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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR CARRANZA MAKE  
ANNOUNCEMENT ON STATE EXAM SCORES IN NYC**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Thank you so much.

[Applause]

Well it is great to be here at P.S. 204 and I kind of feel like the 1960s are back because of the bean bag chairs.

[Laughter]

I thought those went out of style but I'm glad to see they made a comeback here. And I want to congratulate Principal Amanda Blatter and everyone at the P.S. 204 family. This is extraordinary what you've all achieved. And I think you said it really powerfully and it's important for everyone to hear that you create an environment for success and you help kids to learn and you help them to be their best selves and you help them through all the transitions they're going through which is part of growing up.

I really admire the environment you've created here but the other reality is you've got some real numbers to back it up and students here have exceeded the city average in math and English three years in a row. So, a big congratulations.

[Applause]

And a real example of what is possible with the right leadership, the right educators, the right investments. We're here in the Bronx. This is an example of a school that is making progress and can inspire a lot of other schools to make this kind of progress. So, that's great news and I want to celebrate as well that this district, this coming September, will be getting 3-K. So, we're very excited about that.

[Applause]

Before I say a few remarks on the tests, I want to of course acknowledge as well Executive Superintendent Meisha Ross Porter –

[Applause]

And District 9 Superintendent, Leticia Rodriguez-Rosario. Thank you.

[Applause]

And I want to commend the Chancellor because he has created, I think, a more streamlined and straightforward management structure for the DOE, where the lines of authority make more sense and decisions can get down to the grassroots quicker, and information and ideas from the grassroots can get up to the Chancellor and his team quicker. He also has put together an exemplary team of leaders and this is the first time I've gotten to sit at the table publically with our new Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Linda Chen. I want to welcome you formally.

[Applause]

Dr. Chen spent part of her career previously in New York City and knows our schools well and is widely regarded as someone who's really achieved results in a lot of places where it wasn't easy to do so and is bringing that talent and that history here as part of Richard's new leadership team. So, we welcome you.

We've got test scores that I want to present as really being a reset moment for us in a lot of ways. This is a new interpretation of test scores this year by the State of New York. It is hard to compare against last year directly because there clearly has been a change in the approach to testing.

But we know for sure is this now gives us a baseline to work from in the years ahead. We have a new Chancellor, a new leadership team at the DOE, we have a new system of testing, we have a baseline that now allows us to move forward.

And I feel very, very good about what the DOE now has to move forward with – all the tools, all the approaches, some of which you just heard about here in terms this district and this school. And that's what we can clearly celebrate today.

I want to straightforward about what the tests tell us and what they don't tell us. The Chancellor and his team can speak to it. We do not have an apples-to-apples comparison with last year, and again, even though there are some promising signs in this test, I think it's really important to say that upfront.

We certainly – we like seeing numbers that are better than last year's numbers. We certainly see some of that in the relationship of the city to the rest of the state, and that's important because when we say the city versus the rest of the state, a lot of the rest of the state includes school districts that are really advantaged, that have a lot of resources, and don't have a lot of the challenges that this school district has.

So, when you see positive numbers of New York City's performance versus the rest of the state, that's always encouraging. But we know this is not a perfect direct comparison because the standards changed. The fact is it's powerful to have a baseline but I also want to note and put in perspective that as an administration we never want to overrate standardized tests to begin with. They are one of multiple measures.

And so this tells us something. It doesn't tell us everything. There are some other things that I'll note in a moment that are also really important to put into the equation but just like you think about the effort that we've been through over these years to get away from an over focus on high-stakes testing, to get away from over focus on test-prep – if you believe in multiple measures, you believe in it across the board whether you're evaluating a single child or a teacher or a school or a school system.

And so, we put this in perspective today as one piece of evidence and a new piece of evidence, but we also know we're going to be looking at a lot of other things to make our judgements about how we're doing.

Now, what we do know definitively is where we came from. We know that five years ago and before that there was a fundamental problem. There was sense among both parents and teachers that they were not being respected or listened to and there was a disconnect – a school system not sufficiently unified with its own educators and its own parents.

Well, we've done a lot to try and address that. We certainly have more to do. But that I know has changed. I know our Equity and Excellence vision is changing the approach across the city. I know it especially because pre-K now exists fully universally. I know it because 3-K is growing all the time and working. I know it because the other focus points of our plan are increasingly coming into play. The focus on getting all of our kids' reading on grade level by third grade – this is one of the most important things we'll all be working on.

