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To: Mayor's Press Office
Cc: Norvell, Wiley
Subject: Pool report - Staten Island

In a pre-K classroom at P.S. 59 in St. George, Staten Island, kids were accompanied by their parents, who stuck by their sides for the first day of school only. Kids were wearing matching T-shirts given out as they arrived, saying Harbor View School, playing with play doh and blocks. Parents coaxed kids to sit down around a carpet at the front of the room. At least three students greeted this move with tears, but eventually calmed down. Chancellor Farina intervened to attempt to comfort one crying 4-year-old. Also on hand in the classroom: Staten Island Borough President Jimmy Oddo, Councilwoman Debi Rose, and Teachers Union president Michael Mulgrew.

Farina joined the group of children around the carpet. Teacher Paige Buono, for whom this was her first day ever as a teacher, led the class in a brief good morning song. Farina asked kids, "What did you do this summer? (one: the beach and the playground, "but it was too hot"; another: Sesame Place) until Mayor de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray arrived. "Are you guys ready for a story?" BdB asked. BdB, McCray, and Farina took turns reading to the kids from a book called "Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes" and asking them questions.

"Do you guys have school shoes? Lets see your shoes," de Blasio said. The children showed them off. He began the story, which features a cat riding a school bus to school, wearing red shoes. "Do cats go to school?" "Nooo," the children replied. "This is a smart pre-K class," BdB said. He went on to ask them how many feet they have, and how many feet cats have, both of which they answered correctly.

McCray asks the class, "What color shoes does he have on?" "Red," the children reply. Farina says: "They're ready for kindergarten. Pre-K is too easy. It's too easy." McCray recounts how Pete the Cat went to his classroom, visited the library. Farina took over for his visit to the lunch room and playing outside on the playground. She taught the class the word "cafeteria" and asked them to repeat it after her. "Kindergarten ready!" she said. She pointed to a picture of a piece of playground equipment and asked what it was called. Children: "Slide!" Farina: "You're much much too smart."

De Blasio told the teacher, "You've got a great class already" before surrendering the story book.