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NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 12, 2015

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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO AND CHANCELLOR FARIÑA ANNOUNCE
CONTINUED GAINS FOR NYC STUDENTS ON STATE ENGLISH AND MATH EXAMS**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you so much, Jackie. Jackie, how many years? 23?

Principal Jacqueline Flanagan, P.S. 19 Asher Levy: 23 altogether.

[Applause]

Mayor: That's amazing. Let's [inaudible] for that.

Principal Flanagan: Thank you.

Mayor: You know you're not allowed to lie to a public official, right?

Principal Flanagan: I'm not lying.

Mayor: I'm very impressed.

Well, Jackie, thank you for all you do here at P.S. 19, for the extraordinary success you've had. I want to thank all the principals who are here with us. I'm going to talk about them in just a moment.

But this is a very good day for New York City. It is a beautiful day outside, but it's a beautiful day for this city's children, because we have great news today about the progress that we're making as a city, that all our children are making, that our school system is making. And so much of the credit goes to principals like those around me here, who are leading the way, to so many hardworking teachers, and to all the folks who work in our public schools. And I never leave out the parents, who are a crucial part of this equation as well.

Everyone has a share in this success today, and it's something to be very, very proud of.

Now, I think it's important to remember, part of why this progress has been possible is because of the sense of ownership that these educational leaders feel. Jackie, people tell me that you sometimes refer to the students in the school as your babies. And I think that is a beautiful way of saying it, because you feel a sense of that deep personal, almost maternal connection to each and every one of the children – and you've known a lot of them since they were in pre-k.

Principal Flanagan: Yes.

Mayor: So you've literally seen them since it wasn't long since they were babies. And you've helped them every step along the way. You have a lot to be proud of today, and the children of this school have a lot to be proud of.

P.S. 19 kids made outstanding progress on the state test. English scores jumped 6 percent at this school. Math scores leapt 11 percent. Now that's a lot to be proud of. Let's give her a round of applause again.

[Applause]

And our people who are proud all over this city today, as everyone at P.S. 19 is, because the test results are in for 400,000 of our children. 400,000 of our kids took the test for grades 3 through 8, and it shows that things are changing. They're changing for the better.

I said last year we would shake the foundations, and we are. We are changing the status quo of education here in this city. Things are moving.

For the second straight year, and for the first year fully on our watch, New York City's children have raised up their test scores in both math and English – and that is something that has profound ramifications for the future of this city, the fact that our schools are moving in the right direction.

I want to thank – again, success has many fathers and mothers – I want to thank some of the folks who are with me here – first of all, the superintendent for this district, Daniella Phillips, thank you for your leadership; and our fellow principals here today – Principal Alison Coviello of P.S. 154 in the Bronx, Principal Linda Mazza of P.S. 295 in Brooklyn, Principal Camille Wallin of P.S. 314 in Manhattan, Principal Kim Hill of P.S. 95 in Jamaica, Queens, and Principal Dean Scali of P.S. 56 in Staten Island – every borough represented because progress has been made across all five boroughs.

I want to also say I appreciate the elected officials and labor leaders who've joined us. You're going to hear from them in a little bit.

And I want to thank our State Education Commissioner Maryellen Elia, who is already making an impact as the new leader of this state's educational system. And we appreciated very much her comments earlier today on what the meaning of these test scores is for our city and for our state.

Now, let's go over some of the raw numbers.

The number of kids at or above math proficiency levels raised – rose, I should say, one point, from 34.2 percent to 35.2 percent.

The number at or above English proficiency rose two points, from 28.4 percent to 30.4 percent.

When we talk about a percentage point, it is obviously representative of a large number of young people, and it says a lot about their future. It's 4,000 kids is one percentage point. 4,000 kids reaching a brand new level of achievement speaks volumes about what's possible.

Now, this has been achieved student by student, classroom by classroom, school by school. It is painstaking work. These educators can explain to you what it means to reach each child and help them move forward. A lot of work went into this, and the work will only intensify in the months and years ahead.

But when you look at these numbers, what's so striking is how universal they are. Nearly every cross section of our students made gains – girls and boys both, students of every racial background, renewal school students, students who are currently learning English, students who are recent graduates of ELL efforts and have learned English. All of those categories of students moved forward.

And the city's performance is very strong in a state context. We continue to outperform other large urban districts in the state in both math and English.

