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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everybody. Today, we're going to talk about something so vital, which is the fact that as we rebuild our city, we have to do it the right way. We have to focus on the working people of New York City. We have to make sure we not only bring back our economy, but we do it with a vision of economic justice. And we think about history, the greatest challenge this city faced that we can compare to today was the Great Depression. We learned during the Great Depression because of a great New Yorker, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, that in a moment of crisis, you can focus on economic justice and create new approaches that reach people and uplift them. We're going to talk about that today. We do not want business as usual. We want a new and bolder approach as we come back.

But before I get into that, I want to talk about our schools for just a moment. It's on the minds of millions of New Yorkers. I want to give you a quick update. And I want to start by saying, I paid a visit yesterday to an amazing public school, Village Academy in Far Rockaway. And what I saw there was very, very encouraging to me. I went with Chancellor Carranza and we spent time with the principal, Dr. Doris Lee. And she is the founder of this school in Far Rockaway in a community that's had many challenges. She decided to create a school for the children of that community, no matter what disadvantages they may have experienced in life, she believed that that public school could be the place that would be transcendent for them. That would allow them to reach their potential. And you could hear the warmth and the heart in what she does, her devotion to her kids. So we went through the building because we wanted to see all the preparations that were being made.

And this is happening in public school buildings all over New York City. But what I heard was even more important because it wasn't just about the physical preparations, the cleaning and the social distancing and the face coverings and the hand sanitizer. It was about the devotion to kids, to our children, to what they need, and the fact that we have to help them through this crisis and beyond. And I listened to Dr. Lee talk about why it was important to open our schools. And she said something very basic. I just want to quote it. She said, I feel like my children need me. And if there's a possibility to open safely, I want to take advantage of that possibility. Listen to the positive, powerful thinking of one principal that representing educators all over New York City, who first and foremost care about their kids and want to be there for them.

So, we saw a lot of professionalism [inaudible] not just from the principal, for the whole team, working in the school. And here as an example for you and your screen of something very powerful, electrostatic cleaning. We've seen this used in other places, including our subways. The custodian there [inaudible] he is able to go through that classroom and every classroom, in one to two minutes, create an entirely clean environment where the technology he has and go through a whole school quickly. And that's going to happen every single day. That's one of a number of measures that are going to be taken to keep our kids safe. Now that's the physical part of the equation, making sure the schools are clean, making sure they're ready, very few kids in the classroom. I already talked about the amazing commitment of educators. Let's talk about another piece today.

I want to announce something very important. And it's something that educators care about. They've been asking about. Parents have been asking you about it. I want to confirm it announced that every single New York City public school building we'll have a certified nurse. This is very important for people to hear and understand. We're taking every precaution, but there's a tremendous value to having a health professional present. We're working with the Health + Hospitals team to put this together. They did an amazing job at the height of the crisis, bringing in additional medical personnel, health care heroes. They're going to do it again and make sure we have enough nurses for every single public school building. So, to all the folks who have been raising that concern, I hear you loud and clear. And that will be in place. We have a whole month until school begins and we're going to be ready to do great things for our kids.

All right, let me go back to where I started. This is about working people. This is about jobs. This is about the future of New York City families. And there are so many New Yorkers who believe in this place, who know that this is their future. They love New York City. They love their neighborhoods. They're not going anywhere. And they want to make sure that their future means a good paying job, a job that you can actually take care of a family with. So when you think about quality jobs, when you think about a living wage, when you think about a long term career for working people, it all comes back to one thing, labor unions. It comes back to what working people have come to expect and believe in with the labor movement. And when the labor movement puts its head together with government to figure out how we can respect working people, give them the kind of life they deserve. And do it in a way that's also smart for the needs of the general public and the taxpayer, great things happen. And one of the tools we have used over the years is a project labor agreement where we come together and we agree on a whole groundwork for how to do this.

Now, today, we're going to talk about a historic agreement with our construction unions, the building trades. Because here is an area where a huge amount of spending is going to happen because there's a lot that needs to be done in New York City. There's a lot that we're going to do to keep building back this city. So, a lot of money will be out there to do that good work. But we need it to reach people who are hardest hit. We need it to reach the communities that bore the brunt of this crisis, that felt the disparities. We need not just good jobs, but good jobs that reach every neighborhood. We need apprentices to have an opportunity to move up into the union and into the career. There is nothing more powerful than someone getting a union job that they can turn a career into. We want that door to be wide open for everyone. And this has been a priority for our Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity. And this is again a group of extraordinary leaders within this administration. Leaders of color in agencies across the administration who are focused on the question of what we can do right now to create more fairness, more equity, and to address disparities. And what was clear is the project labor agreement is a tremendous tool to do that, particularly if it focuses on communities hardest hit. And particularly if it creates the right kind of partnership with minority-and-women-owned businesses. And that's what's been done here. And you're going to hear from a great labor leader in a moment. I just want to say to everyone who's a part of this process on the labor side, on the government side, everyone shared a common vision that, yeah, we've got to be inclusive. We've got to create more and more opportunity

in communities of color. And find a way to open the door for those minority-and-women-owned businesses that we believe in because they hire community people. They hire people from the neighborhood. They give people opportunity who wouldn't have had it otherwise.

