

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 8, 2020, 10:00 AM

MEDIA CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning, everyone. I hope you all had a great Labor Day weekend. I hope you had a chance to relax. We had beautiful weather and hopefully everyone got a well-deserved break after everything we've been through. And look, I want to talk today about the ways we to keep ourselves safe, going forward, and that means being really smart about folks who are returning from some of the states where there's a real challenge with the coronavirus, where folks have to quarantine when they come back here in New York City, whether they're folks who don't live here or folks returning from visiting family or whatever it may be. We're going to talk about that in a moment, because I really want people to focus on that reality at this crucial moment. We're going into the fall. We have to really consolidate our gains in fighting this disease.

I'll come to that in a moment, but first let me talk about this weekend in another perspective. Look, this weekend that we just had, usually, in addition to all the other family celebrations and folks enjoying the last weekend – in a lot of ways, we feel, the last big weekend of summer. One of the high points each year is the celebration of Caribbean culture, the parade on Eastern Parkway and the J'Ouvert celebration. This year, we had a very different situation. There was not going to be the big events. It was very important, in fact, to protect people's health and safety and not have those big events and have a clear message to the community that health and safety comes first. And that's exactly what the leaders and members of the community did. You see here pictures of members of the so-called God Squad, an amazing group of clergy and community activists who go out into communities in Central Brooklyn to preach peace and to help avoid conflict. They do amazing work. I want to thank all the members of the God Squad. I want to thank all the community-based organizations that were out over the last few days, keeping the peace in central Brooklyn, the elected officials, the clergy, the Cure Violence movement and the Crisis Management System. And, of course, the men and women of the NYPD were out as well and working closely with community members and community leaders. And that was the key to this weekend. So, a situation where there was a lot of concern given everything that had happened, but, in the end, people did a great job on the ground. We had one incident – and it was a very troubling incident where one individual shot five people in Crown Heights in the early morning hours, Monday. One of those people was a six-year-old boy, and that's deeply troubling. Thank God, none have life-threatening injuries. But except for that incident, overwhelmingly, we had a peaceful weekend in central Brooklyn and it really is because of the hard work of everyone. So, thank you to the community. Thank you to the NYPD. Thank you to everyone for working together in these trying times to protect the peace.

Now, back to the question of how we protect ourselves going forward. So, we're going into the fall, a lot more activity expected, and we have a lot of challenges to face right here in New York City in terms of beating back the coronavirus. But we know travel – all over the world, all over this country, we've seen travel is a crucial part of the equation and being smart about restrictions on people who travel is one of the keys to fighting the coronavirus. So, I want to make sure if you're one of those folks listening to my voice now, or friends, family, coworkers, anyone in your life, if they've come back from one of those 33 states and territories up on the screen now – if you're coming back from one of those 33 States or territories, you've got to quarantine for two weeks. It is the smart thing to do. It's the safe thing to do. It will keep you and your family and your community safe, and it is the law. So, again, whether you're a New Yorker coming back, or whether you're someone visiting either coming from one of those 33 places, you have to quarantine. Now, we are doing more and more to make sure people understand that – more and more activity at airports, at highways, bridges, tunnels, you name it. But here's another new piece – and the Sheriff's Office has done an outstanding job. I want to thank Sheriff Joe Fucito and his whole team. They have a new approach at the Port Authority bus terminal, where they will be pulling over buses before they arrive. And this is buses that are coming specifically from states with a high rate of COVID. And they'll be giving out those traveler health forms to get people right away to sign up so we can make sure they quarantine. So, the officers are literally be going on the buses, talking to the passengers, giving out those forms, making sure that people fill them out. This is so important to keeping us safe. Now, again, expect a lot more activity economically going into the fall, school's opening, we are keeping a close eye also, of course, on the flu season – a lot going on. We have to get this part about travelers right. So, again, thanks to the Sheriff's Office and thanks to all of the agencies and all the travel companies that are helping us with this, because they understand how important this quarantine is as well.

