgence and threatened us even

more. We're not going to allow the coronavirus to start to attack us even more and to make sure it doesn't, we have to, we have to be cautious. We have to be smart about the moves we make and we can never get in a situation where we end up jumping too soon and regretting it later.

I had a conversation last night with Dr. Anthony Fauci, who's really been a hero in this entire national crisis. And I said to Dr. Fauci, that I had talked to the Chancellor and to our health care leadership, and really increasingly we were thinking it did not make sense. And he said to me he agreed and he appreciated the sense of being cautious and careful because the most important mission for all of us in New York City and all of us in this country is to end this crisis. To not let it reassert and keeping the New York City public schools closed is a way to contribute to finally beating back the coronavirus. And of course, what we think about every single day, and we think about this during normal times as well, protecting our kids, protecting our families, protecting our educators. From that perspective, this was obviously the right thing to do. So, it's not an easy decision. It's not a decision that is satisfying for all of us who have devoted so much of our time to try and make sure our kids got the very best education. But it is the right decision. And it's also a decision made a little clearer by the fact that the distance learning is working more and more every day and we're going to have more and more good ways to reach our kids and help them over the next few months.

Now we'll be working with the State of New York. We want to work with the State in many ways as we have throughout this crisis. But one of the specific ways is that the State regulations officially require that all school systems around the State have kids in the classrooms for 180 days. Those regulations have been waived to date all over the state. We're going to work with the State to continue that waiver so that we can see the school year through, but again, with distance learning, not with our kids in their school buildings.

Look, the other thing to recognize here is that the timeline says it all. I told all New Yorkers over the last few days, we got to assume that April will continue to be real tough. We're going to go into May, we don't know yet what this disease will do. We may get the kind of relief in May that allows us to begin to make some changes, but that may go into June. But the one thing that was clear to us was if we even want to consider bringing our schools, there was going to be a lot of lead time, a lot of work that would have to be done including in the school buildings to get ready. And again, it was not realistic to believe that that work, which would have to start in just a matter of weeks, would be appropriate given the challenge we face, given the timeline we're looking at.

We also knew that if we just brought kids back for a few weeks, it really wouldn't add that much to their lives academically. The risks simply – the risk did not outweigh the reward. It just proved to be that there was not a clear reason of what we would gain to help our kids. But the challenges and the problems were very, very clear. And we knew that there was a real danger that if we came back, some schools would have to close because of individual cases of coronavirus and it would create so much disruption and confusion. But there's another factor that's really important to point to and it's where I started about what our kids are going through. Our kids have gone through a lot of trauma here. We all know, again, kids are resilient and sometimes they don't show it, but look at what they've had to witness. Look at what they've had to experience and think about those kids who are grieving right now who've lost a grandparent or aunt or uncle or a member of their school community, an educator or another member of their

school community. Think about what that's doing to our kids and we want to help them through that. We want to support them. And we don't think the best way to do that is by bringing them back into the schools between now and June. We do think there's much that we can do to support them in the meantime.

And there's a lot we're going to have to do starting in September that's very different than what we've ever done before. I've spoken with the Chancellor about this, we're going to have to think about September in a way that really is a new era for the New York City public schools and a new approach. And one that's going to have to be very, very mindful of all the trauma that everyone's been through. And really, we're going to have to all work together to overcome it.

So, I'm going to lay out quickly, a five point plan for how we get from here to the opening of school in September. And again, we're going to ask a lot of parents, of teachers, principals, all educators to help us through this path together and work together to help our kids. And it's going to get tough. And not because of the disease alone, but because of the weather. As it gets warmer and warmer, our kids are going to get more and more restless. We know that. So, we have to help you through and we have to give you the best possible tools, the most compelling options to keep our kids focused on the distance learning and keep them safe and indoors for a lot of the day until we really see things change with this disease.

So, the first point is to make sure that the devices, the iPads and all the other devices that we have given out, will give out to kids, that every student who needs one gets one. And we will ensure that that happens by the end of April. I said at the day we had to shut down our schools that we knew a lot of kids just didn't have these devices and there would be a lag time. But we've gotten great cooperation from the companies involved and again, the team at DOE has stepped up. We now need to get devices distributed on a very fast pace. We already can say that 66,000 devices have been distributed. We have to get 240,000 more in the hands of our kids over the next couple of weeks by the end of April. And we will do that. And then I've said to the Chancellor, whatever it takes, the entire City government will assist to make sure this happens. So that's point one, devices for every child by the end April.

Point two – parent help line, we're going to take the helplines and hotlines we already have for parents and that they can reach through 3-1-1. We're going to expand them, we're going to add more educators, add the ability to get much more coaching and support for parents in multiple languages and expand the hours. And we'll have a further announcement on that shortly. But a lot of parents, since they're dealing with an unprecedented challenge, they need coaching, they need help, they need support, they need ideas. And a lot of educators and trained professionals that they can reach at any hour of the day in multiple languages to give them that support.

Third, we're going to provide a lot more creative at-home programming. So, teachers already – teachers have always known how to be creative, but they have been extraordinarily creative in this crisis. So, DOE's been creating new programming. Teachers themselves have been creating all sorts of important new ideas to help our kids. The Parks Department has put together some great new programming online and our Children's Cabinet is doing the same. We're going to be working with a number of media companies here in New York City and creating a variety of free programming to help children and help our families get through this, and more and more

compelling options to make that stay at home a little bit easier, but also supercharge the education process in the meantime.