So, in this plan will be a lot more investment in communities of color and a lot more opportunity for people who live in neighborhoods hardest hit by the coronavirus. To make this work we are always committed to bringing more and more minority-and-women-owned businesses in to these opportunities. And to do that, they have to be certified. It's a very, very important piece of this puzzle, is to get opportunities through these government contracts you have to be certified. In the past, very few businesses were in New York City. Well today I have a milestone to report, 10,000, 10,000 minority-women-owned businesses now have been certified by the City of New York. That is a 173 percent increase since the start of this administration. And what it means is for all those businesses, now the doors of opportunity are opening up, contracts can start to flow. They start to hire. You know, what also happens when someone gets hired in one of those businesses? They learn how to do that work. They start their own businesses. So, it becomes a very virtuous circle. We have already in this administration awarded \$16 billion to minority-and-women-owned businesses. We have a goal of \$25 billion by the year 2025. That was our original 10-year goal, \$25 billion. We're more than halfway there and speeding up. So, this is direct redistribution to communities that need it the most.

Now, we have to go farther. And you're going to hear in a moment about why this project labor agreement is so important, but we need to go even beyond that. And you're also going to hear about something very important, we need from our friends in Albany. We need the State government's help because look, it all comes down to hiring community people. It all comes down to breaking down barriers. And the law actually hasn't been on our side. The law actually has made it harder to hire people from the communities that often have been least advantaged. We want the legal right when we're spending government money, to make sure that people who have gotten the short end of the stick, get the opportunity to be hired and benefit from those jobs. We need the law changed in Albany to allow us to do it. Community hiring. It's all about community hiring. We need to be able to mandate that people in a neighborhood get hired for the work the government is paying for. So, a community hiring bill is going to be introduced in the State Legislature, and it will require – require that businesses that get City government support must hire from communities of color, must hire from communities that have been disadvantaged. Again, this is direct redistribution, making sure money gets in the hands of folks who have done so much of the work, created so much of the wealth, but rarely benefited from it. We need to pass this community hiring bill in Albany. If we're serious about addressing disparities, if we're serious about learning the lesson of the coronavirus crisis, we need to pass this bill so we can move forward.

All right, now, I'm going to turn to two folks who really should be very proud of the announcements we're making today. They put a lot of time and energy into it. First, co-chair of our Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity, and someone who believes fundamentally that government can be a force for equity and fairness, Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson.

Deputy Mayor J. Phillip Thompson, Strategic Policy Initiatives: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I just first want to reiterate something the Mayor said, that our Community Hiring NYC program has two pieces. The first piece is the project labor agreement, but the second piece is this legislation in Albany, which I'll come back to in a minute, that will enable us to require contractors to follow the same guidelines that the building trades have agreed to here, but also it would extend this same program to businesses beyond construction. Community hire has long been a demand from communities of color in New York City. In the 1960s, Malcolm X and Reverend Milton Galamison – Reverend Galamison led the school integration efforts in the 1960s. Malcolm X and Reverend Galamison disagreed on many things, but one thing they agreed on was community hire, and they worked in Brooklyn in the 1960s to try and make that happen. In the 1970s, Asian-Americans for Equality was actually formed around the demand for community hire in the construction of Confucius Plaza. Harlem Fightback, led by Jim Haughton, was formed at around that same time. And there were a bunch of organizations around the city trying to get community folks hired on the job. And I had the privilege of working with both of those organizations right out of college as a very young person. Public housing residents organized around this issue in the 1990s, and actually they developed a program with the building trades that lasts to this day, I believe, training people from nature to go into the building trades. So, this is long been a need and a demand from communities of color and it was no surprise that community hiring was the number-one recommendation by the workforce committee of the Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity.

And today, we celebrate a big victory, thanks to the help of the task force, and, of course, the Mayor's leadership, which is project labor agreements. The agreement standardized work and hiring rules for contractors, working on certain government construction projects, leading to critical cost savings for the City on those PLA projects. They will also now enable the City to use design build, which is a project delivery method that streamlines construction projects, leading to greater speed and reduce costs in city construction. But the project labor agreements do something else that's very important, they prioritize the referral of workers from ZIP codes where at least 15 percent of the population lives below the federal poverty line and/or our NYCHA residents. They also now allow us to establish a goal where at least 30 percent of all hours worked under the PLA projects are logged by workers from these high poverty ZIP codes. Many of these communities were also among those hardest-hit by the covert crisis and these are communities that needed good job opportunities before the crisis. The PLA's will bring as many as 26,000 good construction jobs to high poverty communities throughout New York City over the next four years and more jobs after that. They will include expanding bring-along provisions to allow contractors, particularly M/WBE's to use their existing workforce and certain [inaudible] for smaller contracts and subcontracts. These new terms provide flexibility and will help support our growing minority and women-owned businesses that are, as the Mayor said, already used to hiring folks from high need communities.

These agreements show that City dollars can do more than get work done. City dollars can uplift people out of poverty. A good job, in my mind, is the best kind of antipoverty program and genuine opportunity is the best way to fight despair and to reduce crime. Now, we need the State of New York to be on board. The community hiring legislation Mayor de Blasio is putting forward in Albany would require all contractors and businesses working with the City to hire New Yorkers from high poverty neighborhoods in NYCHA. This will enable us to create even more jobs outside of construction that will reach neighborhoods that need them most. As our hardest-hit neighborhoods look to recover from this global pandemic we can no longer afford to wait. We need the State to pay us community hire legislation now to create a fairer economy and rebuild our city with equity.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Deputy Mayor Thompson. I want to congratulate you and everyone in the task force for the hard work you did on this. And look, this is the kind of thing that really makes change, when you work and do the hard work to figure out how to take not millions, but billions of dollars public investment and actually make it have a much greater impact than it's ever had before by focusing on economic fairness and justice.