Okay, well, as we talk about the fall coming back and school coming back, obviously the particularly crucial piece of the life of this city, this is a time where we see so much happening to get ready for the school year. You have educators going back today to their schools, getting ready for the school year. But throughout these last weeks, in fact, going all the way back to June, you've seen hardworking folks getting the school buildings ready, whether they're folks from Department of Education, school facilities, School Construction Authority, the custodial teams in each school – everyone's been working hard, they've been working nonstop. And now, the ventilation inspections we've talked about over the last few days, they've been completed for all 1,485 public school buildings. Again, 1,485 buildings fully inspected. And that includes 64,550 classrooms. And what we can say today is 96 percent of those classrooms have passed and are ready to go. Work will continue on the classrooms that need a little more to be done before school opens. There's time, obviously, to make the improvements before school. And this morning, we will put the inspection data up on the Department of Education website, so you can see exactly what's going on in your school. And again, I'm going to affirm what the Chancellor and I have said many times, if any classroom is not ready, it will not be used. It would only be used when it's ready. But, thank God, the overwhelming majority of classrooms are ready right now.

So, as we've said, this is all about health and safety first. The approach we're going to take to reopening our schools is to be there for our kids, be there for our families, give them what they need, but always do it from the perspective of health and safety first. Here to talk to you about

these inspections and all the work that's being done to get school ready, our Chancellor Richard Carranza.

Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Let me just say that September is my favorite time of the year. And you can feel that energy of the new school year and getting it going again. No doubt this year will be very different in so many ways, but I know that today educators, students, and families across the city are getting ready for the school year to begin and across the city teachers and staff and principals are in their buildings, bringing those buildings to life. We've been busy in buildings as well. We've completed ventilation inspections in every single New York City public school building. And because – and you've heard us say this – the Mayor and I say this before – health and safety comes first, always. Today, we are not only telling our families that, but showing them that fact. Every family will be able to see the results of the inspections that we have done in their child's school. Just visit schools.nyc.gov and you'll be able to see the list for each school.

Here's what we found overall. Of over 64,000 classrooms surveyed, we found that the ventilation is 96 percent in good working order, in 96 percent of those classrooms. Where we need to take a little more action on the ventilation issues, we are. And, in fact, repairs are being completed on an aggressive timeline. In fact, many buildings that were surveyed – remember, that was just a moment in time have already been fixed. So, rooms in need of repair are safe for one individual, and that's important to understand as well. Any repairs that aren't complete before the first day of full-time teaching and learning will not be used. It's as simple as that. Now that there are 10 buildings that we've identified as needing repairs across the board, we're prioritizing these buildings to get all systems up to par by the 21st of September, meanwhile, staff at those buildings will be temporarily working from home.

Look, I've been a teacher, and I've been a principal, and I'm a parent. We're leaving no stone unturned to protect our students and our educators and our families. That's why we're being tremendously aggressive in all of our health and safety protocols from ventilation to face covering, to physical distancing, to nightly cleaning and frequent hand washing and sanitizing. It's why we will reinspect and make all information available to the public as well. These next few days are about getting everything ready for the incredible school year that lies ahead. So, we're happy to have people back in the buildings today, preparing for this new school year.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Chancellor. Thank you to you and your team. I have to tell you everyone, the Chancellor's team had been working nonstop. There's been work weekends, nights, nonstop for months and months – extraordinary dedication to the children and families of New York City. So, thank you Chancellor.

And so, as we get ready for school, a lot going on, and we really have been listening to the voices of parents in these last months. We survey the parents of the city, there's been a constant dialogue, listening for what parents are feeling and needing. And what they told us was, look, parents have gone through so much, families have gone through so much over the last six months. Parents need to get back to work. Parents need to make sure their kids are getting the best possible education. And for so many of them, that means that they really need their kids in a school building getting the support of educators. Parents have been stretched so thin trying to be

teachers and breadwinners simultaneously. They need relief. Kids are so anxious to get back with their friends and get back into everything great about school. So, we have been working from the beginning with imperative, the voices of the people, telling us what they need, and that has now gotten a whole series of pieces to come together, listening to the voices of the people and preparing for opening day. So, when in-person classes resume on Monday, September 21st, a lot of families will then be able – family members will be able to get back to work. They'll be able to do things differently in a better way. Now, some families clearly need help to do that and they need childcare. And we've talked about this now over recent weeks, the program we've put together from scratch – this didn't exist before the last few weeks, but it's called the Learning Bridges program. And the idea is to provide free childcare, quality supervised childcare and learning for kids from the preschool ages up to eighth grade. Now, the program will begin on September 21st and it's going to be highly prioritized. I want this to be clear, it's something we're going to start and continue to build as we go along – highly prioritize, according to who has the greatest need. And you'll hear more about that in a moment. But beginning September 21st, 30,000 kids will have access to a seat the first day of school, 70 percent of families with that priority level will have access by the end of September. And we're reaching 100,000 seats in December, all of them free. Now, this work has, again, been extraordinary over recent weeks. So many people have gotten involved to do this work – School Construction Authority, OMB, DOE you name it – agencies and individuals putting our heart and soul into creating something that didn't exist, but to make it ready for our kids and our families. And I particularly want to help – excuse me, want to thank everyone at Department of Youth and Community Development – DYCD. They've done amazing work for our kids in so many ways before this with afterschool programs and so many extraordinary supports for young people. Now, they've taken the lead in this exciting new element we'll be bringing to the equation. Here to tell you about Learning Bridges and everything that we'll be doing for our kids and families, the Deputy Commissioner for Youth Services Susan Haskell.