Fourth, we got about 75,000 seniors. They were looking forward to graduation, want for every child who we can help to meet the requirements in time, we need to do that. So very, very important mission and one that the whole DOE family feels deeply right now. We do not want to see these seniors robbed of their future, robbed of that joyous moment when they graduate high school. We have no idea, at this point, if there's going to be anything like a graduation ceremony this year, but we do know that so many of our seniors can graduate on time if we support them properly. So that's going to be a very important focus. We will have a full plan out next week that will allow us to focus on each and every senior individually, help them if they're on track to graduation right now, see it through. If they're not on track, do all we can to get them there. We have a lot of focused capacity to help these seniors. That's going to be a primary objective. So, to all the seniors out there we are going to help you and we're going to communicate with you and figure out what you need. We want the maximum number of seniors graduating on time by June, and we want to support them in every way possible.

And then the fifth point, we are working now on a comprehensive plan to reopen the schools in September and as I said, it will be unlike any other reopening of schools we've ever seen because we're going to have to ensure the safety of all our students in a new way. We're going to have to make sure our vulnerable students get maximum support. We're going to have to do so much for the mental health of our students who have been through as trauma and the mental health of the whole school community. Our educators have been through so much – everyone who works in the schools. We're also going to need to address the emotional impact on parents and families. All of that. This focus on mental health and support for everyone who's been through this crisis will be crucial to our plan to reopen in September. And next school year is going to have to be the greatest academic year the New York City public schools have ever had, because we're going to be playing a lot of catch up. So, we're going to be looking for every conceivable way to make it the richest, most powerful year we've ever had to really help our kids move forward. I'm going to turn to the Chancellor. I think it would be good to let him weigh in now and then I'm going to come back on just a couple of other items before we take questions from the media. So, Chancellor –

Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And I want thank you for your leadership. This is not an easy time, but I also want to echo your words of thanks to all of our educators, our administrators, our food service workers, our custodians, everyone that has been out supporting our students and our families. I've had the opportunity to participate in a number of online forums with families and parents. And the stories that they share with me are both inspiring but also challenging. So, I want to thank our families who have really stepped up and moved mountains to support all of our students. A special thanks to all of our colleagues and friends that are volunteering at the Regional Education Centers, our food service workers, who are also demonstrating true heroism every single day. I want to thank you for your service to your fellow New Yorkers. Without you, this city would grind to a halt. So, thank you for what you're doing. You are true heroes and every night at 7:00 pm when you hear all of those claps and cheers and pots banging, you're part of the heroes that they're celebrating. So, I want you to remember that.

I know that this news today may come as a bit of a shock to everyone out there, but the Mayor and I absolutely agree that this is in the best interest of all New Yorkers. We know that the past few weeks have not been easy. And we've asked a lot of our teachers and our administrators and our families and our students, I know you're exhausted. But thank you for continuing to do the work that you do. While we may not be together in school buildings, I want to be very clear that schools remain in session because of our teachers and our administrators and the learning continues. We just don't do it in person. And that'll continue throughout the rest of the school year by this announcement. I also want to reemphasize what the Mayor said. We are going to be here to support you, both our teachers, our administrators, our students, and our families, through this transition. We're staffing up our parent hotline, we're speeding up device delivery. And I want to thank you, Mr. Mayor, for helping us work with the supply chain. We, literally, when you think about what is happening around the world, every school system in the world is ordering devices right now. And we are at the top of the list because of your intercession, Mr. Mayor. So, thank you.

We're staffing up and we're going to be there every step to support you as we finish this school year in remote learning mode. We know what an undertaking this has been. But we want to thank you. Remember the two words that we've continued to emphasize. Number one is flexibility and the second is patience. So, thank you for your flexibility and your patience. We will also be reaching out to families to get your feedback about how remote learning is not only going but what that should look like as we go into the rest of this school year because we truly want it to be as an enriching experience as possible. You are truly our partners in this effort and we want to thank you.

[Chancellor Carranza Speaks in Spanish]

Mr. Mayor, thank you.

Mayor: Thank you very much, Chancellor. Let me just turn to a couple of other quick items, important matters, but I want to get through them quickly and then we'll say a few words in Spanish and we'll turn to our colleagues in the media for questions. So, another area where we are focused, of course, on protecting people, protecting their health, ensuring that we do everything to address this crisis is with some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers who are homeless. And our shelter system is an area where we are focused on ensuring that those who do not have a home are protected, that they are given the support they need through this crisis. It's tough enough to not have a place to live. We want to keep people safe and healthy and make sure all the support they need is there for them.

So, first I want to announce that by Monday, April 20th, we will have 6,000 homeless people in our shelter system who were in other settings, will now be in hotel settings. So, 6,000 single New Yorkers, meaning single adults, will be in hotels, not traditional homeless shelters. That's about one-third of the single clients of our overall shelter system moved into hotel settings. We are doing that because we think that is the right balance to strike as we ensure that people get what they need to be safe. And I want to remind everyone, when we talk about the health and safety of homeless people, we have to protect everyone from COVID-19. We also have to support the

needs of homeless folks well beyond COVID-19, folks who have serious physical issues that they might need support with, but also a lot of whom have mental health issues and need support and need services available to them constantly. And that's what happens, of course, in so many of our homeless shelters. So, we're going to keep that going while also recognizing a number of people need to be in hotel settings. We'll strike that balance.

Those who will be prioritized across our shelter system for transfer to hotels, will include seniors, will include, of course, anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, or who tested positive for COVID-19. They, of course, will be isolated in hotel settings. And anybody in shelters where it's been difficult to achieve social distancing. So, I want this to be clear. Some shelters have a lot of space, some do not. Where it's clear to our Department of Social Services and our Department of Homeless Services that social distancing cannot be achieved properly, a number of those clients will be moved to hotels to achieve the balance, to make sure there is the proper social distancing. So, we will use those hotels aggressively as a tool to support homeless individuals, to strike the right balance in our shelters to make sure people who need to be isolated are isolated. Commissioner Steve Banks is with me here, our Social Services Commissioner. I want to thank him and his whole team. They've done a remarkable job of keeping people safe in the shelter system and we have all agreed on this plan as the best way forward to use hotels to ensure that we can strike the balance and achieve those health and safety goals that are paramount right now.