By the way, if we see this year's test as a new baseline, I'm excited about next year and the year after that and I'll tell you why. Because next year will be the first time we see the effect of universal pre-K. Next year will be the first time we see the pre-K expansion expressed in the third grade test scores but remember that's when we went from 20,000 kids in pre-K to 53,000.

The next jump was to almost 70,000. So actually it's the year after that, that we'll finally get to see what every single child getting a strong start means in terms of literacy and that's exciting to look forward to. All the other pieces we put into play, Computer Science for All, Algebra for All, Advanced Placement courses in all high schools, College Access for All, after school for all middle school kids – all of these pieces are taking hold more and more, and we expect now to see the impact of them against the baseline of this year.

I'm excited to see where that will lead us. I'm very confident. I'm confident in our new leadership but I'm also confident that the building blocks are really starting to add up. But we just don't have enough evidence in this new interpretation of the test to tell us everything we want.

Now, as I referenced earlier, there are some facts that are absolutely clear and undeniable. And these are the things that are giving us real hope. The graduation rate in this city – 74.3 percent, the highest we've had in the history of New York City. That's something everyone should be proud of.

[Applause]

The dropout rate – 7.8 percent. Now, I remember not so long ago in this city it was 20 percent or higher. We're at a 7.8 percent dropout rate and decreasing all the time. That's something people should be really, really proud of.

[Applause]

The highest ever post-secondary enrollment rate meaning the number of kids enrolling in higher education coming out of New York City public schools – for the class of 2016 – 57 percent, the highest in our history and that's going to keep growing.

[Applause]

And one more, which is really exciting to me because we're making opportunity available, we're creating the opportunity for kids to take Advanced Placement courses in schools that never had any, literally, in their whole history – we're providing SAT exams for free to really open up access. So, we now have the highest number of New York City public school students taking and passing both Advanced Placement exams and SAT exams – the highest number in our history.

[Applause]

All of that is good but that last thing I'll say before a few words in Spanish is, okay, that proves progress can be made, it's great to have a new baseline. Now, we have to proceed with tremendous urgency because when it comes to educating our kids that is a test we cannot fail. All of us, we have to get it right.

The good news is we have a leadership here that feels urgency every day, that knows that they've been given the building blocks, and now they need to do something really intense, really fast with it. And that gives me a whole lot of hope.

Just a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With Equity and Excellence for All, we expect strong results, better results in the years ahead. And the man who is going to lead the charge with urgency and energy – our Chancellor, Richard Carranza.

[Applause]

**Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza:** So, thank you – thank you, Mr. Mayor. And I also want to join you in congratulating the students, the teachers, the staff, the administrators, all of the support staff at P.S. 204 right here in the heart of the Bronx.

[Applause]

And their incredible principal, Amanda Blatter. Principal Blatter, thank you again for welcoming us into your home. If you've ever had a chance to feel what a good learning environment feels like, just walk in these doors and you'll feel that.

[Applause]

Mr. Mayor, I am so excited at what you just shared with us because typically at events like this what we want to do is really trumpet the highlights and really make a case for what's happening. And what I just want to thank you for Mr. Mayor is for your being authentic and keeping it, as the students across New York City as we speak – you're keeping it real. You're keeping it real.

[Applause]

And by keeping it real, this is a baseline year. There's no two ways about it. As I did my homework as I was coming to New York, and studied the testing scheme in New York State, I have to tell you it's a rollercoaster. It's been a number of changes, a number of twists and turns. You add to that the assessment wars about how are we going to use test scores and what are they going to be useful for, and you add the differing and often changing from year to year baseline cut scores. So, your words are very, very important to keep in context.

We now have a baseline year. And for the next two administrations, we know the State has said they're not going to change –

**Mayor:** Years.

**Chancellor Carranza:** Two years. So, we now have some consistency, at least short term, by which we can actually use this one measure to compare and to look at what our progress is, just one measure. The other thing that I appreciate is that we have decoupled the use of test scores and used them for other things.

Like when you use a screwdriver to pound a nail – that's not what it's meant for. Test scores are not used, and should not be used to choose the livelihood of educators. They should not be used to cast dispersions or make declarations on communities and schools. They are used as a tool, one of many tools that in the hands of well-trained teachers can use that information to understand, where are my students now, where am I going with them next?

So again the emphasis on using test scores as just but one of many indications is an important message for our community to understand. The other thing that I'd like to say is that we do have some evidence that things are going in the right direction.