Deputy Commissioner Susan Haskell, Department of Youth and Community

Development: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As you said, when in-person school begins on September 21st, most schools and preschool programs will begin on a blended learning model. So, students will, week to week, attend some school days in-person and some days remotely. And we know that working parents will need a helping hand. So, Learning Bridges will provide support by offering free childcare on remote learning days for families whose children are enrolled in blended learning. And in preparation for Learning Bridges, we have been working hard with our agency partners to identify suitable spaces throughout the five boroughs, including community centers and cultural institutions. Whenever possible, outdoor activities will also be available.

So, one of the questions we get is what will Learning Bridges look like for my child? For a preschooler, a typical day will include center-based play, social emotional skills development, early learning and physical movement. For a student in K-to-eight grades, you'll have support for your remote learning activities. It will also be balanced with physical fitness and STEM activities, creative arts literacy, and because it's difficult for anyone to learn on an empty stomach, meals will be provided for free, and snacks, at the programs. And, as you know, and as you've heard, ensuring the safety of all New Yorkers is a priority of the administration and Learning Bridges is no exception. So, we want to assure parents that activities and programs will be offered in a safe and welcoming environment. To keep young people safe and healthy, the

programs will follow New York City and New York State Department of Health guidelines, particularly as it relates to COVID-19. In terms of applying for the Learning Bridges program, all families who previously expressed interest at the DOE website will automatically go into the enrollment process and others can complete an online survey by visiting the DOE website at schools.nyc.gov/learningbridges to learn more.

Offers to participate in the Learning Bridges seats will be made throughout the fall as programs are matched to a DOE school. For the K to eight component, DYCD will follow up regularly with parents and guardians who've expressed interest. So, DYCD, DOE, and community-based partners – we look forward to providing the safe, engaging space for students to learn this year. And on behalf of Commissioner Chong and Chancellor Carranza, we thank you, Mayor, for making this a priority for families.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Deputy Commissioner and congratulations to you and everyone at DYCD. This has been a Herculean effort but also a labor of love, because I know how much all of you care about our kids and our families. So, thank you.

Now, let's go over our daily indicators. Okay. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals or suspected COVID-19, threshold is 200 patients – today's report, 56. And the percentage confirmed positive, 11 percent. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average, threshold, 550 cases – today's report, 231. And number three, percent of people tested positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold five percent – today's report, 1.49 percent. Okay. A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: [Inaudible] our Q and A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Chancellor Carranza, Commissioner Grillo, the Deputy Commissioner for Youth Services Susan Haskell, the Deputy Chancellor for Early Childhood Education Josh Wallack, Sheriff Fucito and Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. The first question today, it goes to Courtney Gross from NY1.

Question: Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Good Courtney. How was your weekend?

Question: It was lovely. Thank you. So, I would love to talk about Kathryn Garcia. She submitted her letter of resignation this morning, I believe, and is planning to potentially run for mayor. So, I'd love to get your thoughts about that, whether your thoughts about her resigning and your thoughts about her potentially running for mayor.

Mayor: Sure. I mean, look, Kathryn has done a great job for this city and I really appreciate all she did not just as, Sanitation Commissioner and many highlights there, and I'm particularly proud of the fact that on our watch, I wish we didn't deal with the largest blizzard in the history

of New York City, but we did, and, and Kathryn and her team did a great job getting the city right back up and running quickly. The extraordinary work she's done on the pathway to eradicate lead paint poisoning in this city once and for all. She did great work helping us with the Housing Authority and obviously more recently to make sure every New Yorker had food. So really appreciate her great efforts.