And – this is very important – we are approaching something that has been talked about and thought about for a long time, but not achieved. For a long time, we have wanted New York City schools to reach the same level as schools across the state in combination – meaning, you look at all the schools of New York State, all kinds of districts, some underprivileged, some very, very privileged – there’s a statewide average. We now have the smallest-ever gap between New York City’s scores and the rest of the state’s scores. It’s less than a one percentage point difference, and we intend to close that gap. This is an indication of how quickly things are changing in our schools.

Remember, we’re working under a Common Core curriculum, a very demanding curriculum. Literally, New York State has the highest educational standards in the entire nation, and even with that tougher standard, New York City schools continue to progress.

Thousands more students are at the highest level of proficiency – level 4. And thousands fewer are at the lowest level of proficiency – level 1. That’s another story within the story. It’s not just progress overall. More kids are getting to the highest level. More kids are coming out of the lowest level.

7,000 fewer students in English and 4,700 fewer students in math scored at the level 1 lowest level. Think about that for a second. That’s pushing 12,000 students. 12,000 students is more students than a lot of school systems have in total. That’s the number of students who improved markedly as we found through these tests.

Now, let me be very clear – the goal is 100 percent proficiency for all. We’re quite clear about the fact – this school system and school systems all over the state and all over the nation have a long way to go to get to where we need to be for the future of our city, our state, our nation, but we are very struck by the consistency of these gains. And it indicates to us how a number of plans that have been put in place, a number of efforts are really bearing fruit.

And this is this generation’s responsibility – to turn toward that ultimate goal of proficiency for all, and to constantly make progress toward it. And the leaders standing around me today have proven their ability to do so – and they will help this whole system move forward toward that goal.

Remember, again, the toughest curriculum in the nation – Common Core, which this administration embraces, which the state of New York embraces – the most rigorous curriculum in the nation, the toughest standards in the nation, the toughest tests in the nation. What we said was we had to align all of our efforts to that higher standard. And I’m someone who has said for years that standard was necessary because the reality of the modern world, the modern workplace, the demands put on our young people if they’re going to succeed. So we embraced that tougher standard.

But we’ve put in place some of the things we need to actually help our young people reach that standard – most especially a huge new commitment to professional development. And again, I’ve got plenty of experts around me if you want to know why additional professional development was key to preparing our educators to bring these students up to a much higher level than has ever been asked of them before.

Another way of thinking about this – if you just go back five years in time, and you look at the lower standards that this state used to have, and the way things were graded, which we all came to understand, and we thank the Board of Regents, and we thank Chancellor Merryl Tisch for having been very open with the people of this city and state a few years back about the fact that there was an inflation in the overall grading statewide. When that was all adjusted, we finally got to the kind of place of rigor we deserved. But if you compare these scores today and adjusted them to what used to be the standard five years ago, these numbers would be astronomical, but they wouldn’t be telling us the whole truth.

This is an instance where tough love was good for all of us. It was good for our kids to acknowledge we needed a higher standard, and we needed to be rigorous.

We are in a 21st-century dynamic. This city is a global city. This is an economic leader, not just nationally, but on the earth. We have to hold ourselves to a 21st-century standard – the highest standard. And our schools must deliver real preparation for the real world – and that’s what you’re seeing now happening more and more. That’s what these test scores are telling us – that these educators and so many more like them are deepening the ability of their teachers to teach to the higher standards of today, and to really prepare our young people for what they face today.

I’ve said before – and I feel it deeply – education determines economic destiny more today than at any previous point in human history. And you really – just dwell on that for a second. A generation ago, if you had a high school degree – even if you didn’t have a high school degree – there were ample opportunities in the economy. There were ample job prospects. That has changed markedly just in the course of 20 or 30 years. The technology revolution and so many other factors have changed the playing field. So someone who doesn’t have a good education today does not have the economic prospects they deserve.

Our mission is much harder than those of our colleagues a generation ago. We have to reach farther. That’s why today is so important, because it says that the changes are starting to work. Again, it’s just the beginning. We are devoted to going much, much farther.

Now, one other very important qualifier, we never – we never say that test scores is the whole story. No child is the sum of their test score. No school is the sum of its test scores. There’s always more to the picture. I always talk about the power of multiple measures. But we also can say this is the universal measure in this state. And when you see steady process – and by the way, we saw it in the years before we got here and we’re very happy about that fact – progress was already being made, we’ve now been able to go farther – that’s good for the people of New York City and good for the children of New York City.

Testing is necessary, but testing doesn’t tell us all the things we need to know. And testing is only a piece of telling us what we need to do. So when we have results from a test that show us some kids who need more help, the test doesn’t get them that help. These educators get them that help – these educators determining what is needed to reach each child, figuring out what their teachers need to be effective, bringing each child up. The test gives us a piece of evidence. The real work of moving the lives of children takes much, much more.

