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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. You know, we've talked about this for weeks, for months – the grit, the strength of New Yorkers; the amazing ability in this crisis to keep fighting back no matter what has been thrown at us; the compassion; the decency. So, those are the things we should celebrate. We're going to talk today about some of the challenges too, the trauma, the pain, so much of what people have been through. We're going to particularly focus on our kids and everything they are dealing with in the midst of this crisis. But before we get to that, I want to talk about what we're doing to try and beat back this disease once and for all, because, in the end, it's the first, second, third topic every day – is how do we fight this disease? How do we get to a point where we can really get back to normal in this city? And I want to be really clear about the fact that the work that's being done now to ensure that people who travel to this city really understand the laws of this State, and this City, really understand they have to quarantine. And this is true for someone coming in from outside New York City, it's true of a New Yorker goes to visit family, or, for any other reason, travels to one of the states that's really having a tough time with COVID-19 – whatever reason, whoever the person is. if you traveled to one of those states or come from one of those states, you come here, you really have to quarantine. It's the law, it's for everyone safety.

One of the great efforts to make sure everyone understands this and to enforce this has been done by our Sheriff's Office. And I was out yesterday in Staten Island by the Bayonne Bridge with Sheriff Joe Facito and his team. And they're doing an amazing job, getting the message out and making sure people know we have to take it seriously. So, we have 31 States still where their COVID-19 infection level is still too high. So, anyone coming from those states has to fill out that traveler health form, has to quarantine. Now, we have been able to keep the infection level low here, but we are watching very carefully and with great concern – the number of travelers start to increase. And, right now, we think about 20 percent of the COVID-19 cases in this city are associated with people who have traveled. So, I want to be clear, the Sheriff's Office is going to be out there in force. They've done 3,000 vehicles stops already. They'll be doing a lot more. They're getting a lot of compliance from motorists. And I want to commend everyone – everyone's paying attention and doing the right thing. There's only been indeed so far for two summonses. And, at the same time, what the really good folks at the Sheriff's Office are doing is handing out masks for free. So, they're educating people. They're reminding them of the law. They're helping them to stay safe. And if someone won't comply, then they're ready to provide the penalties.

Now, I just want to say to everyone, since we all know the most important thing we can do together is beat back the coronavirus, the best thing to do is if you don't need to travel to one of those affected states, just don't – don't do it now, wait until they end up in a better situation. But if you do need to travel or you have traveled recently, please follow the rules for the good of

everyone – yourself, your family, your community. And, again, Sheriff's Office will be out there, reminding people how important it is and making clear people understand it is the law.

Now, let me go back to our kids and the challenges they face – and not just the kids, the entire community – and that means parents, that means, as kids go back to school, educators, school staff, everyone's feeling the pain and the challenges of the last six months. And that means we have to address the mental health needs of our school community, starting with our kids. And we have to remember that there is no health without mental health, something our First Lady reminds me all the time. When we talk about keeping people safe, when we talk about keeping people healthy, we need to see that as not just protection from the coronavirus, or physical harm, but protection for people's mental health as well.

And so, today, we announce the Bridge to School plan – and the Bridge to School plan makes clear that, from the very first day of school, the mental health needs of our kids and our school communities are going to be front and center. And it's support for students, teachers, principals for the whole community. And I need everyone understand, when we talked earlier in the week about the comparison of New York City's approach to opening schools with the entire world – we looked literally at examples from around the world, we took the best, strongest practices from different countries, combined them into a gold standard here to make sure our schools are healthy and safe. When we looked at that, we put mental health right there in the mix, because we knew our kids couldn't be healthy unless they were getting that mental health support. So, that gold standard continues to be built every day, and here to talk about what we're doing to support our kids, someone who I think everyone knows has been a champion for the mental health needs of all New Yorkers and has reminded us every single day that we have to focus on mental health. It's been swept under the rug for too many years and now it's getting the attention it deserves. And that's in large part due to our First Lady Chirlane McCray.

First Lady Chirlane McCray: Thank you, Bill. When we brought social and emotional learning to every New York City classroom last year, it came from a really simple idea – children learn best when they're healthy in every way and when they have a sense of emotional wellbeing. Now, most of us adults remember that when we were in school, we didn't have math or science on our minds all the time. Our young people today don't either, they're learning to manage relationships and thinking about their friends, their siblings, and their parents. On the first days of schools, some of our students are going to feel upbeat and joyful. Some will feel lonely. They might be afraid of getting sick. Some may be angry or are afraid about not having their usual school activities. Many students are worrying about whether their families will have a stable place to live or if there'll be enough money for a new shirt or sneakers. And in New York City, we know that educating our kids – really educating them – means helping them deal with all those feelings that are part of their life. It means helping them process their emotions positively, constructively. It means helping them build relationships and resolve conflict. It means helping them grow into healthy, happy adults. Social and emotional learning means creating a curriculum where learning those skills is just as important as learning how to read or learning how to do math.