We are also at the same time in this crisis working to continue what we talked about before the coronavirus hit us, which is getting more and more New Yorkers off the streets who have been permanently living on the streets. To do that, even in the midst of this crisis – and I commend everyone at Social Services, Homeless Services – we'll open 230 new Safe Haven beds and low-barrier beds. These are the kinds of beds and facilities that help us get people immediately off the street who have reached that point where they're ready to finally come in and accept shelter and change their lives and hopefully never, ever go back to the streets. A lot of our street homeless folks are going through a lot right now like everyone, of course. We're going to remind them and show them that there's a better way and it's available to them now. And those outreach workers, those hero outreach reach workers continue to do their work while being safe. And we're going to work hard to get more and more people off the streets into shelter, particularly those who are older. That will be a focus – an intense focus in these next weeks.

Finally, I want to do some thank-yous every chance I get. I want to thank people who are doing amazing things. So many New Yorkers have been heroic, so many New Yorkers have dug deep to help each other. I want to do a special thank you to everyone at the Parks Department. We have asked a lot of them and they've been doing amazing things. The one thing I don't think people think about is, the Parks Department has part of how we help our kids who have to stay home because of shelter in place. But they have been, they've been coming up with great, exciting content to ensure that kids have something new and exciting to participate in from home. If you go to nyc.gov/parksathome, you can see the great content that Parks Departments put together.

But I also want to thank all the Parks workers, everyone at the Parks Department, especially the frontline workers in our parks. They've been working, despite all the challenges, to keep the parks safe and clean. They have been absolutely teaching and enforcing social distance and it's

been remarkable how well they've done that. The results we've heard consistently from the Parks Department, from the NYPD have been really striking how well they've done it, convincing people that we all have to do social distancing together. This was not, I assure you, what Parks workers thought they had signed up for when they took their jobs, but they have been adapting and doing a hell of a job, helping to ensure that our parks are safe for everyone. So, thank you to everyone at the Parks Department.

And always want to thank those who are supporting all of our frontline heroes. And a lot of people have stepped up. Someone that New Yorkers know well from his illustrious career on the basketball court, John Starks. He has dished out an assist, and this time it's not with a basketball. This time it's 3,00 sets of scrubs for our city hospitals to help out our health care workers. IBM has provided a half-a-million dollars in [inaudible] technology to the Department of Health and a million donation to the Department of Education. Apollo Global Management, and cofounder Josh Harris, have provided 100,000 N95 masks. That's outstanding. 100,000 N95 masks to our public hospitals, particularly to Elmhurst Hospital. We are so grateful for that. And Salesforce has made a half-million dollar donation as well to help the effort to fight COVID-19 in New York City. So, a lot of people stepping up, a lot of people helping from all over the city, all over the country, and we are so appreciative. And I'll close, before a few words in Spanish by saying, look, even in the midst of this challenge and this pain another thing that people are doing that brings out the beauty of the holiday season is they are living out their faith.

All of you are helping each other, respecting each other, supporting each other. All of our faiths, all of our beliefs, no matter what your belief system is, they almost all come back to the same place, which is love each other, help each other. And that's what we're seeing New Yorkers do. And it's beautiful even amidst the pain and the struggle. So, thank you because you're showing the whole world something very beautiful in this time of challenge. In Spanish, just a quick summary.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media. Please let us know the name and the outlet of each person calling in.

Moderator: Hi, all. Just a reminder that we have Chancellor Carranza and Commissioner Banks here in person, and Dr. Barbot on the phone. We'll take one question from each reporter in order to get to as many outlets as possible. With that, I will start with Christina from Chalkbeat.

Question: Hi, Mayor and Chancellor. Thanks for taking my call. Looking ahead to September, we would like to know whether there's any talk about extending the school year. And also, if you could talk more about what reopening schools might look like in terms of helping students catch up academically.

Mayor: I'll start and pass to the Chancellor, Christina. We're still dealing with the great unknown, obviously. So, the first thing to say in any attempt to project the months ahead is we first have to see what happens with the fight against this disease and ensure that we're making steady progress and ensure that we can get into those next phases that I described earlier in the

week, the low transmission and the no transmission. For us to be effective at educating kids in person, we have to really prove that this crisis is effectively over. So, that's going to be the determinant more than anything. The DOE is working on all sorts of contingency plans depending on how that timing goes. But the one thing that is certain is we can at least plan for the scheduled opening of school. We have to make sure the disease is beaten back, but we can plan for it because as we've been saying from the beginning, and our Health Commissioner has been saying, we think September is a good date to think about when things get more fully back to normal. And we know it will take a different kind of approach than we've ever had, particularly as I say on the mental health side, but also on the academic side because we're going to be dealing with challenges we've never had on this scale before and we're also going to have to find a way to make up a lot of lost grounds. So, it's going to be real tough. Chancellor.

Chancellor Carranza: Thank you, Sir. Christina, so as the Mayor said, we're working on multiple scenarios and again, caveat is always depending on the public health, how this COVID virus is promulgating or hopefully not throughout our city. That's going to be a huge determinant. That being said, we're also working very closely with our labor partners, CSA, UFT our food service workers as well because we want to make sure that their voices are included as well in terms of what makes sense. And as I mentioned in my comments as well, we will be soliciting the feedback of parents as well. Because obviously they're going through a very difficult time as well. I can say that everything is on the table but nothing has yet been decided because again, circumstances in terms of the public health are going to determine when we open again. But we are very, very concerned about making sure that our students' mental health, the trauma that they are suffering and families are suffering, is well taken into account, as well as the academics as we go forward. So, more information will be coming next week and in subsequent weeks.

Moderator: Next, we'll take Doris from NY1. Hi.