The building blocks we’ve put in place all are contributing and will contribute much more going forward to the progress we will make – full-day high-quality universal pre-k.

The time in each week that teachers devote to working with parents – something we never had before in this city – making that alliance with parents so that each child knows their parent and their teacher are on the same page. So there’s a partnership between parent and teacher to help each child – to make sure they’re doing their homework, to make sure they’re doing their reading. That’s what that additional time means.

Community schools – bringing a whole host of resources to bear to help children, including with their mental health and physical health needs.

Renewal schools – lifting up schools that too often were disinvested in as opposed to invested in, and helping them to move.

And, of course, as I mentioned, the extra professional development time, which, when the Chancellor catches her breath and when she speaks, she will tell you why extra professional development time is one of the biggest difference-makers in terms of our ability to reach kids – by the way, I would also argue one of the best things we can do for retaining good teachers for the long haul, because as professionals it’s one of the things that teachers value the most.

All these reforms, all these investments are making an impact already. Again, they’ll make a lot more going forward.

And we believe in accountability – not just the accountability of each principal and each teacher, but my accountability as mayor. These changes, these improvements were made possible because of mayoral control of education. And we'll continue to make more progress because of it.

It takes time to change what is by far the nation's largest school system, but today we have further evidence that we are heading in the right direction.

Let's take a moment to be proud, to appreciate the administrators, the teachers, the kids themselves – they're the ones who actually have to take the test – the parents who reminded them of all the studying they had to do. Let's take a moment to appreciate them. Let's give them all a round of applause.

[Applause]

And then tomorrow, and next week, and next month when school opens again, we get right back to work and we go farther. A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, you will hear from her in both English and Spanish – and she is one person who really deserves a round of applause today; who more than anyone pushed for the professional development changes; who helped us achieve the fundamental reforms of pre-k, community schools, renewal schools; helped us achieve the teachers' contract with all the reforms in it; and who is inspiring educators in all five boroughs with her own personal example – she gets special credit today. She gets an A for effort and an A for success, our chancellor, Carmen Fariña.

[...]

Mayor: We're going to take questions on this topic first, and then we will take questions on other topics.

Yes.

Question: Mr. Mayor, you talked a lot about consistent gains across demographics, but that achievement gap, racially, is still quite large. Can you speak to that? And what needs to happen to further close that gap?

Mayor: Sure. I think – Ernie will get a chance too – we – equal opportunity to speak. We – the – I can't remember if it was the American Revolution or War of 1812, the famous quote, "We have not yet begun to –" just – just help me, someone?

Unknown: "Not yet begun to fight."

Mayor: "Not yet begun to fight" – thank you. Teachers ready for the [inaudible]. We have not yet begun to fight. We have just started. This is the real answer – we have just started. And that gap will be addressed. We see progress here. We see improvements for our English-language learners, improvements for the young people who finished their English-language learning experience and then went on. We see improvements for Latino students, improvements for African American students, but it's not enough. This is a beginning. I believe, as we deepen our efforts, with full-day pre-k, with afterschool, community schools, renewal schools, parental involvement, teacher training, and a host of other initiatives, it's going to have a bigger and bigger impact. I think we are starting a process that's going to have huge ramifications for the future of this city, but I came here to address inequality – and that means inequality in our schools as well – and we will address it.

Ernie, would you like to add something?

Ernie Logan, President, Council of School Supervisors & Administrators (CSA): Very briefly. I – I – I think what – what people fail to realize is that we're not going to close this automatically. But by putting the

things in place, when you start to get students into school, when you start to change the families' perception of how important school is, you will change what the achievement levels of students are. And that's why the community partners are so important. It's about doing the social, emotional things that we do at school to help us by providing the social workers and counselors that we need, by reaching out in the community, by changing the dynamic, by saying school is indeed important. But once we do that, we need to also be able to understand that it is not just the child that we're educating. We need to educate our entire community about the importance of school, so that when a neighbor sees that the neighbor's child is not in school, maybe that neighbor calls the school and says, you know, this child is not going to school, let me talk to their parent. We need to get back to the point that we are all in this together – not just one – don't just throw it on the school and say you do it. We need you all out there to help us do this.