As simple as it sounds, that is a radical idea. By bringing social-emotional learning programs into every classroom, last year, we created the most comprehensive program in the nation. We saw even in less than a year, the amazing difference that it made to teach those skills, how children were more engaged in learning, how they improve the classroom environment, and how

it improved the academic performance of the children. And now, after what our children have been through during these last six months, social and emotional learning is more important than ever. Most of our youngest and middle schoolers have been isolated from their friends and have gone without the usual school activities. Our high schoolers are witnessing our country have a long overdue reckoning with racial injustice. Many are participating in it themselves, challenging our country to be better. And sadly, many of our young people are in pain, grieving the loss of parents and loved ones to this virus.

So, on the first day of school, our students will be carrying more than the usual weight of their backpacks. They'll be carrying the weight of myriad emotions experienced over the last past – over the last six months. Can our educators ignore those feelings and just pull out a textbook? No, it's not enough. It's just not enough. That's why today we're releasing the Bridge to School plan to support students, educators, and all across the city. It expands on the groundbreaking work we've already done. And I thank Chancellor Carranza and the entire DOE team for leading the way. Bridge to School offers guided language activities and community-building exercises to support our students' mental health, especially in those first days of school when it's critical to help our children process what they've been through. As we've seen over and over again in this crisis, we are all in this together and never is that more true than when it comes to supporting our children. And that's why as we get ready for a new school year, even in the face of so many challenges, I feel hope. We have the best school leadership, the best educators, the best staff, and the best parents in the nation. And together, we're going to make this a successful school year for our children.

Back to you, Bill.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Chirlane. And you could hear, everyone, the clear hope and belief in our kids, the belief we can do right by them, and the understanding we can only do right by them if they're there with loving, caring professionals who can help them and support them. And this is part of why the Chancellor and I have been so adamant about the value of bringing kids back into school, because so many of these kids need support that just can't be provided remotely. It needs to be provided by – provided by extraordinarily committed professionals. And we're going to help those professionals to be ready to be there for the kids.

Now, Chancellor Carranza has done an extraordinary job getting ready in every sense, and he knows the power of addressing kids' emotional needs and thinking about the mental health piece as well. And he's also reached out to a lot of partners, a lot of folks who want to help make this work, including the Robin Hood Foundation, and other great partners. And here to tell you about the support we're getting for this initiative, our Chancellor Richard Carranza.

Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As a lifelong educator, I know that students are much more likely to learn and feel safe and rebound from tough blows when they feel connected to their teachers and their peers. Supporting students socially and emotionally improves not only their academic progress, but prepares them to succeed in life. Even before this pandemic, the majority of our students faced trauma every day. Poverty is traumatic. Homelessness is traumatic. Fear of deportation is traumatic. Yet schools can do so much to help students learn how to manage their stress and find refuge from their pain and anxiety. We've demonstrated this in New York City, as our First Lady and our Mayor have spoken about. Now, after the added trauma and upheaval of this pandemic when safety required

that we abruptly close our buildings and limit our in-person interactions through social distancing, rebuilding those personal connections and honoring our students' lived experience is more important than ever before. That's one of the biggest reasons why we're going to such lengths to welcome students back into our schools this fall physically and virtually, while strengthening our social and emotional supports to student learning. Our students are the heartbeat of our schools and we have worked so hard to build and strengthen social emotional supports in New York City schools for the entire time I've served as Chancellor and throughout this administration as well. That includes historic efforts that the Mayor and First Lady and I announced just over a year ago, to provide all elementary school students with rich education and social-emotional learning, and every middle and high schooler with restorative practices aimed at strengthening community, building character, and creating the conditions to heal.

So, today, we're pleased to announce new ways that we will be providing these vital supports to our students and our staff, tailored to address the disruptions that we have confronted in the recent months. Foremost among these initiatives is curriculum that we are calling the Bridge to School plan, that will provide all schools with social-emotional learning lessons and activities designed for the first few weeks of school. As students re-enter their school communities, re-entering buildings, in many cases, that they abruptly left in March, or navigating a brand new building, these materials and lessons will help students build coping skills and process grief and reconnect and allow students to orient themselves to learning online or in classrooms during the first few weeks. In addition, with the generous support of the Robin Hood Foundation, the Gray Foundation, and the Tiger Foundation, and with the incredible support of the fund for public schools, we have been expanding access and training in trauma-responsive educational practices. Every New York City principals started this training this summer and we are going to expand to offer it to all school staff at the school year begins.