Look she's one of three of very talented, effective leaders from my administration who have now chosen to either run for mayor or explore, run for the mayoralty. Kathryn, Maya Wiley, Laurie Sutton, all extraordinarily talented leaders. I'm proud of all of them, what they achieve in this administration. Three strong women. I think that's good for New York City. So I wish her and all of them great luck. Go ahead, Courtney.

Question: And then on the ventilation inspections, now that they are complete, the four percent that have not passed inspection, what is the actual number of classrooms for – that have not passed inspection and how much work needs to be done in those classrooms to get them up to par? I imagine the Department of Education has already kind of, you know, needs more space considering all the social distancing that needs to happen. How problematic is it that four percent of classrooms do not pass these inspections?

Mayor: I'll start and then turn to Richard and Lorraine. Look, I think the fact that 96 percent are ready to go is the most important thing here. Clearly that means you're going to have a lot of schools that are all ready to go. You're going to have schools that just have a handful of classrooms they've got to work out. Remember schools are using a variety of spaces, different than any time previously, Courtney. The order from the beginning that the Chancellor sent out was looking at every kind of space in your building. Obviously more recently, a lot of schools have applied for and been granted permission to use outdoor spaces. There's lots of different options to make it work. So that's the first point to say in the second point to say is a lot of these classrooms will be repaired and ready to go by the 21st. Chancellor, do you want to add?

Chancellor Carranza: Yes, Mr. Mayor. So if you think – there were 64,550 classrooms that were [inaudible], just think about how many walkthroughs that was. So 96 percent is 61,568 classrooms that are ready to go. The four percent is approximately 2,800 classrooms, and I'll let Lorraine add some more detail, but a vast majority of the work that needs to be done in those classrooms is what I would consider minor and not capital. So there are little things that need to be done, but keeping our promise, we said, we would make sure that everybody has functioning ventilation.

Mayor: Can you hear us Lorraine? You may be on mute. There you go.

Commissioner Lorraine Grillo, Department of Design and Construction: Can you hear me? Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Absolutely, an answer to Courtney's question. The 10 schools that we just talked about amount to 837 classrooms, but I will say work has already begun, and four of our classrooms – four of our buildings we believe have been completed and are being re-inspected today. So that is a large portion over 200 of those classrooms.

Mayor: Courtney, just to conclude you heard Richard do the math. The fact is that we have several thousand classrooms that need work, but remember we have 1,400 school buildings we're talking about here, and when you average it out, obviously in some buildings, as I said, some will have no problem. Some will have one or two classrooms, some will have more, but there's time to resolve a lot of those and have them ready. Go ahead.

Moderator: The next is Shant from the Daily News.

Question: Yeah. Good morning, Mr. Mayor. what I wanted to get back to your characterization of the weekend as is overwhelmingly a peaceful one and yeah, I just want to say, you know, yesterday five people were wounded, including a six-year-old boy and his mother are there celebrating J'ouvert. There were additional shootings over the weekend and this all comes amid a spike in crime. So how can you characterize this as an overwhelmingly peaceful weekend?

Mayor: Shant, I was talking about very clearly and I think you heard me, I was talking about Central Brooklyn and I was talking about the deep concern that folks had would there have been issues in the past, around J'ouvert, and then on top of that, the concerns we have now because of the coronavirus, and there was tremendous concern how all those pieces would add up and whether community members would hear the plea from their community leaders to not turn out because the big events weren't happening. I want to be very clear. The community leaders, the clergy, the elected officials, community groups, cure violence, crisis management system, as well as NYPD really did a fantastic job in the days leading up, telling people this is not business as usual, this is not something to turn out for. Let's focus on health and safety and overwhelmingly that's what the people in the community did. There was one bad incident, for sure, and as I said, thank God, no lives were lost. But compared to the concern folks had we saw minimal, thank God, minimal violence, but much more importantly, we saw an extraordinary community effort to keep the peace. That's what I'm talking about.

Question: Okay. I'm going back to Learning Bridges. Just want to say, ask will kids in the Learning Bridges be in the same pods they're with in school, and if not, will you, will the city expand contract – the contact tracing to include kids in the Learning Bridges? That's an excellent question, and we actually talked about this a week or two ago in one of our meetings. Let me turn to Susan and to Josh Wallack to give you the details on that. You want to go first?