Question: This will be in Spanish for NY1 Noticias. This is for Chancellor Carranza –

[Question asked in Spanish]

Chancellor Carranza: [Speaks in Spanish]

Mayor: I got a lot of it, but not all of it. Is there anything you didn't say previously that you need to highlight in English?

Chancellor Carranza: I just want to say again how are parents – the question is how are parents going to take on this challenge of educating students and having them home through the end of the school year. I just want parents to understand that you're not alone and we recognize, and this is part of what weighs so heavily on the Mayor's decision-making authority is that we understand that families – this is a crisis. This is a traumatic event for families as well. All of the things that you may be dealing with on top of now you're been drafted into the Teaching Corps. But you're not alone. If you go to our webpage, schools.nyc.gov, you will go to Learn at Home. There's a Learn at Home link with lots of guidance for families, lots of activities, lots of things that families can do.

I've also been privy in some of my conversations with parents to learn that parents are forming their own support groups and they're sharing activities. For example, this coming Wednesday is going to be a Fitness at Home Wednesday where our New York sports teams are doing fitness videos that families will be able to log on to and participate in. There's a lot of creativity that's happening out there, but what we want to be able to do is put people together. You can also call 3-1-1, and that'll put you in touch with folks at the Department of Education that can also help you navigate what these next few weeks and next few months will look like.

Moderator: Next we have Myles from NBC New York.

Mayor: Myles? Let's see if Myles is there. Myles, can you hear us all right?

Moderator: Sorry, apologies. We will circle back. Next, we have Yoav from The City.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I was just looking for an update from yesterday on the issue of delivery of meals to seniors. You had said that you hadn't spoken to anyone who had heard of a senior going without delivery. Have you heard anything differently since then?

Mayor: Yes. And thank you for the question. I'm looking to Freddi Goldstein. I thought we put this out publicly. Yes, we did. Okay, did you tweet it out or, okay. Freddi, so check what Freddi put out last night. The – in fact it is a true statement that previous to yesterday I did not hear of anyone not getting their meals. This a real mistake what happened with the seniors in Independence Plaza – it should not have happened. I want to apologize to those seniors. Something went wrong in the application process and we are aggressively fixing it. Meals will be delivered today. I've asked our Food Czar Kathryn Garcia to work to make sure that that will not happen ever again, anywhere. If someone calls 3-1-1 and they sign up for those home deliveries again, there's certain particular characteristics we're looking forward to ensure that someone gets a home delivery. But if someone qualifies, they must start getting them immediately. And so our leader who's proven herself many a time before, she will ensure that all agencies involved and the 3-1-1 operation are tightly coordinated to make sure that anyone who signs up, any senior signs up get those meals right away, this is literally crucial. We cannot have a senior in this moment where there's been so much dislocation – if a senior needs a food delivery at home, it has to happen instantly. And I've made that really clear to Kathryn Garcia. Let me be clear, when I say instantly, meaning as quickly as humanly possible from the time they sign up to the time the meal arrives, I want that to be the fastest conceivable timeline. I have told Commissioner Garcia that this is an area, even though we're dealing with a lot of challenges you know, human, especially logistical, financial, this is an area where we're not going to spare any expense. If people need food, you know, it's going to be one of our highest priorities to get them food. So we will fix that going forward. If anyone has a problem, you sign up with 3-1-1 and you have a problem, please call 3-1-1 back and alert them immediately that if you have not gotten a delivery you were supposed to get, so that can be fixed. But the Independence Plaza situation will be fixed today.

Moderator: Next we have Katie from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor and Chancellor and everyone on the call. I'm curious if you could outline if there's any changes or plans to summer school. As you know, particularly the District 75 students, they have school for 12 months out of the year. Will there be any plan to open some of these buildings during the summer or will you have a further plan in the coming days?

Mayor: Thank you Katie. Great question. I'll start and pass to the Chancellor. We care a lot about making sure the kids who go to the District 75 schools are supported and protected and given what they need, but it's the same larger reality is the first question for us all. We don't know what the summer will mean for anything we do because again, we have to first get to – out of this widespread transmission phase, which according to, you know, all the information we have to date is something that only happens in May or June. And then we have to sustain the effort to get into low transmission and hold that and keep making progress to that to get to the point where we're basically at no transmission.

You know what our Health Commissioner, Dr. Barbot has said from the beginning is we could see in September being back in a state of something like normalcy, but that's very initial and preliminary based on what we know. There's still a lot more we don't know and I keep warning against that possibly of a resurgence in the disease, which is really one of the underpinnings of why I made this decision on the schools to really help ensure that there is not a resurgence. So I would say right now, it's hard to know for sure. It's hard to see a summer programming until we have a lot more answers. I feel a lot more confident about anything starting in September than I do something starting in July. But to the last part of your question, yeah, we're certainly going to be planning and ready for different options and when we see something definitive, that's when we would talk about any possibility for the summer. Chancellor?

Chancellor Carranza: Yeah, I will only add to what Mayor de Blasio has said – is that there are two other operating words that we're operating under. One is optimistic and realistic. So optimistically yeah, we want to get students together, we want to have them with their teachers as soon as humanly possible and where it's safe. Realistically, given the modeling that the Mayor has talked about we are going to be in remote learning phase through the summer and for students with disabilities in particular whose Individual Education Plan, their IEP, calls for services, we are working with families and with their teachers to make sure that those services are being provided. The good news is that in the vast majority of cases, we are able to provide those services remotely. There are some things that are just much more difficult and – but even then, we're working through those, those particular situations as well. So again, as public health information dictates, that's how we will then determine what those programs look like for in-person instruction.

Moderator: We're going to circle back to Myles, Myles from NBC New York.

Question: Mr. Mayor, Good morning.

Mayor: Good morning Myles.