Now, as I introduce our next speaker, I have to say something personal and from the heart. I've watched Gary LaBarbera throughout his whole career. And this is a guy who took many risks on behalf of working people, including way back when he was someone in the Teamsters union who believed that there needed to be more fairness and democracy for working people and fought for that no matter what the risks he faced. Well, for a long time, you've heard of an assumption that there couldn't be common ground between construction unions and communities of color.

That's been an assumption that's been out there for a long, long time. In many, many ways, an outdated and inaccurate assumption, but grounded in a truth we need to look at and a hard truth that communities of color had not gotten enough opportunity from government, from the private sector, from the union movement, from any part of our society. What I've been struck by is the fact that Gary LaBarbera does not believe we have to be held down by those old mistakes. And for years he has been saying to everyone, we're going to transcend and we're going to make sure that unions and particularly construction unions open doors wide for communities color, because they are the future of New York City and they are the future of the labor movement in New York City and things have to change, and they can change the right way. So, as I introduce, Gary it's with gratitude that he has been willing to chart a bold course here and say we're going to do things differently because it's the right thing to do and that all working people have in common that need. We've got to make sure that we stop the reality of one group of working people fighting against another group of working people fighting over the crumbs. We've got to create a reality where working people of all races and backgrounds are empowered and they get their fair share, finally, of the bigger economic pie. And that's what Gary has been fighting for, for years. So, my great honor to introduce the President of the Building and Construction Trades Council, Gary LaBarbera.

[...]

Mayor: Gary, thank you. And, Gary, you have worked so hard at this and sometimes we do get to experience the fruits of our labors. So, this is so important because what it means is, again, we're not being held back by the past. Think about it – think of the barriers that have been in the way, think about the problems that in some ways people thought could never be overcome. This is a transformative moment in history and we're to knock down the old barriers, we're going to get rid of the things that held us back. And some people might say, oh, that sounds idealistic. Let me tell you, when you fully look into what we're announcing today, you're going to see things you've never seen before. And when you think back on that history I talked about at the beginning, you think about the Depression, the New Deal, which so many of us learned from as the example of how there is hope even in the toughest moments. Everything good that came out of the New Deal came out of tearing down the old ways and creating new ways for a new time and going farther than people ever imagined possible. That's what this project labor agreement does and that's a very bright, bright development for this city.

And now, I'll give you one other piece of news, and it fits very nicely because everything is about bringing this city back, creating opportunity, creating economic activity, that benefits all. And there's great news today from Steiner Studios in Brooklyn. I know Steiner Studios really well. I know Doug Steiner, I want congratulate him. I've seen the great work that happens there. And, as a Brooklynite, I'm particularly proud of what Steiner Studios has done and everyone in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, it's one of the most amazing stories of last few decades in New York City of this city getting better all the time. Steiner Studios has just announced they've signed a new deal for a new media production studio in the Bush Terminal in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. And our City Economic Development Corporation is redeveloping the space for media production and for another thing that's emerging more and more of that community, garment manufacturing, growing again in New York City. It's a dual effort with the theme, Made in New York. So, this Made in New York campus is going to create, in the process of being built, 1,800 construction jobs, 2,200 full time permanent jobs. And it will continue to strengthen New York City's hand, not only in our historic garment industry and fashion industry, but in the film and TV industry, which has been extraordinary in recent years in New York City, and, as we speak, is starting to come back strong. So, congratulations to everyone at Steiner Studios. This is a big step forward for this city.

Now, let's go over our indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19, that threshold 200 patients – today's report, 70. Number two, daily number of people in Health + Hospitals ICU's, threshold 375 – today, 282. And number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold 15 percent – today's report, one percent. Again, that's our favorite number, besides zero, and it's something all New Yorkers should be proud of. Let me say a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

I want to say one quick programming note before we turn to our colleagues in the media, that for tomorrow we will not have a morning press conference, but we will be back again at our regular time on Monday. With that, let's turn to our colleagues in the media. Please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Hi, all. We'll now begin our Q&A. As a reminder, we're joined today by Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson; Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza; Senior Advisor and Director of our M/WBE program Maggie Austin; Director at the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development Amy Peterson; Chief of Staff to Deputy Mayor Laura Anglin, Sherif Soliman; Gary LaBarbera, President of the Building's Council; and Senior Advisor Jay Varma. And with that, the first question today goes to Andrew Siff from WNBC.

Question: Mr. Mayor, let's start with schools here. What I'm wondering is, with regard to the principal's union and their concerns, what do you think the harm would be in delaying the in-person opening to the week of September 21st? If that would allow everyone to start remote for the first two weeks, so no one would have a different situation than anyone else and then you'd also alleviate the concerns that these thousands of principals have that they're being rushed to open and they're just not ready.