Finally, in partnership with Child Mind Institute, we will launch a helpline for educators and school staff to call to consult on best practices and classroom strategies for assisting students with their mental health and wellness. Staffed by mental health professionals, this hotline will help schools get immediate answers to urgent questions and concerns that they have for their students. So, together, through these efforts, we will build and we will strengthen our connections to restore our school communities this fall, whether students are on-site or online to help New York City school students build a strong and healthy future. As a largest school district in the country, by far, and the only urban school district in a position to reopen its public schools, our focus on SEL is another way in which we are setting the gold standard during this unprecedented time.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Chancellor. And thank you for all the work you and your team are doing. And thanks again to all of the partners who are giving us so much support in this crucial moment. And again, it all comes back to the extraordinary effort in this city to fight back this disease. And every New Yorker is participating in some way, and that's why we have gotten as far as we've gotten. And what we're focusing on now is neighborhoods that need particular attention to make sure we keep the infection levels low there. And we've seen that when we apply the focused efforts of our Health Department and our Test and Trace Corps, it makes a huge, huge difference. So, I want to talk to you about a couple of examples lately. And, obviously, a week or two ago, I talked to you about Sunset Park, Brooklyn. And that was an area where we had a particular concern. We saw some evidence that caused us concern. We sent the Test and Trace Corps in, in a very big way, and with folks who spoke multiple languages and

could connect with the community. This is part of what we call our hyper-local strategy, really focusing on specific areas, even specific blocks, where there's a concern. In the course of this blitz in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, our test and trace team knocked on over 16,700 doors, made sure that folks in community got testing to the level of 8,500 new tests and just that one community. And now, as more and more people have gotten tested, we're seeing a clearer picture and it's a better picture. So, now, the seven-day rolling average for that community is 2.5 percent. So, it's more than the citywide average, but, thank God, not by a lot. And this is a really good sign that, that additional outreach, that additional testing allowed us to get a fuller picture and also encourage folks who did need to safely separate to do so. And that support was there for them. We've applied the hyperlocal strategy as well in Borough Park, Brooklyn, and that's continuing now. And, again, we saw some concern there at a particular location. That follow-up has been intensive. Good news, again, seven-day rolling average for that community is 2.5 percent. So, again, we see results that give us some comfort, but more work is being done. There have been a number of cases identified. And so, the test and trace effort is going deeply into that community – and free mask distribution as well to make sure everyone knows how important it is. So, two examples that are working – a lot more to do, but, again, they work best when we go deeply into communities, engage people often in their own language and get people to join us in being vigilant and following through for the safety of all.

I'm going to talk about our daily indicators in a moment, but I want to just take one moment before we do a talk about an extraordinary anniversary today – 100 years – the women's suffrage movement fought for so long. And on August 26th, 1920, a hundred years ago today, the 19th Amendment to the constitution finally adopted, and it gave women the right to vote. But we, I think, all now know our painful history, not all women, only white women – women of color excluded, and they had to fight for many decades more. And to give you a sense of how recent this was, my mom was actually born before this amendment was passed. Chirlane's mom was born after the amendment was passed, but it was many decades before her rights were fully recognized. So, I want people to realize this struggle is very, very much in our recent past, and we need to keep learning the lessons and fight for truer equality in this city, in this country. And a small step and an important step forward today – the unveiling of the statue you see on your screen – Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Sojourner Truth represented as the great historical figures they were. But what's interesting here is it's not just to celebrate this crucial anniversary. It's also the first time there has been a statue of real life historical figures who are women in Central Park. Central Park has plenty of statues of men. It even has some statues of fictional women. This is the first time that actual women who changed the world are being honored and represented. So an important day for this city and more such statutes will be coming in the future to actually represent our whole history.

Okay, with that, let's turn to our indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for a suspected COVID-19, threshold 200 patients, today, 71. And the confirmed positive rate for COVID-19 among those patients, only 2.78 percent. Number two, new reported cases on a seven day average, threshold 550 cases. Today's report 233. And number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold five percent. Today's report, 0.83 percent.

A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish:]

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

Moderator: Hi all. We will now begin our Q and A. As a reminder, we're joined today by First Lady Chirlane McCray, Chancellor Richard Carranza, Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi, Senior Advisor Jay Varma, Test and Trace Chief Equity Officer Annabel Palma, and Sheriff Joe Fucito. With that, we'll go to Rich Lamb from WCBS Radio.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, and all on the line.