The Mayor has shared with a list of many things that are going in the right direction but, my friends, I will be the scrooge in the conversation and say we still have an opportunity gap not only in New York City but in the State of New York where the education attainment by different groups of students is predictable by who those students are in terms of their ethnic group. That's not okay. That's unacceptable.

And what we're doing in terms of Equity and Excellence and the incredible enlightened agenda around Equity and Excellence initiatives is, make no mistake, focused squarely on not reducing but eliminating the opportunity gap for our students in the City of New York.

[Applause]

I'm excited about the team. I'm excited about the work and I do, although this is a baseline year, when we do compare ourselves to the rest of the state of New York, we are not satisfied but I will tell you that the efforts of teachers and our paraprofessionals and our administrators and our students and our parents is evident in terms of, even in this baseline, how we compare to our colleagues across the State of New York.

So there's good things to build on but let's be really clear, the work is not only just begun, we are deep into the work and look forward to really moving and delivering upon those initiatives under the Equity and Excellence for All agenda that we've all committed to.

[Chancellor Carranza speaks in Spanish]

Mr. Mayor –

**Mayor:** Thank you. You've just taught me how to say – let's give him a round of applause.

[Applause]

You've taught me how to say Equity and Excellence for All in Spanish. That's my next lesson. That's very good.

[Laughter]

The – one of the most important things that Richard just talked about is taking on the achievement gap squarely. And I want to say that, referring to the history that I talked about earlier, you can't address the achieve gap if there isn't unity between our DOE and our teachers, our educators, our parents. You know, that absence of any sense of team effort made it impossible to go at this fundamental inequity that we have to solve.

But I think what's, again, in the happened last year is a real coming together in common cause. So, as I turn to Michael Mulgrew, I want to say thank you the educators of this city who feel this. And I've talked to a lot of them. They feel that closing that achievement gap is their business, is their job, is their mission, and we just had a great example in District 15 last week of educators saying, "We want to up our game, we want to take on a great challenge in the name of justice."

And that was something I hope all New Yorkers were really, really proud of. So, it's my pleasure to introduce the President of the UFT, Michael Mulgrew.

[Applause]

[...]

**Mayor:** Thank you very much Michael. We are going to take questions from the media on the test results and then on other education matters and then we will go to other general matters, yes?

**Question:** So I know you've made it a point in this to mention that this is just the baseline that's being established, you don't kind of want to hype up any gains but in the press release your

quote is you know about we now have a school system that is steadily improving before our eyes. We have seen steady gains across our student's state math and English examines, proving that equity and excellence go hand and hand. What is that about?

**Mayor:** I think it's two things. I think it's a little over exuberance among the writers and I think it is also talking about the big picture. The big picture is true. The graduation rate change is real and factual. It has nothing to do with the State changing standards. That is a fact on the ground. The reduction in dropout rate, the increase in college readiness and college attendance, the increase in SAT taking and passing and AP courses – all of those things are very, very real. That part is true, we are seeing steady progress. And to the point Michael made, clearly something big is starting to happen over these last few years and our relationship with the rest of the State of New York. For decades it would not have been believable that New York City could compete with the rest of the State of New York by any measure. So the fact that we continue to be competitive with the rest of the state, even beating the rest of the state in some measures is a very promising sign.

But I'm not going to go farther than that. This gives us only a beginning to try and show a deeper form of progress which we have to get to. The good news in that is again, I think the cavalry is coming because of the impact of Pre-K and 3-K that we will really start to play out.

**Question:** So is it untrue to say that we have seen steady gains across our student state –

**Mayor:** No it's not untrue. I think it is right to say we have seen steady gains because we say it in all the previous tests and because we've seen it on other measures that are not tests like graduation rate and college readiness. I think it is fair to say what should have been added in there is a leavening sentence about we are not overstating the impact of these tests because we regard them as a baseline. Please.

**Question:** What is so different about – why is this the baseline? I mean there's been a change, I think it is from a two day test, three day test. What has been the change and why can't you compare that from this past test data to ones in the year prior?

**Mayor:** Let's see if either of our educators want to delve into that?

**Chancellor Carranza:** Yes I'll start and then I will ask Dr. Chen to chime in as well. So not only the structural changes from a three day to a two day, we've gone from a timed test to an untimed test as well. In addition the questions have been reformatted with the input of teachers and other experts so that we are actually standard setting and I know that sounds like a very education term. It basically means, are the question truly measuring the standard that they are intended to measure and at what degree are they measuring that standard? So that whole process was employed by the State Department of Education this year as well. So there's a number of changes that fundamentally make this year's test different from last year's test, hence the apple, orange comparison. Anything else? Okay.