Mayor: Look, Andrew, I always listen when my colleagues and labor raise a concern, when folks who are experts in their field, raise a concern. I've been talking to a lot of educators, a lot of parents, but I've also sat down with Michael Mulgrew with Mark Cannizzaro to hear out their concerns. But I think the most important point is that I really believe our schools are crucial for our kids, there is nothing that replaces in-person learning, our school coming back as part of how our whole city comes back and we've been planning for months to start the day we were already planning on as we would have normally. So we'll keep discussing the concerns and trying to address them, but we have a whole month until school begins to address these concerns further, and as the Chancellor and I said earlier in the week, we understand that it's going to take a lot of flexibility this school year, everyone understands that. New Yorkers are practical. Parents understand it. It's not going to be perfect because we're

going to be having to make a lot of adjustments, but I was out there in Far Rockaway yesterday, and as telling you, when you listen to a principal who is captain of her ship and says, yeah – she said in front of all the media – she is going to take a lot of flexibility. We're going to have some things we're going to have to work out, but we're going to make it work for the kids. That is the attitude we need and I think that's how we're going to get it done. Go ahead.

Question: You mentioned today that you now have a nurse for every building, I'm wondering what was the mechanism of making that happen? Is there an existing pool of nurses who were ready to be assigned? Our understanding was there were some 400 schools that didn't have regular certified nurses on a daily basis. So how are you able to solve that problem? And will those 400 additional nurses be ready as well on September 10th?

Mayor: Yeah. It's a great question, Andrew. I just want to say, you know, it's amazing what happens when you experience teamwork. Health + Hospitals came to the rescue here, and if you just think about things rigidly, you might not see that potential solution, but as we talked about the fact, you're right, there were schools that didn't have nurses historically, and we needed it for this situation. We're all talking about how do we make it work? And Health + Hospitals came forward and said, hey guys, in the middle of the worst months of the pandemic, we went and found certified nurses, brought them in on a contract. We can do that for the schools as well. So they stepped forward and said, we will take care of this for our sister agency, the Department of Education, we'll hire them, we'll get them to you, we'll take care of it. And that's why it's going to happen and they did it on a matter of days' notice back during the worst of the crisis, they've got a whole month to get it in place, they'll get it done. Go ahead.

Moderator: Next step. We have Jillian from NY1.

Question: Hi Mayor, thanks for taking my question.

Mayor: I feel like I saw you yesterday afternoon.

Question: I know, long time no see, strange in this universe. But so you know, to go back to something Andrew asked about, I know that you cited this principal who we were with yesterday in Queens, who's the captain of her ship, but we're not just seeing this pushback from the CSA. There's also been letters signed by the vast majority, or perhaps I think all of the principals in District 15 in Brooklyn, where your children actually attended school, and District 13 nearby dozens of principals saying they're not ready, that they can't get answers to questions they need, that things are being handled piecemeal. You know, what would you say to them? And I mean, perhaps they feel the same about this nurse announcement, which we've just gotten, you know, sort of a little bit of information about right now, what would you say to their concerns, these captains of their ships, that they're not ready to move forward?

Mayor: I would say when you're a month away from school opening, it's understandable there's going to be questions to still be resolved. I'd say in the middle of a crisis that we've never experienced before anything like it and our whole lives, of course, there's going to be challenges, but in the end, let's go address those challenges. Let's go take on those questions. I am certain that principal's hearing now that every school will have a certified nurse, that that's not a hard thing to adjust to Jillian. They'll be able to figure that one out quick. They've been asking for it and we're doing it. I mean, again, I don't want to get confused here about this central point. Our colleagues in labor have been putting forward a series of requests and needs. We're going to have different views on each one, but where we can get something done, we're just announcing it. We're saying you raised this concern, we're answering your concern and that's what we're going to keep doing. But again, a month is a long time and I see a lot of educators who are focused on kids and getting ready. Go ahead.

Question: And then, you know, on the issue of the nurses, did I hear you say to Andrew that these will be contract nurses hired by H + H? And if so, do you have any concerns about how you'll be able to hire all of them? I know there were some vacancy issues as recently as March, obviously we're out of the, you know, the most dire times of the pandemic, but how many do you need to hire? And do you intend to hire this way and are they contract workers?

Mayor: Yeah, I don't have a question about this one. They hired thousands and thousands of nurses at height of the pandemic in April. And we're talking about hundreds needed here. And again, we're a month out. So no question in my mind they'll have them, we'll have them for the whole school year. I mean, obviously the goal here is to get to a vaccine, get everyone vaccinated and go back to normal. But the plan of course is to be ready to handle the whole school year. So H + H has done it before under much tougher conditions. They're absolutely confident that they can get that number of nurses in place and have them when we need them.

Moderator: Next up, we have Derick from WABC.

Question: Hi Mr. Mayor, good morning. Just piggybacking on the discussion about schools. I will tell you, obviously we had Principal Lee yesterday who, you know, had – which said what she had to say, but I've heard from some administrators and some teachers who, you know, frankly, are not on camera, not in front of the Mayor who have a different perspective, and they say, they feel like they're not prepared, and one teacher actually said that, he says the custodians at his school are ill informed. They don't know what's going on. So, you know, obviously you say we have a month out, what kind of conversations have been going on with custodian, custodial staff about their responsibilities? You know, keeping these schools clean every day?