Mayor: How are you doing Rich?

Question: I'm doing okay. So here's a question generally, a little bit more general on the schools. So the one million 100,000 students, 75,000 teachers, I think 1,800 schools, is it reasonable to believe that even if you're able to open schools on September 10th how can it last very long with that many kids involved, that many teachers? There's got to be some cases that will arrive? Do you expect shutdowns, you know?

Mayor: Yeah. Rich it's a good question. Look, we are looking at what we see around the world. Of course, they'll be instances where there'll be an infection and it has to be addressed in a specific classroom. So this is the way we've set this up. If a kid tests positive, that specific classroom is handled, not the whole school. If you have multiple instances in a school, that's a different matter. But again, you know, part of why it's so important every day to pay attention to these indicators, to the science, to the data is it shows us we've been able to beat back this disease. And so I think it's fair to say, you're going to have schools where you won't have cases for quite a while. The good news is if we need to, in any instance, address a specific case it's a limited period of time. We all know the quarantine period is two weeks. And then people are back in action. So yeah, we'll have challenges undoubtedly, but I think we see a lot of good examples from around the world of those challenges being managed well and us being able to provide kids what they need. And today's an object lesson. You cannot provide social emotional learning, you can not provide mental health support the same way remotely as you can in-person. And our kids deserve that support. Go ahead, Rich.

Question: So the second question is about the stops from the people from out of town. How do you arrive or how has the 20 percent figure been arrived at? In regard to the you know, the cases to being connected to those who've come in from out of town or those who have traveled and come back?

Mayor: It's a great question. And I'll turn to Dr. Varma and Dr. Chokshi to give you a sense of where we're getting that indicator from. Go ahead, Dr. Varma first.

Senior Advisor Jay Varma: Sure. Thank you for the question. [Inaudible] don't do interviews. So any time a person is newly diagnosed with coronavirus they're interviewed by our Test and Trace team. As part of that interview, they are asked about their travel history. Now it is very difficult to know with 100 percent certainty that a person who traveled definitely got it at the location that they traveled to. But based on the history that they give and the other exposures that

they report, we then try to assign a case to whether it did travel or not. So as the Mayor's reported, that number is around 20 percent and it's been at that rate for the past few weeks.

Mayor: Dr. Chokshi, want to add?

Commissioner Dave Chokshi, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: No sir. That's exactly right. Nothing to add.

Mayor: Great. Go ahead.

Moderator: Next up we have Gloria from NY1.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I want to ask you about a report we have out this morning that the City Council will be amending language in the chokehold bill, which you recently signed. First what you know about it, what you can tell us? And what you can say to the advocates and people who had been supporting this bill for many years and are now seeing it change to accommodate some of the concerns of police?

Mayor: Well, Gloria, I'd say this is concerns that go far beyond only one piece of our city. The conversation over the last month or two has been about the need to have constant reform and improvement in the relationship between police and community. And also the need to address the growing problem of shootings and gun violence. I've heard from so many City Council members, so many community leaders that they are deeply, deeply concerned. And they want to address both these needs simultaneously. Details, I understand will come out in the course of the day, but you know, the Chairman of the Public Safety Committee in the Council, Donovan Richards has taken the lead on this. And clearly the crucial reform in the original legislation continues. Chokeholds will be illegal no matter what. As I understand the focus here is just on some clarification on the issue of diaphragms.

Question: Okay. If I could also follow up on another NYPD related question. My colleague, Courtney Gross reported some numbers that we got exclusively yesterday, showing that there has been a significant increase in the amount of time that it takes officers to respond to crimes in progress. So I know we've been having discussions about whether or not there has been a slowdown and you have sort of acknowledged that there has been a problem. Now that we have these numbers to confirm that, what can you say about it? And do you acknowledge that police are taking longer to do their job these days?

Mayor: Well, again, I want to be careful when you said, quote unquote sort of acknowledged. I want to be careful. I've said that there are tremendous challenges right now and a perfect storm of problems. And that our officers are trying to manage all of these realities and make sense of them, including without the normal supports that typically exist in the criminal justice system. I've been asked about the quote unquote slowdown, and I've said I've seen something that was a systematic slow down. This is not what I'm seeing here. I'm seeing a lot of challenges, a lot of attempts to navigate them. I'm seeing confusion that needs to be addressed. So our officers have a clearer sense of how to go about certain things. But I believe at the same time, you're seeing the pendulum swing back. Because – I've talked about last week, we have a very clear increase in the number of gun arrests. It's getting close to the level that it was exactly at the same time last year. I think you see throughout the city more and more engagement between police and community in

common cause like those Occupy the Corners efforts. And other efforts to get the community front and center working with police. So I believe all those pieces are starting to add up and that's how we're going to move forward.