Mayor: Just one other point. Recognizing this point – Ernie made a really crucial point. Imagine this extraordinarily diverse group of parents and children. We're pushing 1.2 million kids. If you add up all the things we do through New York City public schools – and that means 2, 3 million or more parents, family members, etcetera. There is a mission we have to engage them differently than has been done in the past. That's why every single week, teachers are now tasked with reaching out to parents. That was not true before. That's why in the case of pre-k, we've been going out into communities explaining to parents why a 4-year-old in today's day and age needs full-day pre-k. A lot of parents who did not know that, honestly, needed to be given an opportunity to understand what a difference full-day pre-k would make for their child. And you are – you will see – I just have a sense already of how strong the response to pre-k will be for this coming school year – but you'll see, as more and more parents have learned about the importance of pre-k, and particularly full-day pre-k, more and more of them want that. It's an evolutionary process, but one of the things we didn't do a good enough job at before was making parents partners and showing them what role they could play in bringing their children forward.

Okay. On this topic – yes.

Question: Again on the topic of the inequalities and the gaps – specifically, special education students. On one of the tests, they made very small progress. On another, they went down a little bit. And I'm wondering, for you and the chancellor, there's been so much work in the past few years on reforming special ed and doing more to include children with special needs. What does that tell you?

Mayor: Well, I – I think we should look at the overall numbers, because, again, you're talking about a number of grades in both math and English. You can – you can start, but I'm – I want the team at the DOE to go over the specific numbers and make sure we're all seeing the same thing. Go ahead.

Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña: I think some of the things that we have particularly focused on is this summer we did an intensive on working with speech therapists to increase our use of speech teachers across the city. We have increased the number of programs, starting in September, for kids with autism. We have put compliance officers in every single borough office to help principals deal with how they designate special needs kids and how they place them. We're looking to increase the ICT programs. So I think we're looking at a lot of different things. We're also looking at targeted interventions, even within programs. So, for example, we've been training, in cooperation with the UFT, paraprofessionals to actually become experts at intervention strategies in programs such as Great Leaps and Wilson, so that they can also be partners with teachers in the classroom. So I think we're looking at this in multiple ways. And I think you're going to see, certainly starting in September, unique programs in many of our schools.

Mayor: I think the other point here is, again, this is a beginning. We're very, very proud of the success and how universal it is, but it is just a beginning. There's much, much more to be done.

Yes.

Question: Can you talk specifically about the results for the renewal schools and what kind of academic progress they should – ?

Mayor: Do you have it here? Does – do we need Phil for that? Who's got that? Do you have them handy?

Chancellor Fariña: I can answer generally.

Mayor: Okay. And if – Phil, if you know them in specific, come forward, and if you don't, Carmen will answer generally and we'll have follow-up – meaning, Phil Weinberg.

Chancellor Fariña: You'll see that the renewal school work really started in February of this year. One of the principals standing up here – Alison Coviello – is one of our renewal schools – P.S. 154 in the Bronx. And she had a significant increase in scores, particularly in ELA. 11 percent? I mean, I'm – in scores. Some of the schools stayed flat, a few went down, but the work for the renewal schools really starts in September, when they all become community schools, and when there's a focus of an extra hour in the school day. But we have also started with the training, at least four months ago, of what we call the DSRs, which are all focused on specific training of teachers in all these schools. So I do believe that the renewal work is moving forward, and I think in those schools you're going to actually see success. We're invited other districts in the state if they want to come see some of the work we're doing. I want to say also – and thanks to City Council – one of the reasons we think that many of our middle schools, particularly renewal schools, are moving in the right path is due to the MSQI initiative that the City Council funded. And this is a very targeted intervention for middle schools in English Language Arts. So there's a lot of things we're trying, and then we're looking to see which had been more successful than others.

Mayor: I want Deputy Chancellor Phil Weinberg to come up and give you a little bit more on the renewal schools, but I want to frame it with two key points. The renewal schools, obviously, are schools that didn't get enough investment in the past and had a lot of problems. We expect that it's going to take a lot of work and investment to get them where we need to be, but we're confident they will move. Second of all, we obviously are in just the beginning of that process. I announced the plan last November. So we've – we've not even had a full school year. At the end of next school year, you'll have a much better sense of the impact of our renewal school efforts, but I still see some promising results in these test scores already. Phil, why don't you go over them?

Deputy Schools Chancellor Phil Weinberg: The mayor's right. The investment that we made halfway through this year is starting to pay off already. We see – of 63 schools, we see 41 increasing in English in the time that we've worked with them so far, and more than – and 36 increasing in math. It's a trend in the right direction, and we're sure that as we work with them further this year it will go even further.

Mayor: Okay. On-topic – yes?

Question: I have a two-part question on opt-out – the first of that, how seriously are you taking the numbers? I know it's fewer than two percent, but, as you said, one percent still accounts for 4,000 kids.