Question: I'm happy to be back here. Just a question about how do you envision and the Chancellor as well, the Regents working. In order for these seniors to be able to graduate, they need to pass these Regents exams and you're envisioning them coming into a central building and getting them done? Or could they be done remotely?

Mayor: I'll pass that Chancellor by just say, I think and everything we're going to be dealing with, with the Regents, with the State, I think we're all sensitive to the fact this is a place we've never been to four, we're dealing with a crisis that, you know, literally on a health level we haven't seen anything this in a century. But in terms of impact on young people, we have to be creative and strategic because the last thing we want to see is a lot of young people who were literally well down the road to their plans to go to college or to go onto whatever else they were going to do next, you know, being interrupted and being stopped on a path that they had been working on, you know, for years and years and their families had been working on for years and years. So, whatever it takes, and I would imagine the state and the regions feel the same way, we come up with creative solutions so we don't disrupt the lives of these children any further. But Chancellor you take it from there?

Chancellor Carranza: Yeah, good question. So the State Education Department has already, I would say eliminated the June administration of the Regents. So students that were going to sit for that in June do not have to take the Regents. They have not yet made a decision on the Regents administration for August. We suspect that they will take that up in a matter of weeks. The State Education Department has also put out guidance for those seniors that still needed to sit for the Regents. And we've distributed that guidance to schools. So anyone that's listening that has a high school senior should be in touch with their guidance counselors and with their high school for more specific information because again, this is all very individual to individual students. But I want to thank the State Education Department for really keeping an eye on how do we realistically get students to cross that threshold and get their diploma.

Moderator: Next we have Sophia from Gothamist.

Question: Hi, good morning.

Mayor: Okay, good morning. Go ahead Sophia.

Question: Okay, good morning Mayor and Chancellor. I wanted to ask about attendance rates so far with remote learning, especially if as you said, 240,000 students still don't have the right technology yet. And is there any way to move some of the learning components offline to help relieve the pressure?

Mayor: Yeah, great question Sophia. I'll pass the chance to, but say one the DOE has been also doing a work offline and he'll describe – the Chancellor will describe it. But yeah, attendance is a very challenging dynamic when you're dealing with distance. But that is also being worked on. I want to remind everyone what we asked of educators. It was almost like a military situation to say you have to mobilize in a week's time and put together you know, something and get it going. So at least there was something for kids. And then as we said, literally the day that we, you know, that painful decision to close the schools, this will get better each week, literally

meant that with every passing week there would be more devices in the hands of kids with every passing week. The educators would come up with new and better ways to do distance learning with every passing week we'd find more and more ways to engage kids and keep track of what they are doing. But it is, this is a work in progress. So, Chancellor, if you could explain sort of what's possible and what's not so far on attendance, that'd be helpful.

Chancellor Carranza: Yes, sir. So, this week we put out guidance for taking attendance. Obviously, we're not taking period by period attendance. It's a full day one, once a day schools are reporting their attendance. We can get you the details of what that attendance is looking like. What we're trying to pay particular attention to is students that have not been in contact with us. We're spending a lot of time, our teachers, our administrators are really taking time to get in touch with those students. We want to know where every student is. What's also important to really be clear about is that when we originally talked about device distribution, we had put out a number of about 300,000 devices based on a number of modeling scenarios. Since that time we've actually had parents fill out a survey and I'm going to give you the information because if you haven't filled it out, and I'll tell you why this is important in a minute, you need to. You can do the survey by calling 7-1-8-9-3-5-5-1-0-0 and press the number five. Okay, 7-1-8-9-3-5-5-1-0-0 press the number five, if you don't have internet. If you do have internet, it's very simple: coronavirus.schools.nyc/remotelarningdevices and that's available in all nine languages.

Now the reason that's important is that the families that have taken that survey, we now know who you are, if you need a device and the reason that becomes really valuable is that this, this week we have mailed over 40,000 packets to families that don't yet have devices. And we know they don't have devices because they filled out that survey. So they have learning packets that have been mailed directly to them. It's also important to note that we've given out 175,000 devices that were school devices. They're loaned out to students, they're in their hands.

We've also, as of this week, shipped 70,000 Wi-Fi equipped iPads to students because we know who they are because of that survey. So that means that in the hands of students are about 245,000 devices. If that was a school system, that would be the sixth or seventh largest school system in America that we've put devices in the hands of those students already. And as the Mayor has said, our goal is by the end of April, every one of those students that have identified themselves or families that have identified themselves as needing a device based on the survey will have a device in their hands as well. So it's really important that we know who you are because we need to get you in the queue, but it's also important so that we can mail you those learning packets so that you're not losing any instructional time as you wait for your device.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: Next we have Christie from News 12 New Jersey.

Question: Hi, good morning. Mr. Mayor panel. Quick question about food distribution where – well, actually the money towards food pantries and soup kitchens we're hearing that \$25 million is being designated from the city, which I assume is actually mirroring what the state is giving the other \$25 million. Just a question that collected \$50 million, how long is that expected to last? You know, you're saying hopefully by September at least schools will be back on, but do

you think this \$50 million collectively from the state and the city will last even as long as you hope it will?

Mayor: Well, Christie that's a great question. We – I'm very, very worried about the food situation. I think we're only beginning to see the impact of this this piece of the coronavirus crisis is going to have on people. It's remember – kind of, it kind of will get worse with each week because folks have lost their income and people have lost jobs and will continue to lose jobs and then, you know, whatever they had still coming in that runs out. So I think it unfortunately, tragically it gets worse going ahead. There is some help coming from the federal government. That's a good thing in terms of, you know, the money coming out of the stimulus and certainly these particular new initiatives that you referred to will help a lot. But no, I'm not confident yet that everything is going to be needed is in place. That's why I named a foods are Kathryn Garcia and that's why I've said to her, whatever it's going to take a, we're going to put forward the resources to make sure that everyone has food. We literally have to have a simple standard. No New Yorker goes without food and what the folks in the Department Education are doing, which is amazing, 435 sites that have now been up over the last week or more where anybody, any adult can come in and get breakfast, lunch and dinner, grab and go as for as many family members as possible. That to me is the kind of thing we're going to have to do on a really big scale going forward to make sure that everyone has food.