Moderator: Next up, we have Juliet from 1010 WINS.

Question: Hi, good morning, Mr. Mayor, and all on the call. How are you?

Mayor: Good Juliet. How are you doing?

Question: I'm okay. My question involves the upcoming Labor Day weekend. There won't be a West Indian Day Parade per se, but what is happening with the J'ouvert celebration? And what are the plans to protect the public during those celebrations?

Mayor: It's an important question. I know that as per usual NYPD has been working with community leaders and that's been one of the powerful realities in recent years, Juliet. That there has been such clear, coordinated planning between community leaders and elected officials, clergy, and NYPD all working together to keep those celebrations safe. Now this year is entirely different. You won't have the big organized events that are the core of all that. Everyone, I think understands the danger of gatherings, but we still have to do important work to make sure people are safe in every sense. So we'll get you an update on the specific planning, but again, what has worked in recent years will, I think work in a very different situation here. It is that close coordination with the community.

Question: Okay. So then the assumption is there will be a kind of plan and how will this work on the street? Because in past years, you know, there were corridors set up with barricades and lights. And given social distancing issues will that be happening like that? Well again Juliet, remember that not only the parade, one of the biggest events all year in New York City, but you had the J'ouvert celebrations had specific organized events within them. None of that is happening obviously. So it's a very, very different reality in terms of what normally draws people from all over the Tri-State area and, you know, specific events that people come from for. You're not going to see that this year. You will, of course, see people, you know, of considering it's a very, very important point in the year for folks from the Caribbean. You'll see some celebrations I'm sure, but we have to make sure they're done safely. And that's the plan that has been worked through with community leaders and continues to be. So we'll get you an update on that in the next few days so you have a sense of how that's going to look.

Moderator: Next up we have Brian from Crain's.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

Mayor: Good. How are you?

Question: Can't complain. Can't complain. My question is about 729 Seventh Avenue. You know, that was a tragic event with the building facade falling on Ms. Tishman. And I wanted to ask, your Department of Buildings did a sweep of 1,300 buildings around the city following that accident. And they found 222 violations. We've asked for the information of which buildings these are. We want to – we'd like to know, you know, what are they? Are they a threat to the

public? How can we safely walk around New York without knowing what these 222 buildings are identified as? And will you make this list public?

Mayor: Thank you for the question. It's a good question. I've got to get an update from the Department of Buildings. I know they put a lot of work in to address – they have for a long time, but particularly after this horrible tragedy, they went and doubled down on the reference on facades. I've got to get an update for you about where that stands. I don't know the legal realities, et cetera, around the release of the specific addresses. But most importantly is making sure the work is done to secure those facades. That's what the central focus of it, but we'll get you an update on that quickly.

Question: Okay. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: Next up we have Michael from the Daily News.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

Mayor: Good Michael, how are you?

Question: I'm good. A couple of questions on the UFT's demand for a mandatory COVID tracing. I'm wondering if you could talk about what is the reason behind not requiring this? Is there kind of a logistical or legal consideration? It would just kind of seems like a pretty reasonable demand. I know the administration, your administration has said it's kind of come late in the game, but it kind of seemed to make sense, common sense. I was wondering what are the reasons behind not doing that?

Mayor: Well, look, Michael, I think the first thing to consider here is we're looking at the practices from around the world we talked about, you know, trying to set a gold standard of taking health and safety practices from around the world and combining them into one very coordinated plan here for the New York City Public schools. And I really think at this point we have the strongest plan anywhere. It has not been the guidance around the world or the practice to do mandatory testing. Equally honestly, it was not something the union was looking for or was comfortable with for quite a while. So we're going to continue in dialogue with them about the best way to keep everyone safe. And we're moving forward. There's no question we're moving forward together. So I think what I would like to emphasize is what we've been talking about for weeks and months now. We now have a very high level of free testing available in New York City. Any New Yorker can get it anytime for free over 200 locations. And we're going to be really amplifying that in the next days, as the timeframe becomes particularly pertinent to the opening of school. Where in the lead up to school, we want the maximum number of educators and staff to get tested. We want the maximum number of kids to get tested. And the best way to do that is to keep encouraging it and giving out that message that it's available and free. And then obviously Michael, we want people to keep getting tested thereafter. But we think this system is the best way to get it done. Go ahead.

Question: My second question has to do with the First Lady's announcement today. First Lady, you said the social emotional learning has improved things in classrooms. And I was wondering

if you could explain for us, how is that quantified? Is that quantifiable? Is there a way you measure that? Can you elaborate on that a bit more?