Deputy Commissioner Haskell: Either way. Yeah to answer your question about matching schools, to Learning Bridges programs, the goal there is to maximize group stability. We recognize that not every classroom group is going to be a match for a Learning Bridges classroom. Exactly, but we are absolutely going to integrate the tracing and reporting on students and Learning Bridges programs in close coordination with their school groups so that we can stay on top of that.

Mayor: Thank you. Josh, you want to add?

Deputy Chancellor for Early Childhood Education Josh Wallack: I'll just say – Susan hit the main points. I think it's both. I think we are going to do everything we can to keep groups together, and this program is part of the Department of Education and Department of Health and

Mental Hygiene and Test and Trace operation. So we will be doing everything we can to make sure that they remain in those groups and that we are tracking our progress as we go.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: The next is Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

Mayor: Good, Henry. How was your weekend?

Question: It was good. Good – it's over. That's the bad part.

Mayor: That does happen, Henry.

Question: I wanted to ask you whether the training of police officers has changed at all in light of all of the circumstances that we've experienced this past year, and if so, how? If not, why not?

Mayor: Yeah. It continues to change and evolve all the time, truly Henry. This began with Commissioner Bratton making a decision, which I thought was exactly right, and it took some real resources, but was absolutely worth it to retrain the entire police force, something that had never been done and then to make the retraining a regular annual activity, and I want to give a lot credit as well to First Deputy Commissioner Ben Tucker, who has been leading these efforts, and it's not just a regular training, it's not just the deescalation training. It is also the implicit bias training which is something that's grown over the years to address underlying issues in a productive manner. So that training has evolved literally every single year. It will continue to. We want to continue efforts at deescalation and continue efforts to ensure the NYPD listens to and works with communities through neighborhood policing. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Okay. can you tell me a little bit about what kind of epidemiological projections the city has for the fall? What do you anticipate in terms of increased infection rates in the City of New York, going into the fall?

Mayor: Let me start and turn to Dr. Varma. I mean, we talk about this all the time. Anticipate is an interesting word, Henry. It's not an unfair word, but I want to tell you that we don't assume that things are going to be exactly the way we want it to be, nor do we assume the worst we prepare for the worst, but now it's been, you know, months of tremendous stability. I think our job is to maintain that stability and then drive the infection rate down. Unquestionably, the biggest factor is New Yorkers who are observing social distancing in so many ways. It's not perfect, but it's really impressive. The use of face mask is really impressive and a lot of precautions being taken in workplaces and so many parts of the city. So that's the biggest piece of the equation, but also, you know, being very careful about what we open when, how we do it, the precautions we take, like the immense amount of measures being taken to ensure the safety and health of everyone in the school buildings. So right now I'd say we think we have a good opportunity to stay stable and then to fight the disease back more. But the next, you know, month, six weeks are crucial because there will be so much more activity to keep a very tight lid

on that and obviously move our test and trace resources effectively and quickly as needed. Jay, you want to add?

Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma: Great. Thank you. I think there may be covered all of the really essential points. I think I would just add a little bit more detail to the notion. There are areas of concern and there are areas to be maybe cautiously optimistic. The areas of concern is, as the Mayor noted is as we are progressively opening up more, the situation around the rest of the country is not necessarily improving, and of course we know that during the winter months people move progressively indoors and there was also the overlap of other respiratory viruses. So those are the areas of concern and the models that had been we've analyzed and looked at all predicted those could potentially create problems. For a sort of cautious optimism are, we've seen that in the Southern hemisphere, the flu season has been dramatically reduced by all of the COVID-social distancing and mass wearing measures. So our flu season it's possible it could be more mild than we anticipated, and also of course, our testing and tracing initiatives continue to perform at a very high level, and those really represent a critical safeguard.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: The next is Julia from the Post.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. I understand with Shant's question, your clarification that the overwhelmingly peaceful characterization was just in central Brooklyn where five people, including a six-year-old were shot. But could you address overall violence, shootings in the city over the weekend where you know, over 10 people shot on Monday, another eight shootings on Sunday and are police doing enough to be proactive to make the city safer instead of just being reactive once these shootings occur?

Mayor: Look, Julia, we've talked about this many times. I said that you saw the recent statistics come out. Police are obviously being proactive in their strategies in so many ways. That's the history of NYPD that's what CompStat is all about. Everything that I'm seeing suggests more and more targeted activity by police, more and more police being moved where the need is greatest, the number of gun arrests now at the same level it was last year, and in fact it's been growing. So yeah, I think the entire nature of the NYPD is to think proactively and strategically, and that's what you're seeing. We have a lot to overcome. It's been the perfect storm I've talked about. It's been a very, very tough environment, but I do see more and more work being done to reduce the violence.