Mayor: Sure.

Question: So, a – how seriously are you taking those numbers? What are you going to do bring them down next year? And, b – obviously the city's numbers are way less than the state's gargantuan 20 percent – can you tell me – tell us kind of why you think that happened? And to what extent you might work with the UFT, who is way less vocal than the state teachers union in encouraging parents to opt out.

Mayor: Well, I appreciate that question. It's a very thoughtful question. I think – a couple of points – one, I think the message we sent even before we came in the door is that we think in the past there was an over-reliance on high-stakes testing. And this is a national problem, it's a state problem, it's a city problem. I think a lot of parents in this city understood that we were making real changes. Obviously one of the most evident was we ended the practice of the letter grades for schools, which had caused a lot of confusion and a lot of concern. So, I think part of what got communicated to parents was that we're in the process of change. I can't compare to

the state dynamics because I just don't know them. I certainly think that everyone – all the stakeholders here were united in saying we have bigger changes to make, and none of us believe in high-stakes testing as the only way to measure students, or teachers, or schools. But, at the same time, the opt-out effort has unintended consequences. I think – I want to hasten to add, I think the parents who felt the desire to opt out were doing for legitimate feelings they had, meaning that they were motivated by honest feelings. But I think we have to do a better job of explaining to them all the things we're doing to change the school system to move away from high-stakes testing. And I think when we do that more, I think fewer and fewer parents will choose to opt out.

Chancellor Fariña: I also want to be clear that we made one significant change – we removed the promotional policy. We said this is not going to be the key by which your child will be judged – not saying that we're not going to look at kids who need to be brought up to a [inaudible] that they can see in the classroom. But I do think – from the very beginning I said I don't believe in opt-out. I said it in as many places as possible. I believe that everyone needs to be assessed. I believe that teachers are assessed in some ways, principals are assessed in other ways. And I think the message has to begin now to parents that without assessment we don't know how to help and target kids who need more support. And that has always been the message we've given out. I've been getting – giving it out more clearly. We now have a new commissioner who also has strong feelings on this topic, and we'll be working together. So, I do think this is probably – hopefully in New York City – not going to be a major issue.

Question: And can you just address the UFT question – like, to what extent you might have worked with UFT, cause their messaging was very different than [inaudible]

Chancellor Fariña: I think we're partners and that we want the best for kids, and without looking at what kids need more of, we're never going to get successful. And I think the UFT is very cognizant of that in their partnership. We've worked together on many issues and I – you know, I don't know why they did what they did, but I do know that they – we believe that working with students and with teachers to improve student performance is both our goals.

Question: Summer school has gone – the number of students attending summer school has gone down dramatically in the last two years, and the chancellor was just talking about a change of policy so it's no longer purely based on test scores. It's down 57 percent – just a couple of years ago, the number of third graders that are mandated to attend summer school. Obviously the test scores have gone up a lot slower than that. Do you think that the principals are not recommending enough students for that extra help in the summer? Do you think that the policy is working, that principals choose who needs that extra boost?

Mayor: I will say – I will defer to the chancellor on the nuances of that question. Let me just give the broad-stroke. I think we are trying to solve the problem at its root, meaning that summer school is a part – it's one of the options we have. But I think better is to address the problem during the school year, which is why we're changing the very nature of things. That's why we've done things like full-day pre-k. That's why we've done the professional development. That's why we've done the greater engagement of parents. So, I think we are focusing on the core of the problem. I'll let the chancellor speak to the specifics around summer school.

Chancellor Fariña: We had less students attending mandated summer school, but we had more students in summer school in the second grade for the first year ever in terms of STEM. I just went to visit one of the programs who had second graders doing all kinds of learning around mathematical and science concepts. So, in terms of our goal – that one of the features that we feel students need more of is vocabulary development. We're coming across it in another way. Also, many more schools – and renewal schools in particular – but all schools had Saturday academies where parents came for at least five to six weeks, three hours every Saturday with their kids to do more learning. So, there's not one way to improve instruction. There are multiple ways. And one of the things we'll do now – we'll debrief with the kid who took part in any summer program to see what was working better or not, so we can improve for next year. One of the best summer programs I went to was high school kids learning how to build their future cities. And all the – and these were kids from around the city all learning how to think, analyze, and construct. That's the kind of work that we really need if we're going

to move to the world of the future, not just, you know, just more – just skill and drill. So, we're looking to make this even better.