Mayor: Yeah. So it's a great question, and the custodial staff – and you saw a great example yesterday – custodial staff are doing this work right now. They have been for a while now to get the schools ready. We're going to show you more and more examples of the hardworking folks who are changing the air filters, cleaning the rooms, opening up windows that previously weren't openable, there's so much work happening right now. And again, I – the important thing to recognize is I honor and respect the labor movement and honor respect anytime the labor movement standing up for their members and raising concerns. I also know that our kids need to be in school. Our parents are very, very concerned that our kids have already lost a lot of their education that they've gone through a lot of trauma. We've got to get them back into school buildings, where they can get so much more support. I don't know a single educator who disagrees with the fact that in-person learning is much more powerful and effective than anything could be done remotely. So we've just got to do this for our kids. Our parents have spoken, the vast majority of them want

their kids back in school. I like a can do attitude. I like an attitude that says we're going to find a way, our health care heroes in March and April found the way, our first responders found a way through the worst of the crisis, our educators have gone to find a way. We have to support them. We have to give them answers. If custodial staff need more guidance and answers, we're going to have to do that. We will do that, but again, a month is a long time and we've made a lot of progress already, and we're going to make a lot more in the next month. Go ahead.

Question: Question, are water fountains being disabled?

Mayor: The – it's a great question, and the Chancellor will speak to that. I just want to emphasize as I turn to the Chancellor, everything is being looked at a new, so at the school in the Rockaways, you know, again, you have one side of the hallway you're supposed to go one direction, another direction you had a classroom, never seen anything like in my life, a classroom with 10 desks in it, because only 10 kids were going to be in the classroom. Kids are going to have lunch at their desks, not going to a cafeteria anymore for the duration of this crisis, the electrostatic cleaning, I've never seen that in a school before. There's a lot that's going to happen we've never seen before. So where we have to put new things in place like hand sanitizer in every room, you know, we're going to do that. Where something has to change, we're going to change it. So to the water fountains, go ahead, Chancellor.

Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. So all of the facilities and all of the things associated with facilities, including the water fountains, including the wash – the hand washing basins are all being reviewed, and it's a school by school analysis because some schools have newer models, for example, where you had the hydro refills, or you can fill up your container with water, it doesn't touch anything. Those are okay, they'll still be disinfected on a regular basis. There may be other water fountains that are much more of the traditional ones that you and I had when we were in school, where you turn to the faucet and take a drink. Those may come offline as well. Then instead, there'll be other types of water stations that we'll put in. So again, there's a school by school analysis that's being done and then we're making decisions based on what the medical experts are telling us is best practice for this kind of a situation.

Mayor: Go ahead.

Moderator: Next up, we have Rich Lamb from WCBS radio.

Question: Hey there all on the call. How are you?

Mayor: How are you doing, man?

Question: So I have a sort of a follow up question to what I asked you yesterday. In regard to the numbers of teachers who are actually going to be available for, in person teaching, and in other words, I think you did the math. If I – as I remember it, it is subtracted, you said the 15 percent who wanted to all remote and then assume that the rest would come in, but do you have any affirmative assurance that those teachers indeed will come in?

Mayor: So let me – what you said was a little bit off. Let me clarify Rich and the Chancellor jump in if he wants to add. About 15 percent asked for a formal medical accommodation. The 15 percent certified that they had a specific medical problem. Those as with any other employment will be reviewed to be confirmed. But let's just take that number as a working number of 15 percent, so you have 85 percent of your staff. This is their profession. Again, health care workers, first responders, sanitation workers, construction workers, it's your profession. It's what you do. You want to make sure that safety precautions are being taken, absolutely, and I've listed for you just in the last minutes, 10 or 12 major safety precautions that have been taken that we didn't have last school year that we have now. But this is what people do for a living. This is what they get paid to do, and more importantly, this is what they do because they're devoted to kids. So unless folks have a medical accommodation, their job is to come in and serve our kids, and I'm convinced that's what they're going to do, because that's what they've done. Their whole lives. Chancellor, you want to add anything?

Chancellor Carranza: I would only add Mr. Mayor that even for those teachers and administrators that do have a medical accommodation, they will still be serving students, they'll be doing it from a remote location, but they still will be engaging in supporting students in instruction five days a week.

Mayor: Go ahead, Rich.

Question: Okay, so just one other question with all of the questions and doubts and difficulties that have been raised, how do you rate the chances of actually opening the schools on September 10th?

Mayor: Yeah, you know, there's a funny thing, Rich. Sometimes people think that if you raise enough questions and doubts folks will run away and hide. That's not what I do. That's not what New Yorkers do. We just don't surrender. The – think about the option here, we're in a city that has the lowest infection rate in America, we've got a huge majority of our parents begging us to give kids help and support again. We've got kids who desperately want to get back to school and want to start learning again. We have all the tools we need to create an extraordinarily better and safer environment. Now we could say we have all that stuff, but let's take the easy way out and just shut everything down. I'm not going to do that because people raised doubts. I'm going to listen respectfully the concerns and figure out how to address those concerns one by one. But if people say, look, it's not perfect, therefore we don't want to participate. That's not New York. New Yorkers do not need perfection. New Yorkers are pragmatic. New Yorkers are tough. Also every other profession has kept going through this fight and I know educators are devoted to our kids.