Mayor: Let me say one thing and pass to the First Lady and then pass to the Chancellor. I just want to give you part of why – I don't know, Michael, if you were there the day we announced this last year. It seems like a million years ago. And the educators who were there and it was not only the Chancellor, Michael Mulgrew was there and other educational experts all pointed out that this has been the great ignored area in American education. And that in fact, things like having an orderly, productive classroom and opening up kids' ability to learn very much connects to their social and emotional wellbeing and addressing those issues. So I believe there's a growing consensus in American education that it really matters. I think some of that is based on research. And some of that honestly is based on the common sense recognition by educators. They can tell when kids' emotional realities are being addressed, that it's a more productive and more disciplined and positive classroom. But over to you Chirlane.

First Lady McCray: Yes. Bill, you're exactly right. Social emotional learning has been championed by progressive educators all across the country. And it's an evidence based approach to learning that has been championed by folks at the Yale Child Studies Center, at Harvard. It is actually not very new. It's just that we've taken a long time in this country to integrate it within our curriculum. I can tell you that educators are for the most part, have been very excited about having the tools and the training to actually put into practice what they know intrinsically. That we have to make sure that our children have a sense of wellbeing before they can actually learn. Otherwise they can't focus on reading. They can't focus on math. They can't focus on anything if they're distraught, if they're sad, if they're worried about other things that are happening. So I have anecdotal information. I'm sure the Chancellor can give you some more – a better sense of what he has seen in the schools. But this is not new. It is evidence-based and we would not have put it into practice if we didn't have a strong sense, a good sense that this was the best thing for our children.

Mayor: And the Chancellor will speak. And Chancellor, I know you're passionate on this topic. I'll give you a one hour time limit on your answer. Okay.

[Laughter]

Chancellor Carranza: Okay. Hi, Michael. So prior to March the indicators you wanted some – what does the data look like? I think the First Lady and the Mayor have been very articulate about the broader philosophical, but pedagogical reasons why this is so important for our young scholars, but we were seeing record number reductions in suspensions, record number increases in attendance. We were seeing many more children that were taking advantage of social-emotional supports at their schools, including being able to speak about what their emotions were, you know, the mood meters. The First Lady and I have both visited classrooms where children are able to describe in very concrete terms how they're feeling today, and that's important because all of these things work together in addition to some of the policy changes that we made in terms of restorative practices and not criminalizing student behavior in school. All of those things work together to create an environment that is not only uplifting, but is supportive. This is even more critical at this point, because if you think about what happened in March, children left their school in March and have not seen their friends, have not seen their teachers, in some cases, probably still have some of their materials, their backpacks, or a book or

something at the school. Think about students in the transitional grades that finished in March in one school and are starting at a different school this school year. That's traumatic for children. So the ability to be able to not only talk about that, but to be able to work through those emotions and have principals and teachers that are trained in being able to facilitate those conversations is just critically important for students to make this kind of transition, and that's why we're so excited about this announcement today.

Mayor: You kept it under one hour. I'm impressed. Go ahead.

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

Question: Hi, good morning, everyone. My question is for the Chancellor and if the Mayor wants to comment, so Brooklyn City Councilman Mark Treyger tweeted a little while ago that he's heard from different administrators at schools, and they said that the ventilation inspection is actually – that the teams are actually just putting toilet paper on yard sticks to test for ventilation. I guess you could see if there's air flowing, but I just wanted to see if that's correct, and if it isn't, could you explain a little bit about what does it look like when someone goes in and tests for ventilation? If you could just explain that a little bit?

Mayor: Chancellor and then Dr. Chokshi or Dr. Varma might want to add in as well. Go ahead.

Chancellor Carranza: Sure. Thanks Katie. So there are a number of different processes that are happening to check the ventilation. We spoke yesterday about the teams that are going in. These are licensed, certified engineers that are using equipment. They're looking at CO2 levels. They're looking at air flow, they're looking at what the HEPA filters look like. We also have Department of Facilities and SCA that are making sure windows set have previously not been able to open or on purpose were locked down, are now operable. You can open those windows. So it looks a lot of different ways, and, and what I would say is, look, there's, I don't think one elected official in New York City. It doesn't have my cell number. It doesn't have my email number. If there is a concern that you're hearing about, call me, send me an email, and I guarantee you, we will be on it. We have said on numerous occasions that we are – the primary concern for us is the health and safety of our students and our staff, and that is especially true as we talk about the facilities inspection says it has to do with ventilation.

Mayor: Dr. Chokshi or Dr. Varma, you want to add?