**Mayor:** Yes, Marcia.

**Question:** Are the changes make the test easier or harder? And why was there a six week delay in releasing the exams?

**Mayor:** Well the second one is, you'll have to ask the State of New York I assume but go ahead.

**Chancellor Carranza:** Yes, so starting with the second one, we don't know why it took so long. Again the State of New York and Commissioner Elia, I believe covered it this morning in her press release. However, we don't believe that it made it easier. What we believe is that this year's test is much more closely aligned to the standards than last year's test was. So it's a much more accurate reflection of whether or not students have mastered the standards at the grade levels that are tested.

**Mayor:** And Marcia – just to jump in, hold on a sec, just to jump in – a test that is built to actually reflect to what kids are being taught and are supposed to be taught right? And that actually reflects the input from the people doing the teaching, that's a great step forward. And we like to believe is giving us a truer result and by that measure we'd be happy because it shows some progress for us. But we can't with a straight face say it's the same test and the same approach as last year. So that's where we have another year to be able to compare against.

**Question:** [Inaudible] test has changed so that is more accurately results how the kids are learning and what they are learning?

**Chancellor Carranza:** Sure so part of what my previous answer was – so again every standard, there are questions that will measure whether students have mastered the content for that standard. There was a lot of discussion in the previous years before I got here to New York about whether or not the questions truly were aligned to what the State standards were asking. There was a process that was employed at the state level where teachers were brought in, experts were brought in. It was recalibrated. You had groups of teachers and others, actually looking at standards at different grade levels and then assessing the question and asking does this in fact answer or assess what students should know. There was a whole process of doing that. Through that process we were able to get to a test that actually measures what students should know at each grade level. It's a much tighter alignment. What I'm particularly happy about is that's best practice for norming, that's how you norm these kinds of questions. So the fact the State did this writ large, I think is kudos to the State of New York, now I'm just asking please keep this for a while so we have something to compare to. Mr. Mulgrew?

**President Michael Mulgrew, United Teachers Federation:** Yes, they are going to keep it for approximately two more years at this point. They are working with a group teachers now to – and it's more about just continuing to move the test in a positive direction because the State Education Department, both the Commissioner and Board of Regents have been clear that they really want to move away from people misusing test scores. So just for a simple example, is it more important to have a higher percentage of just factual answers or formative answers where you can show reasoning? So that's as far as I'm willing to go into that in a press conference. But it's a whole different style of learning that reflect what we believe are the correct standards because we have been changing the standards in New York State by working with educators from – there's a bunch of educators from New York City as well as from Buffalo, from all of the North Country have been coming together and working on this as well as experts from outside.

**Mayor:** Okay yes.



**Question:** It seems like the test scores show that Renewal schools haven't made significantly more progress than the rest of the city's schools. So I'm sort of curious – you've said before that the City will be making decisions this year about the remaining schools in the program. I'm curious about what this new data point means for those schools.

**Mayor:** Well I think it shows us two things and I'll start and let the educators jump in. One, look the Renewal schools were the schools with the greatest problems and the toughest history and what it shows is with investment and support that they are now aligning to the rest of the school system. They are not continuing to lag behind and unfortunately as was often true in the past declined further – that we are showing that we are one, stabilizing them and then in the case of the Rise schools, the ones that graduated, I think it's 15 schools. They actually outperformed the rest of the city, suggesting that when you make those investments and you get some of those schools to come out of Renewal status, and we've continued by the way, investing in those schools. We didn't say oh, you are out of Renewal that's it, bye. We continued to strengthen them. That they actually can move forward substantially.

We now are looking for that same equation to play out at the end of this year. That we will – end of the school year – that a certain number of schools are going to graduate. And we think they'll be in a strong place, and the evidence from the previous year's crop of Rise schools is hopeful. But very straight forward, I've said it before, whichever schools at the end of this academic year we feel are not able to continue, we are ready to do something very different with.

**Question:** And so if you believe that this shows that the program is working in some ways as you hope –

**Mayor:** In some ways right.

**Question:** You consider designating new schools Renewal schools? Will this program continue throughout the rest of your second term?