Question: And on that issue of arrest, actually only 20 percent of shootings have ended up with an arrest that's down significantly from a shooting clearance rate of 30 to 33 percent. So can you address that? It seems to contradict what you just said.

Mayor: No, I don't think it does. Do we have, because we had a long period of time where a huge percentage of NYPD was out sick. We had the extraordinary, additional burdens placed on the NYPD by the coronavirus. I mean, come on. This has been, when I say perfect storm, I don't use the phrase lightly. It's been a healthcare crisis an employment crisis, schools shut down the very fabric of our society just torn apart by this horrible disease. We're now pulling the pieces

back together. So, it's not surprising that there's some comeback that's needed, but clearly what's happened to the NYPD is more and more gun arrests, more and more of the right moves to address violence, and that will continue.

Moderator: The next is Hazel from CBS.

Mayor: Hazel, can you hear us? You may be on mute. Hazel.

Moderator: Hazel, do we have you here?

Question: Can you hear me now?

Mayor: There you go.

Question: Okay.

Mayor: The mute button is always the problem.

Question: I know, it really is. Getting back to school questions here. A lot of parents are still struggling to figure out how they're going to get their children to school. Will there be buses running for all the students who rely on yellow buses for transportation, and are the safety protocols in place for those school buses?

Mayor: Yeah, all the – we'll have details in the next day or two, but all the school bus companies are moving forward with their service. A school bus service will be provided obviously with different reality because you're not going to have as many kids on the buses, but at the same time, you're not going to see as many kids going to school on each given day. But there will be comprehensive school bus service, again, I'll hold on the details because there's a few more things we're pulling together and we'll have a public announcement very shortly. Chancellor, do you want to add anything? Okay, go ahead, Hazel.

Question: And just getting back quickly to the Kathryn Garcia's resignation, she was very critical of this city cutting the budget for the Sanitation Department, laying off hundreds of workers. She said that that was part of the reason why she was walking away. In fact, she called it unconscionable. Just wondering what your reaction is to hearing her say that?

Mayor: Look, Hazel. Last thing we want to do is cut back on sanitation services, nor do I want to cut back on police and fire, education, health care, but let's be honest, a lot of – a lot of what we have depended on in recent years has already been cut. Some of the cuts that she notes are painful cuts, no one wanted to do them, but we are running out of money because of the coronavirus, because of a profound economic and budget crisis, and I feel like sometimes folks, you know, talk about this as if it's abstract. It's not abstract. It's happening right now. The cuts I've already begun on a huge scale and God forbid they continue and we go to the point of thousands and thousands of layoffs. So no one wants to make cuts like that, but we've had to against the backdrop of an extraordinarily tough budget situation, and if we don't get help soon from Albany, there'll be a lot worse cuts than that. That's the sad reality.

Moderator: The next is Christina Veiga from Chalkbeat.

Question: Hi, Mayor, Chancellor, thanks for taking my question. My first is having to do with the ventilation reports. I'm wondering how parents or teachers should make sense of them. I don't really see any indication of whether each classroom was deemed safe. It's just kind of a list of the mechanical components of ventilation and whether they're working or not. So if you go to one of the school buildings that's been closed, for example, there's nothing really there that makes it clear to me why this building has been deemed unsafe compared with another one.

Mayor: Well, again, I'll do my best just to start and then Chancellor or Lorraine Grillo can jump in. The – look, think about everything we're doing - this school building – and obviously all of it with close coordination with Department of Health and Test and Trace Corp. We've been showing you examples now over weeks of the cleaning that's being done, the the different PPE, hand sanitizer being put in place, all these different measures, the ventilation issue, was there proper air circulation in combination with all the other health and safety measures? And what this inspection regimen was trying to determine is which classrooms had that. And if anyone didn't have it yet, they were held back for additional work. So I don't think it's a lot more complex than that. It's either the ventilation is what we needed to be by the engineering standards that are in place or it isn't, and if it isn't, more work needs to be done. Chancellor or Lorraine?

Chancellor Carranza: I would only add that this will continue to be updated, especially as repairs are completed, and then refining, you know, when we talked about, you know, over 64,000 classrooms that are visited, we wanted to get that information out very, very quickly. But it will continue to be updated as repairs are completed.