Commissioner Chokshi: Yes, Mr. Mayor, I'll just add briefly, you know, when we look at the science around what works with respect to adequate ventilation to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, so much of that has to do with this simple idea of improving air flow. So just as the Chancellor has spoken to, there are many different ways that one can do that. We're particularly interested in making sure that that windows are open where they can be to increase the circulation of air from the outside as well as making sure that the indoor ventilation systems are maximizing air flow as well. So we'll continue to partner with the Department of Education as we follow the science on this topic.

Mayor: Dr. Varma, anything to add? We can't hear you if you're adding. This may be the classic on-mute situation. Dr. Varma, anything to add? Alright, I'm going to take that as a no. Katie, I think it's important to note that, you know, we're now in the third month of the work on

ventilation, the first run through by custodians was June 3rd. The work has been ongoing over the summer by the custodial teams and the School Construction Authority. The action teams now are reviewing every school, every classroom as a final check before liftoff, and so the whole idea here is to, you know, make sure that every classroom is ready, and again, if we think any classroom is not ready or needs more work, it will be held offline until it is ready. Go ahead, Katie.

Question: Can I get a quick follow-up that doesn't count as my second question or no?

Mayor: So the rule is pretty clear. You get a second question either following on your first or brand new topic, whatever you like.

Question: Okay. I don't want to pile on about the toilet paper, but I will ask instead about perhaps a more important question about a little bit more details on the training for teachers specifically for the social-emotional trauma that children and teachers have experienced as well, given how many teachers died of COVID, but when will that training happen? I know that you began part of it last year, but will it look different? Is it separate? Because I just reached out to a bunch of teachers sources. They haven't heard anything about it yet. So if you can give a little update on when they can get specifically trained and also how this will look with remote hybrid, mixing that?

Mayor: Yeah, good question. I'll start and pass to the Chancellor. The reality, Katie, with some of these things is we start immediately, but it is ongoing by definition. It's constantly crucial and there's no profession, where there's constant professional training, updating of the training more than in education, and we certainly value that here in the city, and we're going to make sure that these resources are available to teachers whenever they need them. Go ahead, Chancellor.

Chancellor Carranza: Yeah, so Katie, principals have already been trained – all 1,600 principals have been trained over the summer. Teachers are on summer break, so it's not surprising. They would say they haven't been trained yet. They will be trained. There is training that happens before students start. So teachers will also be trained. They will have access to the curriculum. That curriculum will be available on day one with a resource guide and lessons – for remote and for hybrid. So, they'll be in multiple formats so that teachers can utilize them in both ways, and we're going to continue to train not only teachers, but we're going to train school staff as well. So teachers, this is coming the materials are ready. Principals have already been trained, and this is going to be hand-in-glove with what we're doing academically this year with our students.

Mayor: Chirlane.

First Lady McCray: Yes. I don't know if Chancellor mentioned that nearly 5,000 teachers have been trained already – the training and SEL began last year. But this additional training you know, this is where the principals have been trained and we will continue the training that was started last year and expand on it so that teachers will have additional tools, additional ways to integrate social-emotional learning into the curriculum going forward.

Mayor: Thank you.

Moderator: For our last two questions. We'll start with Jake from Gothamist.

Question: Hey, good morning. I have a first question is about policing. You've said repeatedly that you want the NYPD's disciplinary process to be more speedy, more transparent, but it's been four months since Officer Francisco Garcia was put on modified duty after assaulting a New Yorker, a law enforcement social distancing – was in the Lower East Side. What is happening in that case? And is this length of an investigation acceptable to you?

Mayor: Yeah, Jake, as I understand it, it's the first case up as the disciplinary process, the trial process resumes. We obviously had a huge disruption, I mean, everyone saw it and everything and the normal process of disciplinary trials couldn't happen the way it would now it is starting again. That case will be adjudicated. I expect it to be adjudicated quickly. It's an important case, and one that I think was very troubling to lot of New Yorkers. So I think you can expect to see results on that relatively soon. Go ahead.

Question: Okay. I'm curious when exactly those thought processes presuming, but I also have a section on testing, which is that the latest data from DOH indicates only 50 percent of tests are coming back within a three-day median period, and so the city considering using the rapid saliva tests that the NBA and Illinois have tried, especially with congregate settings such as schools.

Mayor: It's a great question. I appreciate it. I'll start and turn to the doctors. Jake, first of all Dr. Chokshi and Dr. Varma confirm, the last I heard that we were coming in under four days as an average for the city, in terms of test turnaround, they can give you the latest on that. Clearly we've had, to date, you know, faith that the diagnostic tests have been the best quality tests available, and when we have quick turnaround, you know, that's been the optimal choice. We are hopeful that faster tests could be reliable, and that's really been the question could we depend on them and believe in their results. So that is – that picture is improving for sure, and that could make it part of the strategy more and more going forward. So, Dr. Chokshi, Dr. Varma, you going to have to give an update.