Question: You're going to have to go back to the state legislature next year and ask them to renew mayoral control again. At least the Senate has indicated they're going to be pretty tough on you, and who knows what kind of extension they're going to give you – maybe another one-year extension. Do you feel pressured to pick up the pace of progress and test scores given that?

Mayor: I have felt from day one – it had nothing to do with Albany – that we had a lot we had to improve in our schools. And I think this gives you real evidence of the fact that our efforts are working. A lot more to be done, but we are investing a huge amount of new resources to improve our school system, and to go at the weaker parts of our school system. That's why we have focused on renewal schools. That's we recognize that we weren't doing enough on early childhood education, we weren't doing enough on middle school. That's where a lot of our biggest investments are. So, no – the pressure I feel as the person accountable for our schools is to make sure our kids are getting what they need, and I'm accountable to their parents. That's my focus.

Question: You said that there was progress in all five boroughs. I'm just wondering how much of the test scores raised for District 31 specifically?

Mayor: I don't know if we have that handy. Phil, do you have that in front of you? Yeah, we can get more breakouts [inaudible].

Unknown: For D-31, we see –

Mayor: I thought Anna was going to ask about the Bronx today. I was really looking forward to a change.

[Laughter]

Anna Sanders: I'm going to ask about the Bronx –

Mayor: Switch it up once, would you please?

[Laughter]

Wait, what was her response?

Anna Sanders: I'll ask about the Bronx when you come up with [inaudible] new material.

[Laughter]

Mayor: Okay, I'll come up with some new material then.

[Laughter]

Unknown: – so we have a [inaudible] percent increase in ELA in D-31. And there's a .05 decrease and 1.3 percent decrease in math for District 31.

Mayor: We'll get you the backup on that.

Question: Looking at the citywide averages, I'm wondering if the gains were statistically significant, and how they compared to previous years' gains.

Mayor: They're certainly significant, and very consistent. Carmen, Phil, you can – come on – come on over.

And Ernie, you can join in too. Everyone who's got historical perspective come on over.

Chancellor Fariña: First of all, if you're one of the 7,000 students, it's very historically significant for you. Like I said, 7,000 students left Level 1 to go to Level 2 in ELA; 4,700 left Level 1 in math. That's very significant. In many communities, that's an entire community. In terms of increasing students to Level 3 and 4 – 5,600 in ELA, 1,100 in math, which is much harder. So, in numbers, I think it's very significant, and certainly it also gives us – to me as an educator – the opportunity to start school in September when even – when working with students, the emphasis in working with students who need support can be given, but it's in smaller groups. And that's really important.

Mayor: Okay, we're going to go to off-topic. We're going to start with a Legionnaires' update.

Anyone who needs to get to other things – elected officials, anybody else – you may depart. Let me bring Dr. Ram Raju in.

[Commotion]

Smooth transition – thank you, everyone.

Let me give you updates – thank you, chancellor.

Just broad stroke updates – first – make sure everyone gets settled here.

Okay. Today, of course, is August 12. I am proud to say, for another day, we have no new cases of Legionnaires' that have begun since August 3. So we're now on ninth full day – no new cases since August 3.

Again, cases that occurred previously and were later identified, we have added four – the total now 119 – one-one-nine.

There are no additional deaths that have been reported, so that number remains at 12.

Some good news on discharges from the hospital – nine additional New Yorkers discharged from the hospital, meaning they're fully well, bringing that total to 88. So again, 88 discharged from the hospital of the original – of the total 119 – again, a very strong number in terms of those who have gotten fully well.

So those are the broad updates for the day. I want to take any Legionnaires'-related questions, then we'll take other topics after that. Legionnaires'-related [inaudible] –

Question: There was some talk that today we were going to get the results of the genetic testing to show whether indeed the starting point for all of this was the Opera House Hotel. Are we there?

Mayor: I have not heard that confirmed by the state or DOH. Do you – have you heard anything?

Dr. Ramanathan Raju, President and CEO, Health and Hospitals Corporation: No, we don't – we don't have reconfirmation.

Mayor: We don't have that yet.

Question: What's the timeframe?

Mayor: Well, again, we originally – the original understanding was two weeks to three weeks even. We have been getting efforts to make that go faster, but we will announce 100 percent when we have those scores ready, but I don't want to speculate in advance. When we have a formal – I mean, those – those – that data, that information. I don't want to have anyone speculate on when it's coming until we know it is available.

Yes?

Question: Comptroller Scott Stringer said today, the city [inaudible] didn't [inaudible] plans fast enough – you know, hope for the best and assume things are isolated. He went on to say this should be a wake-up call for the city health department and the [inaudible].