Christie, this is something that could go on for months before – think about, I mean, when are people going to have normal incomes again, you know, even when you're factoring in unemployment insurance, things like that, it's still a lot less obviously than people had. When are they going to have normal incomes again, you know, we hope and pray that it's no later than September, but we don't know that yet. So we're going to have to do a really constant, ever-growing food effort to make this work.

Moderator: Next we have Sally from Politico.

Question: Hi Mayor. Can you hear me?

Mayor: Yes, Sally.

Question: Apologies if this was asked already because I was cutting in and out. But do you have an update on the number of homeless people who have been infected and have died from the coronavirus? And also, I had a second question. We reported last night that your administration has been having some difficulty getting timely information from the Cuomo administration on the number of positive cases and deaths and that sometimes you have to wait until his press conference to get the updated daily number. So, I was wondering if there's any hope that that might be changing?

Mayor: I think everyone is working together to try and deal with information in a very, very tough, painful, ever-changing situation. So, we certainly work with the State constantly. The two health departments communicate a lot. We're constantly working together to try and get the best information, the most timely information. You know, so, I think that right now I'd say, everyone is together trying to work – and we've been honest about it with our health department. I know

Dr. Barbot is online, if she wants to comment, that we've had to make sure as we've collected information that we thought it was a consistent and accurate. And there's been lag sometimes that probably wouldn't have been the case in a more normal time. But I think, overall, you know what the State is finding out, what we are finding in many ways is the same information, even if it, you know, comes in a different hour, it's the same conclusion you can draw from it. And then, what we're going to do on Monday is put out these three indicators that we think are the truest measure of how we proceed. And I've said publicly, we need to see all three of them move in the right direction, meaning downward together for at least 10 days to two weeks before we can even consider changing any of the current rules and restrictions. So, before I turned to Commissioner Banks, on your first question, I'm going to see – Dr. Barbot, I did my best to summarize. Is there anything you want to add to that answer?

Commissioner Oxiris Barbot, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: No, sir. You got it just right.

Mayor: Okay. Thank you, doctor. And now, Steve Banks on the other question.

Commissioner Steven Banks, Department of Social Services: Let me give you an update. We've been putting out information each day and want to make sure that you have it. So, we will make a note to make sure you're on our distribution list. So far, we've had 343 positive cases, 20 deaths among those 343 cases; 19 of those deaths were after a period of hospitalization, and one after someone was self-isolating. Within that 343 positive cases, in addition to the 20 people that passed away – and my, my heart goes out to them and their loved ones – there were 37 individuals who've been discharged, meaning their cases have been resolved. 139 are in isolation, a space that we created within our shelter system portfolio; 81 are in the hospital; 35 are self-isolating – that means they're in families with children or families where the individuals – I'm sorry, where the individual is in a family that has a self-contained living unit; and 31 have made other arrangements and reunited with family or friends in the community.

Mayor: Steve, I didn't – I may have missed, did you say what the overall census right now in shelter is roughly?

Commissioner Banks: The current overall census is 58,000. And then, of course there are, you know, roughly 4,000 people on the streets. We've conducted more than 12,000 encounters, outreach encounters on the streets since the middle of March. And our outreach teams and our frontline staff have really been doing a tremendous job in this effort and questioning individuals on the street whether or not they've got the symptoms, observing whether they've got the symptoms. Out of all of those engagements, 12 individuals from the street have been transported to the hospital for testing and all of them thus far have come out to be negative.

Moderator: Next, we'll have Matt from Newsday.

Question: Good morning, all. For the Mayor, you said Thursday there could be even stricter restrictions, depending on the infection rate.

Mayor: Wait, Matt, I'm sorry. I couldn't hear your beginning, Matt. Start again.

Question: Sorry about that. I'll say it a little slower and louder. You said on Thursday that the restrictions could, depending on the infection rate, be stricter. What specifically are some of those restrictions beyond the status quo. And for the Chancellor, to what extent are students being graded for this semester?

Mayor: So, Matt, look, I think – it's a good question, I appreciate it – the way to think about this is that with the social distancing, with the shelter in place, we're obviously right now at a situation where we've changed life in New York City profoundly. And people are trying to live in a very, very different way and it's been real difficult for a lot of New Yorkers. But clearly, if we have to even tighten up further, we could. We don't want to – who on earth would want to? But if we felt that we were seeing a resurgence and a danger to the health and safety of New Yorkers, and we have to tighten up the rules further, we would do that and we would obviously work with the State on that as well. So, you know, I don't want to project what all those different things may be, but, you know, the easy example is the interpretation of what's essential and non-essential. I think it's a good interpretation right now. You could tighten that even further. You could take some of the work that is now considered essential – excuse me, considered non-essential – let me say it again, I can do this, Matt – you could take some of the work that's considered essential now and limit even that further or limit the number of people that were allowed to do that work. So, that's one area where you could tighten further. But the fact is, I don't think it's real healthy to do theoreticals either way. Some folks in the media have asked me, you know, describe exactly how we might loosen up at a certain point. And I said, no, it's – we can't do that, because we don't know if we're going to get to that point when we're going to get to that point and it's not healthy, I don't think, to say to people, well, this is what might happen and then raise expectations unduly. I don't think it makes sense to do it the other way either. What I think makes 100 percent sense is to say, here is a plan that New Yorkers are actually making work. As tough as it is, it's working. We have seen some really great indicators in the last week. It's not – we're not out of the woods by any stretch, but something's working. It's clearly because people took shelter in place and social distancing to heart and they're doing it really, really well. Now, Matt, another point is, we have to keep enforcing all of that all the time and the NYPD and a lot of other agencies mentioned – Parks Department, Fire, Sheriff's Office, Buildings Department, they're all a part of that. The Buildings Department did a great job when a lot of the construction was deemed a non-essential, did a great job getting out there and shutting down those construction sites and making sure they didn't come back. Parks has done a great job. NYPD is doing it all the time – grocery stores, pharmacies, streets, parks, you name it. In fact, thank God, as we're seeing today NYPD is starting to see real progress in terms of a police officers coming back who had been sick. We're seeing finally a little a decline in the absentee rate as we beef up the NYPD again, the ability to get out there and do even more enforcement. So, I would argue, Matt, that the singular focus should be the rules and restrictions we have now that are working, enforce them really, really consistently, New Yorkers double down on them. And then, when we see that sustained progress, let's assume the positive with those three indicators go down all in a row, we can talk about some loosening up. If, God forbid, those indicators went in the wrong direction, then we're going to talk about the things that might mean tightening up. And I think that means for everyone, do what you're doing, do not take the foot off the gas so we never have to get to that tightening up. The second question, go ahead.