Mayor: As I turn to the CEO of the School Construction Authority, I just want to note, this is what school construction authority does endlessly is make sure that our school buildings are what they need to be, including normal times doing a whole rehab of a school building, in some cases building new ones, whatever it may be. So when you really want to know how a school building works, Lorraine Grillo is the person to talk to him. So how would you answer that question, Lori?

President Grillo: Well, thank you, Mr. Mayor. I would answer it almost exactly as you answered, which is this was one component of what we've been working on all summer long into – including electrostatic cleaning and all of the other components go with keeping those buildings safe. This particular effort was, as you said, to see if the ventilation in a particular room is operating properly, and that is what this is, was meant to do, and so that information room by room is clear. If there is no ventilation, you will see that room will be closed. Very simple.

Mayor: Go ahead, Christina.

Question: I'm just curious whether there have been like tests of the actual air exchange rate and whether that information might be shared? I know the CDC is recommending at least twice an hour, and additionally, I'm curious whether pre-K and CBOs, or community organizations, are

having their ventilation checked or whether are the Learning Bridges programs are also having the ventilation systems checked?

Mayor: Lorraine, you want to speak to that?

President Grillo: I cannot speak to the CBOs. I will tell you that anywhere there is a New York City school building, those classrooms are being checked, every single one, and I also would like to say that we're working closely with our partners in the unions who have been working on random testing, as you mentioned, the CO2 rates, the CFM rate, those kinds of engineering type words, they have been working on that as well. So we, we exchange information. We talk about it constantly and any red flags we bring to one another. So I think you can feel very confident that the union, as well as SCA and school facilities have been working very hard to make every classroom safe.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: We have time for two more for today.

Deputy Chancellor Wallack: Josh Wallack, I can jump in on the community based organizational question.

Mayor: Yeah, go ahead, Josh. I'm sorry.

Deputy Chancellor Wallack: So thanks for the question. I just want to say that we are working very closely with our community based partners across the city. We're are putting out guidance for them so that they understand the standards for ventilation that we expect. Of course they have – they're in their own space with their own landlords. So it's not quite the same, but we'll be working very closely with them to make sure that they have a safe and healthy places for our children, and we'll work with their landlords to make sure that is done.

Mayor: Okay. Thank you, Josh. Go ahead.

Moderator: We still have time for two more left today. The next is Erin from Politico.

Question: Hi there, Mr. Mayor, I wanted to ask about the childcare seats. I understand correctly, you're saying they're only going to be 30,000 in September. You know, and you had previously announced there would be a 100,000 which now it sounds like it won't happened until December. So what accounts for that? Why weren't you able to get to a 100,000 for the school year start and you know, what are parents supposed to do who don't get one?

Mayor: Yeah, so Erin look, we said the goal was a 100,000 and we will get to a 100,000. Starting something from scratch is a huge endeavor. It just did not exist before it had to be created and all those agencies I mentioned before have been hard at work making it happen, and making sure it's healthy and safe, but those are the numbers of when we can get to each level, it will all be for free. It will be prioritized. So the parents who need it most will get the first seats

and then we'll build out from there. But just a matter of how much had to be done so quickly to ensure that it could be safe, it could be free, it could be available. Go ahead.

Question: Alright, thanks. And then, you know, my second question is just about your approach to development in the city. You know, last week we saw - excuse me - the project on the Queens waterfront, it doesn't look like it's going to happen at this point, and a lot of people in the industry kind of observed that you aren't pursuing as much of an aggressive agenda as perhaps you once did. I wonder if you agree with that characterization, and if so, you know, what's the reason for that?

Mayor: Erin, I think it comes down to, we call them like we see them. Each different site, each different neighborhood has to be looked at individually. That case, I think the city was very clear about the fact that it was a private application. It was not a city rezoning, and the developers did not offer enough to make it worthwhile to the public. I mean, I've said from before I was Mayor, you know, we need to drive a hard bargain and ensure that the public's interest is represented in these decisions. And the areas where I've been aggressive is where we get a lot of affordable housing and a lot of public benefit, things like parks and open space where we get a good deal for the people. That's where we move forward, and where we don't, we don't. So I really think it's a case by case basis and that's how we'll proceed from now.