So we're going to move forward. If at any point to the another part of what I could bring out of your question, Rich, if I don't think it's safe, if the Chancellor doesn't think it's safe, if our health leadership doesn't think it's safe, we'll be the ones to shut it down. And that's why we set the three percent goal. We said, if it goes above three percent infection rate for seven days, we're shutting things down, it's a very rigorous standard. So far New York City has not come near that standard, thank God. But no, no, no, I want to be really clear. I'm going to be vigilant, and all the other leaders, this team are going to be vigilant, but if we think from everything, we can see that we can do this safely. We owe it to our kids and families to do it. Go ahead.

Moderator: Next up. We have Marcia Kramer from CBS.

Question; Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I need to ask you again about the schools, because although you talked about nurses and you talked about the cleaning, the unions raise an awful lot of questions in the letter to you to yesterday, not only about ventilation systems and [inaudible] sanitation, but also support for communities if they have a higher positivity rate than the city standards, the hot zip codes. Will you have sufficient staff for both in person and remote teaching? Do you have sufficient bandwidth to support remote instruction? And what about special guidance for students with special needs? These are – there are dozens of dozens of questions that they say they haven't had answered. What do you say to them? They're scared. They're worried. And they have real questions.

Mayor: Yeah. So let me separate scared and worried from have real questions. They definitely have real questions, and again, I've spoken at length with Michael Mulgrew and Mark Cannizzaro about their real questions. I think a lot of what they're raising are things we can address and we want to address them together. Now, all the rhetoric, all the noise, notwithstanding, the Chancellor will talk about this in a moment, every single day, the Chancellor, the First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan and members of the team have been talking to those two unions every day on the specifics of the plans, troubleshooting problems, addressing concerns, and we're going to do that for the next month. And by the way, whenever the school year starts, it's not like in the past, magically everything was perfect. You keep working on it from opening day forward to keep making things better. When in the middle of a pandemic, it's not business as usual, things that are not going to be perfect, but we can get it right. So for people who have fear, I understand fear. We've been through a lot. I understand the trauma that a lot of people have been through, but the fact that there's a lot of outstanding questions doesn't scare me. We're going to deal with the questions and we're going to keep making progress every day. Chancellor, I think it'd be helpful if you could just give a flavor of how frequently the conversations occur between your team and the labor unions who represent the educators.

Chancellor Carranza: Thank you, sir. So I think that there are questions that are, that are being publicly asked is just a sign of how transparently we are working in good faith with our labor unions. I know that I speak to the leaders of the labor unions, daily – mostly daily. I know that members of my senior team are daily, hourly, in communication with other officials in our labor unions as well. So again, as issues arise, we put them on the table, we talk through those issues and some of these issues are very weighty issues. So for example, when you have a blended learning scenario and you have teachers that are teaching in person, then who's teaching the students that are in remote learning. And if you have a group of students that are in blended learning, they're in-person learning for two, three days out of the week, then what happens to those other two or three days that they're in remote learning mode? Who's teaching them. Those are contractual issues. Those are work issues. So there are a lot of thorny issues. But the one thing that I can say that we are absolutely on the same page about is making sure that the health and safety protocols that we put in place are agreed to, that we're comfortable with – we're always going to be looking to do more because health and safety is a paramount concern to all of us. So we continue to iterate on those questions, and as our union partners, speaking with their members, bring up other issues, they bring them to the table, and then we have the conversation about it.

I can say also that, you know, I understand – I've been a teacher, I've been a principal. As a principal, the weight I felt of responsibility for my communities was vast. Not unlike the weight, I feel as a Chancellor right now in charge of this entire system. So I get it and I understand why you want definitive answers, but just think about all of the moving pieces associated with the beginning of this school year and how different that is. But I also want to give tremendous credit to New Yorkers because if it wasn't for the work that New Yorkers have done, not politicizing the wearing of face masks, staying indoors when we had to stay indoors, washing our hands, social distancing – if we as New Yorkers hadn't done that, we would be like every one of the other nine largest school systems in America that cannot even consider in-person learning because their positive rate of community spread is so high. We are unique amongst the 10 largest school systems in America because our rate is so low. Just today, one percent, again, that is something that gives us the opportunity for many of our children who need the in-person instruction from their caring teachers. It gives us the opportunity to actually do that. So again, we're going to continue to be very transparent and honest as we work with our partners – in fact, in two hours, we're meeting again with our partners and working through a whole list of issues. We're going to continue to do that because the children of New York City deserve that opportunity.

Mayor: Go ahead, Marcia.

Question: Mr. Mayor, my question is this: what are you going to do if teachers and principals decide that their questions haven't been answered and they decide not to show up?

Mayor: Marcia, this is a professional reality. I think you're not necessarily understanding their professionalism by asking that question. People have a job to do. If they don't have a medical accommodation, their job is to be there for their kids, and they understand that. So people are going to complain, and that's not saying that derogatorily, people are going to raise concerns, they're going to raise fears. That's all normal, and again, absolutely we saw this in every other field. We've had real concerns, real issues raised by healthcare workers, by first responders, you name it, but New Yorkers show up. So there's not a question in my mind, people are going to show up because it's the right thing to do for our kids.

Moderator: Next up, we have Sydney from the Staten Island Advance.