Mayor: I think that's absolutely inaccurate. This is the finest health department in the nation. It's well known as such. If you want an understanding of how New York City performed, ask the Centers for Disease Control, our federal agency that is in charge of this exact kind of situation. They are the experts, and they have praised our efforts. I think we learn from every situation. We're certainly learning here how to do better community outreach in a situation like this that is brand new, where people need information from the beginning. But I think it's been a very strong effort, and I think, you know, the best people who've commented on it are those who have been in the middle of doing it, or those who are experts in the field.

Rich.

Question: Mr. Mayor, [inaudible] – maybe not new era, but this era of good feeling and cooperation between the state and the city about this – this particular outbreak?

Mayor: Look, as I said over the last days, the state and the city have been talking quite a bit. The two health commissioners – and we've talked about this on Saturday, we talked about this on Monday and Tuesday – the two health commissioners have been talking constantly. And remember, they did this same exact approach during the Ebola crisis – they were in constant communication. The staffs of the governor's office, the mayor's office have been talking constantly. The governor and I have talked several times. The more we compared notes on what we're trying to achieve and how to achieve it, the more we recognized that we could do something together here that would have a very positive impact. And we, as you heard days ago, are working with our City Council to craft legislation – unprecedented legislation for an unprecedented situation. Again, we'll be the first major city in America to have such legislation related to cooling towers. As we went over that legislation with the state health authorities and with the governor's office, they felt there was a lot to like in it, and we worked together to figure out how to craft it in a way that would both work as the city legislation, but also as a state regulation going forward. So I think it is a good example of people working on the substance, and coming to common ground. And we're very happy to be working with the state on it.

Okay, on this topic.

Question: Maybe you said it and I missed it – are there any additional buildings that identify as having Legionella in their cooling towers?

Mayor: There's an update coming later on in the afternoon. As I said yesterday, there were still a small number of buildings – it was five – that were pending results. We're still waiting for the final results back from the state – should be literally a matter of just a couple of hours. And that – that will be ultimate update based on everything we know. Based on everything we've heard from the state, from residents, etcetera, that will be the ultimate update on the buildings in the impact area in the South Bronx.

On –

Question: [inaudible]

Mayor: Well, so, let's talk about that, and I think it's an important question. So now the commissioner's order has been in effect since Thursday – the health commissioner's order. And that means there's just over a week left before – because, again, it was a two-week timeframe in that order – before every building with a cooling tower in New York City has to identify it and clean it, and keep a record of it. So we're in the middle of a new, broader reality, literally over this next week – even before the City Council legislation takes effect. Every

building in New York City that has a cooling tower has to clean that cooling tower. In that process we're going to get a lot of information. We're obviously going to get – finally – a sense of the total number of cooling towers. We will also have reports for you if we find the Legionella bacteria in any of those sites. What we know already – remember what Dr. Bassett has said – 200 cases. And I'd like you to go over this a little bit so people hear the medical reality. We're going to find, by definition, some other sites with it, but we're also going to find sites where it's not having an impact, because that's true every day in New York City.. Why don't you explain that a little more?

Dr. Raju: As we reiterated in the past, you know, Legionella is sporadically happening everywhere in the world, in this country, in this state, here in the city, inside the impact zone, outside the impact zone. So this is a very common pneumonia, which we encounter. So along as they don't occur in clusters, then we get, you know, worried about it and we deal with it. Otherwise, we deal with them as effectively. And I said yesterday, we got very good antibiotics and we'll be able to treat with them. In fact, Lincoln – at the height of the outbreak we had over 30 patients. Now Lincoln has discharged more than 22 patients. Only eight patients in the hospital, and only one patient is in the ICU – down from 15 patients. So we – this is coming – this particular outbreak is kind of tapering off.

Mayor: And to further clarify, in terms of outside the zone, any building identified outside the zone with the presence of the bacteria – even though, as Dr. Raju says, in many cases the bacteria will be present, but not having any health impact on anyone – but wherever it is found, that building is going to be cleaned instantly. That's part of the commissioner's order, and certainly that's something the city and state are working on. Whenever either of us gets to a building and identifies the bacteria, instantly we are cleaning that site.

Yes.

Question: I'm wondering as city health inspectors go in and look in the cooling towers, are they looking for other contaminants? And second, when you bleach a contaminated cooling tower that has Legionella, does it also kill other bacteria as a side effect?

Dr. Raju: Yes, it does. We decontaminate it as a possible – again, once decontaminated, it gets clean, then eventually you look at the bacteria in it. But as the mayor rightly pointed out, not every bacteria in the cooling tower is going to produce infection.