Commissioner Chokshi: Yes, sir. I'll start. So then the median test turnaround times most recently have been around three to four days, and you know, what I'll say about that is just to echo that it is something that is a focus with respect to ensuring that those turnaround times continue to improve because that's very important for controlling the spread of the coronavirus. As part of that, again, as the Mayor mentioned briefly, we are looking at every single option available with respect to testing innovations. It's very important that we ensure when we do that, that we use rigorous standards of review to ensure that you know, that the tests that are used while getting us faster results, faster turnaround times also adhere to you know, to quality standards with respect to the performance characteristics of the test. So all to say, we want to continue our expanded testing approach, continue working on addressing turnaround times and looking pretty closely at a series of testing innovations, including saliva and other ways to bring innovations to bear.

Mayor: Dr. Varma. Are we having technical difficulties there? I guess that's a yes. All right. Where we are. We heard him earlier. We can't hear him now. Let's fix that for tomorrow. Okay, go ahead.

Moderator: For our last question. We'll go to Reuvain from Hamodia.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. we've been hearing for a long time now how much of New York needs a bailout. You've also been a frequent critic of President Trump on other issues. This president's considered to be someone who takes revenge on critics and really falls for flattery. I'm wondering if maybe now it will be time for a more conciliatory approach to the president?

Mayor: You are a diplomat, sir. I think – the fact is I've said it before, I truly believe it – this is not about whether you're nice to the guy or not, or say nice things. You're right. He does love his flattery, but this is not about that. The entire stimulus reality fell apart, which is just shocking. Think about it. The entire country needed help on so many levels and the President never used his power to move a stimulus, nor did, of course, Mitch McConnell. They chose not to, it was a very, very conscious choice and it didn't have anything to do with whether I was nice to them or not. They, for the entire country, chose not to provide a stimulus, which I'm shocked by. I don't understand it on any level. So no let's just, don't get caught up in the hype that it's about flattery. For some reason, they have strategically decided they don't want to do a stimulus. Go ahead.

Question: Again, the rising crime figures or you've repeatedly mentioned that it's about dislocations due to the coronavirus and the court closures. Of course, you know, the coronavirus pandemic is not really in your control, but I would like to ask if you can point to specific things that you've done to stem the rising tide of crime? Thank you.

Mayor: Yeah, sure. Thank you for the question. I mean, across the whole spectrum, I think first of all, one of the most crucial ways to address the crime situation has been to keep fighting back the disease. We have a perfect storm. It is an absolutely verifiable fact. We have never had a pandemic, an economic crisis, a budget crisis, a social justice crisis, you know, all wrapped into one all in the space of a few months, and when you see so much dislocation in the normal operating of things, like the fact that the criminal justice system is nowhere near full speed, you've got folks with no jobs, you've got kids out of school, it's all come together. So that says very clearly the number one thing to do is fight back to disease and bring back more normalcy. Get the disease low so you can open businesses, get people back their jobs, get kids back to school, recreate what we had before, make it healthier so the court system can function better. All of the above, and then on top of that heal the relationship between police and community in every way, we can get police and community working more closely together, and you've seen that in recent months, I've been out in communities all over the city, Harlem, East Harlem, Bed-Stuy, many others where people are doing this work together now, and then the pinpointed application of putting officers where they're needed most – moving officers off of desk jobs and other specialized jobs into communities, that is clearly having an impact and the increase in gun arrests as well. So all of that has been my strategy, but we've got to do a lot more to continue to push back crime and get ourselves back to a more normal place.

Alright. Everybody, look, I want to just finish where we began about our children. As a parent, I can tell you this. Chirlane and I went through so many times when you could feel the emotions of your child, and you know, when your child is going through a lot parents, family members can feel it and they want to help, and they want to reassure, and they want to give kids a sense that things are going to be all right. That's now for all of us to do for the children of New York City. It is so important to show them that we can overcome this crisis. It's so important to show them that they will be able to move forward with their lives, that their education is coming back. That

the love and support that they get in the school community will be there for them. You know, kids are very, very perceptive and they can tell when something's wrong, and they can also tell when the adults around them have confidence and hope, and so it's up to all of us to let our kids know that it is going to be all right, that we are going to fight back together and that we will always be there for them. That's for every New Yorker to do for our next generation. Thank you, everybody.

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