Moderator: Last question for today goes to Katie Honan from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Hey, good morning. I was getting nervous that I wasn't going to get called on, but I have two very important questions –

Mayor: We don't want you to be nervous, Katie. Patience is a virtue.

Question: I refreshed the WebEx. It's a whole process. The first question that I have is for the Chancellor is in regards to staffing levels at schools. I know I'd asked it last week. A lot of people spoke, but I don't think it was really answered, and my question, if you have the specific total tally of requested teachers and the principals had to request them. So the number of teachers that are requested and then what's what the pool we're working with? Just the number of DOE subs and redeployed office staffers there are because we've heard from some principals that they just simply still do not have enough teachers and don't know when they're going to get them.

Chancellor Carranza: Yeah. So Katie let me be clear. As principals are working through the programming at their school sites, you also have to keep in mind that there are still families that had previously indicated a blended learning environment that are switching to a remote learning environment. So the number keeps moving in terms of how many students principals need to program for. So obviously that impacts the number of staff. Now, do we have numbers? Absolutely. We're looking through those numbers, but what we're trying to do is verify what it actually looks like in terms of how many teachers for what school. That being said, we've already identified underlying teaching credentials for centralized staff. We've also looked at all of our subs. We've also looked at our ATR educators as well. So we can get you more details on all of those numbers. But again, this is not an exact science and it's not a one size fits all. So it's a

little bit of a moving target, but we're working through that. We should have some more details very soon.

Mayor: Yeah, let me just add Katie. I mean, again, what we start with here is thousands of DOE employees already in place, able to teach, not yet applied to schools, that process will happen in the next few days and then the substitutes who we rely on throughout the year, obviously, some of whom who have been involved in our regional enrichment centers but there's thousands of them as well. So we have a really strong pool to turn to. We're making the final decisions on the exact number that we need to bring on board and then how to apply them to each school, that is going to be done literally over the next few days. Now in a non-COVID school year, a lot of adjustments are made up to the opening day of school, normally, even sometimes in the days after school begins. So it's not unusual for a principal to know that there's a certain amount of adjusting at the beginning, but what we can say for sure is we're going to bring in thousands more educators and make sure that principals have what they need so they can move forward. Go ahead.

Question: Great. Thanks. And I guess since Lorraine Grillo's on the call too, I'll ask, I know that there had been plans for some schools to utilize like ancillary space outside of the building, particularly in districts that are already overcrowded when there isn't a pandemic on top that. So can you give an update? Are kids going to be going to school in libraries and museums and, you know, warehouses? I don't know. I mean, probably, hopefully not warehouses, but could you give an update?

Mayor: We're not thinking warehouses.

Question: Could you just give an update on that? And when parents will be notified because you know, school starts, I guess it starts later than usual, but any update on that?

President Grillo: Well, if I may, Mr. Mayor, to answer that question, Katie, we've been working with Department of Education and their space planning group to find those spaces that are, as you mentioned, with schools that are overcrowded. I would not - cultural institutions is unlikely. I don't know that we've had any agreements with them, but I will tell you there are a number of private and parochial schools who are either closed for good or closing this season. We've taken advantage of that. Our partners at CUNY and areas where they're not occupying. So we're working very, very closely with a number of different groups.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Lorraine, and look everyone as we close up today, here we are now going into the fall, a lot going on as you can hear in the course of this press conference, but again, it comes down to this. New Yorkers have been heroic over the last six months. New Yorkers have fought back against this disease. This city is now the envy of the nation, it's to so many people it's absolutely miraculous that this city has come back the way we have, and just been so disciplined in fighting this disease. And so here's what I say as we start the fall, let's go farther. We have it in our power to do so. Yeah, there will be more activity and there will be new challenges, no doubt, but we've also proven what we can achieve, so why don't we achieve some more? Continuing that discipline, continuing to make the smart moves that everyday New Yorkers are making. We'll keep being careful about each decision we make and we'll keep

putting health and safety first here at City Hall, but I'll tell you again, everyday New Yorkers are the ones who are winning this battle. We have it in our power to beat back this disease even more and that's what I want us to devote ourselves to over these next few months, because I'm convinced this city has shown the whole country how it's done, and if we keep leading, I think a lot of other people will take inspiration from that. If we keep leading more and more people be able to come back to their jobs. If we keep leading, we can take those big steps towards a better life again. So, as we start the fall, a profound thank you for the last six months, let's keep going. Let's go even farther. Thank you, everybody.

###