Chancellor Carranza: So, on grading – work is being graded, but, again, we are emphasizing flexibility in this time period. And the reason for that is we understand that there are students that may not have devices yet. We understand that there may be students that are taking care of their younger siblings and the next door neighbor siblings because their parents or guardians are out doing work for the city. So, flexibility is key. We are – we've put out guidance to the field about grading that will be further refined as we go into remote learning for the remainder of this school year. The bottom line here is that we want students to continue to engage academically, but what we're hearing very strongly from our parents and from our teachers is that there also needs to be a very strong emphasis on trauma-informed curriculum so that students can process what's happening to them. As the Mayor has said, we haven't done this in a hundred years. So, it's important that we are also focusing on the social and emotional learning needs of students as well. And there are many – listen, as a teacher, I had many ways of monitoring student progress and were they actually mastering the concept. Our teachers are being very creative in that regard as well. Grading will not look the same as it would in a traditional in-person classroom, hence flexibility. And that's okay. So, grading is happening, but it doesn't look like it was happening even last semester.

Moderator: Next we have Debralee from Manhattan Times-Bronx Free Press.

Question: Good morning, everyone. How are you?

Mayor: Hey, Debralee.

Question: I wanted to follow up, Mayor, on the conversation that you've been having with labor leaders on this discussion, and also with Chancellor Carranza. What was the precise response from the UFT on this decision? When did they know and what has been their response to you on this? And then also, given the fact that these schools that we're talking about in terms of closure are going to disproportionately impact families that, given your own data – the Department of Health data – is already impacting families that, as you noted, have been disproportionately impacted by illness or death by COVID-19. What contingency plans, what formal steps can the City speak to that will, beyond just looking at remote learning options and looking to bolster the academic support for students? Can you speak to specific reinforcements for students in the Bronx where you're seeing this COVID-19 virus really hit so hard and their families that go beyond the scope of what the DOE is already doing for everyone?

Mayor: Great question, Debralee. Appreciate that very much. I'm going to start and pass to the Chancellor on both parts of your question. On the question of the folks and the families, the kids in the Bronx, I think you're exactly right – as we said, there's this real clear disparities in how this crisis is playing out and folks who have borne the brunt of so many other challenges for, you know, decades – poverty and health disparities long before coronavirus are now bearing the brunt with the coronavirus. It's a cycle of unfairness that's playing out very clearly and deeply and painfully. So, we have to double down. You know, one of the things that Chancellor led the way on was the Bronx Plan. This was, you know – last year, before we ever heard the word – literally, before the coronavirus existed, one of the great things this Chancellor has done was the Bronx Plan to ensure that the best teachers in a lot of subject matters at had not been – literally had not been available in schools in the Bronx – and some of the schools in the Bronx having the

toughest time, had for years and years, not had the teachers they needed in math and science and foreign language – and because of the initiative the Chancellor created and agreed with the union on, we were able this last September to get a whole new group of teachers into the Bronx schools and start to make them better and stronger. And you could see the evidence right away. We're going to have to do all that and more, going forward. So I would – I know the Chancellor will go into a little more detail, but I think we have to think right now about with a distance model what we can do to support kids in the Bronx and kids who are going through the most, including how we can help with mental health. And we already have 888-NYC-WELL to help anyone with mental health challenges, 24/7, multiple languages for free, but we have to think about how to pinpoint that to kids who have particular needs around mental health or obviously any other ways we can help them academically. So, that's part one. And I'd say, of course, in September, doubling down on our investments and our focus in the Bronx so we can come back very, very strong, because this – again, this next school year is going to have to be the greatest school year we've ever had to overcome what we've lost. On the decision process and the workforce, the Chancellor can certainly speak to that, because there's been ongoing discussions. Of course, the people that do the work, our educators and the people who staff our buildings, have been wanting to know what was going to happen next, have been expressing real concerns about health and safety, and just about effectiveness, whether they could – if we came back, we could do it effectively and have any real impact on our kids' education, you know, whether it was going to be worth the risk. And I think consistently what the folks representing our workforce have said is that they're not convinced at all it's worth the risk. And that certainly was important in our thinking. But really, I want to make clear that in making this decision, which we solidified last night – it's something we've been talking about for days, but we really came to the full conclusion last night after long conversations with the Chancellor, with our health leadership, and, as I said, with Dr. Fauci last night. And I think Dr. Fauci is like the great health conscience of America right now and he was so clear about the importance of a careful, cautious approach in fighting back this virus and how keeping schools closed would be a really important component of an overall strategy to beat the coronavirus once and for all. So, when I added up everything I'd heard from the Chancellor and his team, including the discussions they'd had with labor, what our own health leadership was saying, and then ultimately with what Dr. Fauci said, it became clear to me last night that this was the right thing to do. And, of course, we wanted to announce it right away because so many parents, so many educators, everyone's been looking for clarity and we wanted to give it to them.