Mayor: Okay, any other questions on Legionnaires'? On Legionnaires' – yes.

Question: Yeah, [inaudible] legislation for the cooling towers – are you coming up with any specific effort to address the bad health statistics of the South Bronx? At the end of the – at the end of the day, that's what really caused this large outbreak.

Mayor: I think the entire mission of this administration is to address the reality of the South Bronx and other communities that haven't had a fair shake for decades. That means better housing, affordable housing. That means better education. That certainly means the availability of better healthcare – and thank God the Affordable Care Act finally has been confirmed, because that's another part of the solution. I'll turn to Dr. Raju, who can talk about some of the other things we're trying to do to improve the healthcare of residents of the South Bronx, but I think it's fair to say – one of the poorest areas in the nation, the poorest congressional district in the nation – this is a community that's suffered for many decades. Part of our sense of mission is we have to address the inequalities of the South Bronx in healthcare and in many, many other areas as well.

Dr. Raju: One of the major impact are – we are working with Department of Health and the Health and Hospitals Corporation – is to address the asthma rate in South Bronx, which is an important element of it. We are doing that. We also are looking [inaudible] population health model – the role of diabetes, the management of high blood pressures. So all those things are a part of our overall outreach and a population health management of the city, and South Bronx gets a special treatment, because, as mayor pointed out, there is a large healthcare disparity in South Bronx.

Mayor: Okay, on Legionnaires' going once. Yes, Richard.

Question: Just a follow-up, Mr. Mayor –

Mayor: Please.

Question: So the legislation that will pass maybe later this week –

Mayor: Tomorrow.

Question: Okay, tomorrow. Will it be a mirror image or will the state's legislation be a [inaudible] –

Mayor: Well, again, the state – to the best of my understanding, the state's going to act by rule or regulation. Obviously the legislature is not back in session until January at the – you know, based on what we know currently. But the state health department has the ability to act by rule, just like the commissioner's order that was published by Dr. Bassett last Thursday. So we worked closely with the state health department, obviously our own city health department, City Council, Governor's Office, Mayor's Office, and what the state is doing will be based on the City Council legislation here. It will be applied statewide though a different methodology – through a rule – but you'll see the same standards applied here and around the state. I think it is a great example of everyone working together – not reinventing the wheel, figuring out from the beginning a common set of standards and moving quickly, because we know, as you've heard from Dr. Raju, this is a situation where we could experience the problem anywhere in this state at any given point. So we took the experience here and worked with the state, and now this will become a statewide standard as well.

Do you want to add?

Question: You have mentioned that you and the governor have spoken several times. I assume you were referring – about the Legionnaires' outbreak. Are there any plans to appear together and talk about this joint effort to address this statewide?

Mayor: Again, we'll make those decisions case by case as always.

Any other questions on Legionnaires'? Going once, going twice.

Go back to work – [laughs] – thank you.

Other topics. Last call. Jonathan.

Question: Mr. Mayor, the Guardian Angels have announced their intention to return to patrolling Central Park for the first time in two decades. I want to get your reaction to that. Is this [inaudible] you're welcome to help? Or is it, do you [inaudible] ginning fears and potentially getting in the way of the NYPD?

Mayor: It's the first I'm hearing of it. I have absolute and total faith in the NYPD. Crime continues to go down. I think the NYPD is the best qualified force to handle the situation.

Question: Over the weekend, the Staten Island Yankees had a Blue Lives Matter Day at [inaudible] ball park on the same day as the anniversary of Michael Brown's death in Ferguson. I was wondering if you thought – think that that was appropriate?

Mayor: It's the first I'm hearing of it. I don't have a comment.

Question: Mr. Mayor, one of the many programs that the Parks Department runs through the Urban Park Rangers is to allow people to camp out in city parks one night [inaudible]. Central Park is having a camp-out

night on the 22nd of [inaudible]. I wondered if you think it's safe? And given the fact that [inaudible] camping out there, and there've been a number of [inaudible], are you going to ask [inaudible]?

Mayor: It's absolutely safe. Again, I have absolute faith in the NYPD. I would urge all of you to have faith in the NYPD. Crime is down over 5 percent compared to last year. The shooting number that you all were rightfully very concerned about, now that number is turned around, as some of us predicted – fewer shootings year-to-date than last year. NYPD is doing an extraordinary job. They will only get better. Of course it is safe to be there.

Okay. Last call, last call. Anybody?

Thank you, everyone.

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