Question: Hey, Mr. Mayor, it's been more than a week since the city set up checkpoints to enforce a two-week mandatory quarantine, and when you announced this program last week, you said the checkpoints would be set up at bridges and tunnels all across the city. But for the last week, the checkpoints have only been at Staten Island crossings with the exception of one day. So I'm wondering why the city only seems to be targeting Staten Island with these checkpoints, and do you have an update on the number of stops you've made over the last week?

Mayor: Sydney, we'll get you the update on the exact number. It is a very initial effort. That's going to grow a lot more over the coming weeks. I spoke to Sheriff Joe Fucito yesterday about this. Look, there's one obvious reason for Staten Island, which is that a lot of the traffic coming in from the rest of the country, including from some of the most affected states like Florida comes up from the South and comes through Staten Island into New York City. So that's one of the reasons why you're going to see a lot of activity there, but you're going to see activity also, I spoke to him about this in the Bronx with folks coming down 95 the other direction. You're going to see activity around the tunnels into Manhattan from New Jersey. So you've got a lot of different pieces that are starting to grow. We'll get you the numbers, but what's most important to

recognize is that these checkpoints, you'll start to see them more and more, and they're going to keep rotating around, and the idea is to educate people that the quarantine is the law. Go ahead.

Question: Just the second question on schools for you and Chancellor Carranza. So the city can reopen schools if the infection rate stays below three percent, but I'm wondering what happens if the infection rate say on one borough is at three percent or higher? Will schools on that particular borough not be able to open or be forced to close down?

Mayor: Sydney, look, it's a very fair question to say, what if we have major variations geographically, we have not been seeing that. I don't – again besides the Chancellor, Dr. Varma might want to weigh in. I think I'm on firm ground saying now we have a lot of experience with the coronavirus and we have not seen kind of big, consistent variations on the scale of a whole borough at all. We're going to be very cautious here. If something starts to go in the wrong direction, we're going to be talking about it very publicly, because part of what we'd want to do Sydney, is tell people to take additional actions to stop any growing rate of infection. So of course, to your question, we would look at different scenarios, but I don't think that's what we're going to deal with. I think it's either going to be pretty much the city as a whole is doing well, or God forbid we're going in the wrong direction. I believe that will be more widespread. So let me just see – Dr. Varma, why don't you speak first and then if the Chancellor wants to add?

Senior Advisor Jay Varma: Great, thank you very much for the question. I do think this is a really challenging issue and we've spent an enormous amount of time thinking about this. I think that the challenge with using – the advantage of using a sort of geographic restriction would be that yes, you could tailor your response to only the people in that community. The dilemma of course, is that we have a city in which the teachers, the staff and the students often don't come from a narrowly defined zip code, certainly in some situations they do, but in many they don't. So we have to recognize that we have a very fluid environment where people are coming in from lots of different places. So we define – you know, obviously that applies to New York City within New York State as well. So our policy decision to date has been to really focus on strengthening our measures for – first for prevention, but also for detection and response in every single school and use the school as kind of the unit of reference. And that's what you saw with the guidelines that were released before, about how we would handle an individual school in one classroom, cases in multiple classrooms. So again, thinking of the students and the thinking of the school as the unit in which we're going to plan and investigate.

Mayor: Okay. Richard, you want to add?

Chancellor Carranza: Nothing to add, sir.

Mayor: Okay, go ahead.

Moderator: Next up, we have Erin Durkin from Politico.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. One more on school, and then I'll go to a different topic for my second. Marcia actually alluded to this, but I didn't hear a direct answer. If there are teachers who don't show up without a medical accommodation, they just say, I'm not putting my health at risk, I'm not coming in in-person. What will happen to them? Even if it's a small minority, will they be fired or what will happen?

Mayor: You know, Erin, again, I'm going to say something very broad and then anything Richard wants to add. We're not, we're not going to answer questions about a negative scenario when we're working with our educators as professionals and they're responding as professionals. Right now, all over New York City principals are getting ready, assistant principals, teachers, everyone's getting ready to do their job. You can have deep concerns. You can raise tough questions, but people are still going to do their job. So I'm not going to get into a hypothetical that I just don't buy into. I believe that the educators are devoted to their mission. You want to add Richard?

Chancellor Carranza: Nothing more to add sir.

Mayor: Okay, go ahead Erin.

Question: Okay, and then my second question was about the citywide layoffs. With regards to the NYPD we've reported that the NYPD has not been directed to do layoffs, even though yes, they will have to cut costs in other ways, is that accurate? Is it true that the NYPD will not specifically to doing layoffs? And if so why?

Mayor: No, that's not accurate. The – every single agency, God forbid, this happens. I want to start at the beginning. The folks in Washington failed us by not passing a stimulus. I'm going to hope and pray. They get their act together and come back and do that. That would be the best solution. The next stop is Albany, and I know we're going to go united with so many of our brothers and sisters in the labor movement to say New York City must have the borrowing authority to avoid these layoffs of working people who serve all of us. Hopefully Albany hears that joins with us, we get the borrowing authority we need and deserve, and that stops the layoffs right there. If that doesn't work, we then are going to continue to work with our municipal labor colleagues to look for savings that would avert layoffs another way.