Chancellor Carranza: Yeah. So, I'll only add that I've had many conversations, daily conversations, multiple conversations every day with the labor leaders that I get to work with and not one of them has expressed anything but support. Let the data drive the decision. So, they are all very supportive of this decision. I think more than anything, students and families and our colleagues, our teachers, administrators, food service workers, custodians, everybody just wants to know what are we going to be doing? And so, I think this is important for – and I want to thank the Mayor for making this decision and us putting that decision out there. That being said, there is an incredible team working in the Bronx led by the executive superintendent Meisha Ross Porter and her team. The superintendents, the high school superintendents, District 75 superintendents, the principals – and there is so many wonderful stories of resilience and enrichment that is happening in the Bronx – people doing things that are creative but supporting each other. I will also say that, you know, to every dark cloud there's a silver lining. And it's

unfortunate that we are in the state of public pandemic that we are. However, when we get to the other side of this pandemic, we will have bridged the digital divide for our students – that is particularly egregious in communities like the Bronx. Students will have laptops, students will have devices, there'll be connected, they will have the ability to explore the world in ways that they didn't have this past August. So, again, it's unfortunate there's a crisis, but we are looking at this from a perspective of how do we continue to make the learning experiences of students even better. And if there is a silver lining that'll be the silver lining, not only in the Bronx but in many communities that have been disproportionately not connected with devices and connectivity.

Moderator: Last two for today. Next, we have Gersh from Streetsblog.

Question: Mr. Mayor, I know you on Streetsblog to ask a non-transportation question, but the ability to move around while also socially distancing is itself a vital issue for fighting the spread of this disease. So, on Friday – so I will ask this question – on Friday, multiple business improvement districts, and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, asked you to open up many more streets, including Broadway, which is virtually car-free right now anyway. And given that you are asked about Oakland's 74 miles of car-free streets yesterday, maybe you can give us a timeline beyond your answer yesterday, which was no.

Mayor: Yeah. Gersh, thank you. Again, I want my team to evaluate the Oakland plan. Look, all over the country, people are learning from each other and people are creating in a crisis atmosphere. So, I want to absolutely understand what Oakland has done and then see what it tells us. I want you to – even though, Gersh, you have a specific mission and I respect your mission, you're very smart person, so I'm going to ask you to take in the fullness of what I said, not just say, you said no, but listen to why I said what I said, which is, we have an NYPD that has been diminished in terms of workforce, although continues to do a great job. We have a concern about enforcement at grocery stores, supermarkets, pharmacies all over the city that is so crucial right now to ensuring that social distancing and shelter in place will work. The NYPD strongly believes, in addition to everything else it has to do to keep people safe, that it needs to focus its enforcement efforts on where people are right now rather than open up a whole new vein of places that have to be enforced and could be gathering points. And that's where we are right now. Now, to be fair, as I said, for the first time, we have seen, and it's been reported by the NYPD, beginning of some progress and getting the workforce back to fuller strength. That's an important factor here. So, we will evaluate the Oakland plan for sure. I'm happy to give you an answer next week on if we see something there we can act on. But for the meantime, I'm saying this is about enforcement, making sure that the enforcement we need in every other way is sufficient, watching the amount of workforce we have to work with the NYPD, not creating the danger of new potential gathering places. And I'm also concerned – and I'll ask the DOT to look at this – you know, we have to, unlike Oakland, which is a noticeably sized city – obviously, a big American city, but it's not New York City. It has nowhere near the population, of the density we have. So, what do we need to keep open for first responders, for ambulances? What do we need to keep open for food deliveries? We have to look at the whole picture and decide what makes sense. So, my straight forward understanding with you will be, we'll have an evaluation on the Oakland plan. We'll have a sense of what we think of it and whether it's applicable here and we'll give you an answer next week.

Moderator: Last for today, we have Jessica from WNYC.

Mayor: Jessica, can you hear us try again? Jessica, you said WNYC? Jessica?

Moderator: Okay, we'll take one more. We have Alyssa from NY1.

Question: Good morning. Forgive me [inaudible] some connection issues, but what the City working with the State on the 180-day waiver, does this mean the school year is shorter? Is June 26 still the plan as the last day?

Mayor: Yeah, I'll start and pass to the Chancellor. The State's been granting waivers to all school systems to-date. We're obviously going to ask them to keep extending that and keep going with the timing of the school year, but not the in-person reality of the school year. We clearly want to see our kids get the most education we can give them. And we want to take it through to what would have been the natural end of the school year.

Chancellor Carranza: So, yes. Mr. Mayor, I also want to emphasize again that while we have not physically been together in schools learning and teaching is happening, teachers are teaching remotely, students are learning remotely. So, we've also been working very closely with the State education department so that they know what our remote learning plan is so that they can see that we are still teaching and students are still learning. It's not in the optimal environment that we would all like, but teaching and learning is still happening. So, we're going to continue to emphasize that as we work with the State around the waiver, but no change in the end of the school year on based on the waivers we've received.

Mayor: Thank you. And everyone, thank you. I know a lot of people all over the city are getting ready for Easter tomorrow. I want to wish you a Happy Easter in advance, even though it's against the backdrop of something very tough and very painful. And I know people can't gather in so many cases the way you want to, but I hope you have your loved ones either with you or on Skype or FaceTime or some way are connecting with the people you love. And even if you can't be in the same place, the spirit, the love of the holiday, the faith is with you all. God bless all New Yorkers in the middle, this incredibly difficult crisis. But again, I am so proud of all of you and the way you're helping us forward out of this crisis. So, keep doing what you're doing and God bless you all.

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