So we're going to do all of these things, Erin, but say nothing else worked on October 1st. There's going to be layoffs on a huge level. Again, the projected number is 22,000, which is painful and astounding. Every agency will have to come up with savings. Now, look, savings can take more forms than just layoffs. That is a true statement, but to get to the kinds of savings we're talking about here, layoffs, unfortunately have to be part of the package in some form or another. But I, my sincere hope while we're planning for this very painful eventuality has just about six, seven weeks away. My sincere hope is that we can find a way to avert it.

Moderator: For our last question, we'll take Reema from Chalkbeat.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. Hi, everyone on the call, and so about nurses can you, can you specify, I know obviously everyone knows the city has been through a massive financial crisis and continues to be. So I'm curious about how the city is going to be able to pay for these nurses. That's my first question if you could answer.

Mayor: Health + Hospitals to their great credit is covering this cost Health + Hospitals. I want to give Dr. Mitch Katz a lot of credit. He's an extraordinary leader and manager. He's found a lot of ways to make Health + Hospitals more effective and modern, and he's found lots of ways to save money. So this is something he is doing for the New York City public school system out of his budget. I also have to brag on him. He is a proud graduate of Sheepshead Bay High School, and a Brooklyn kid who's giving back to the school system now and its hour of need. So that is going to be covered by Health + Hospitals. Go ahead.

Question: Okay. My second question is we know obviously that this year and that this might be more for the Chancellor. We know that this year is going to be really different, and one thing that we've heard from nurses is just exactly how their jobs are going to change inside of school buildings. You know, if you could just elaborate a little bit about that, like, will they be the one staffing the isolation room and what's their day to day going to look like?

Mayor: To a Chancellor Carranza, and if Dr. Varma wants to join in at all, just want to offer it to both of you.

Chancellor Carranza: Thank you, sir. I'll go first if that's okay with Dr. Varma. So the role of the school nurse is to be the school nurse. So that means that in our conversations, the school nurse will not be manning the isolation room. Instead, there is a building safety committee and every one of our schools that building safety committee will be empowered to make the decisions because it has multiple stakeholders around what is a rotation. It'll probably be something where there'll be a number of individuals that would manage an isolation room if the need arises. Now, let me be clear about what manning an isolation room means. That means that if a child or an adult is experiencing any symptoms of being sick, they will obviously, with the appropriate PPE, be put into a room where they would wait for somebody to pick them up or take them home. That means that the person doesn't have to be a medical profession. They're not administrating any medical interventions. They're simply waiting with that individual until somebody picks them up. So they would obviously have the appropriate PPE, and then also they don't have to be in the room. They could stand at the doorway. Again, it's just to make sure that there's supervision and that somebody attended to the child in that room. So the building safety committees will be authorized to identify who's going to be, who's going to rotate. We all know how schools work. We don't want one person just doing that, but it will be different kinds of shifts if you will. The nurses will be obviously the medical expert on the campus, and we also have situations in New York City schools where we have partnerships with community-based organizations, health organizations. So some of our schools have a rotation of nurses and doctors that actually work through the community schools model as well. They will be utilized as well. So, while, the top line right now is that every school will have a nurse in their building. There are in fact, some schools that will have multiple medical professionals in their building as well, and I don't want that to get lost as well. I don't know if Dr. Varma would like to add anything?

Senior Advisor Varma: No, nothing else for me. I think you summarized it well.

Mayor: Great. Thank you so much. Well, look, let me, let me offer this last thought, as we close out today, and I want to get back to what we talked about earlier, which is the question of addressing so much of what this crisis dredged up. The coronavirus crisis has spoken to us in so many ways. So many painful, tragic ways. Every family in New York City has been affected in one way or another. I believe that is a literal, true statement. Every single family in some form or another has been touched and pained by this crisis. But in the middle of all, this came a recognition of the deep disparities and the unfairness that pervades our society. It came when we announced the reality of what we were seeing in terms of who was being lost in which communities were hardest hit, it came even more in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd. There's been so many revelations throughout this city, in this country, in the course of this crisis, none of us asked for the coronavirus, but it is also creating a transformative moment, and so I close with this point is really pertinent to that announcement today about the project labor agreement, about the efforts to help minority and women owned business, about the efforts to get people the benefit of a union job, particularly in neighborhoods of color, that haven't had enough of those jobs. This is about actually creating equality where it has never existed. So, you know, one thing you hear and the discourse in this country is the idea of level playing field, let's level, the playing field let's create that kind of fairness. It's never existed, and I want it to be clear that when you're trying to do something that has never existed before, it won't be easy, but it must be done to live up to our values and the compassion we feel for our fellow New Yorker. So I actually believe there will be a day when the playing field can be level. I believe that that notion is not just something say and forget about, I believe it's our job to create a level playing field.

I'll tell you early on in this administration, when we created Pre-K for All, the idea became clear that we were actually doing something that had never been done before. That every child, no matter what their background, no matter how much money their family had in their bank account, every child would get the same start at the same starting line, and every child will get a chance to fulfill their God given potential. That never existed before. Well, not everyone has had a chance to get the job they deserve often because of the color of their skin. But what we're announcing today is a profound step in that direction. The legislation we are seeking in Albany, to use the money and the power of government to actually give jobs to people who've been excluded, to turn the tables, to actually carve up the pie in a way that's fair. That's never been done before. But if ever there was a moment in history to change our laws and change our ways, it is now. So to everyone who has worked hard to get us to the announcements today, again, I thank you because it will show all New Yorkers that change is possible. Thank you.

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