**Mayor:** Turn to the Chancellor – we certainly want to make major changes to the approach because we are pleased that there has been some progress but it's not everything we want it to be by any stretch. And we have a chance to do that now because the Chancellor has instituted a whole new leadership structure. Do you want to speak to that?

**Chancellor Carranza:** So we have learned a lot of lessons from the Renewal initiative and the lessons that we have learned, we are taking those and implementing them in our approach to supporting all schools. So there are schools that exist across the city that have different levels of challenges, different levels of what we call opportunities, not necessarily obstacles. So how we address those obstacles in conjunction with community, in conjunction with the teachers and the different people who are actually in the schools is one of the big lessons we have learned from Renewal. How do we do that deeper and better? And then what kind of data do we use to track not just test scores but different kinds of multiple measures that give us a pulse on the health, if you will, of a school and a school community.

All of that is being wrapped into our approach to supporting schools and supporting communities. Now that being said it's also important to take a step back for a minute and when you look at the literature around school improvement, depending on the studies you are looking

at, it's anywhere from three or five years, to seven years to actually embed and cement systems and structures that lead to continuous school growth and continued school improvement. So when you think about it in those terms, we are squarely entering the sweet spot for cementing systems and structures for continuous school improvement. That's a really, really important indicator for us to keep in mind. Now, it's also important and I don't want to get too into the weeds here but I'm just going to say it because I have said it publically. I've got a beef with the way the State of New York looks at English language learners. We know that the literature is clear that to develop language proficiency, it's anywhere from five to seven years. Yet our students who are English language learners are expected to take a cogitative exam in a foreign language in all intents and purposes within one year of them entering the system. It's contrary to what the literature says in best practice. So there are some even structural challenges that we are going to continue to work very closely with the State of New York around aligning, let's just be fair. Let's look at the research. Let's look at what best practices are. Because that information then also gets used unfortunately to make decisions about what are good schools and what are bad schools, what are good students, what are bad students, good teachers, bad teacher etcetera. So there's a lot of work to be done, but I will tell you though, the lessons learned with Renewal are significant and they are being incorporated into our approach going forward. And we have some schools to celebrate. Those Rise schools are actually outpacing the New York City Department of Ed school writ large. That's really good news.

**Mayor:** Okay, question way back.

**Question:** I see the results were all lumped together for the city. Did the city receive a borough breakdown, if yes, then why is that not in the press release?

**Mayor:** I assume we have all sorts of break downs that we can put out. I don't know what was in the press release and what wasn't but go ahead.

**Chancellor Carranza:** Yes, so we received all of our data. I know there was a lot written about us having embargoed data. We had a first cut of embargoed data that we received. But we received the official data after it had been standardized. It had been scrubbed, the cut scores had been done. We received that this morning. So our teams are bust at work doing all kinds of cuts and break downs and grouping of the data as we speak.

**Mayor:** And that will all be public.

**Chancellor Carranza:** It will be public.

**Mayor:** Some I assume later today and then more as it's ready.

**Chancellor Carranza:** As it becomes available.

**Mayor:** Lindsey.

**Question:** One kind of comparative trends that staid steady again this year is that charter schools once again outperformed district schools. Particularly black and Hispanic students, this is something that we talk about every year. I guess I'm interested in your perspective on it, this

many years in especially since we are coming up against the charter cap is increasing the number of charter schools if you hit that cap in the next two years something you will support or not?

**Mayor:** Look, I historically have not believed the answer is to increase the number of charter schools and I still don't. I think the answer is to improve the schools we have. And we have proven that we can improve the schools we have and we are going to be able to do a lot more now. But as to the question – very fair, very straight forward question. I don't want to say that your question has a bias. I think the concept of measuring anything solely by standardized tests has a bias. I feel this strongly. So when we say certain charter schools have outperformed quote on quote, it means their kids did better on standardized tests. But I would also note that unfortunately some charter schools have been very clearly documented, some charter schools do not keep kids enrolled who don't do well on standardized tests. Some charter schools –

[Applause]

Some charter schools go out of their way to discourage English language learners, and special-ed kids.

[Applause]

And some charter schools have a heavy test prep emphasis in their curriculum which to us is not a curriculum. Test prep is not a way to do curriculum.

[Applause]

So of course there's going to be a gap for those reasons. That's my strong supposition. Now I want to be very clear. There are some other charter schools I believe that are reaching out to kids with some of the toughest needs, that are not focusing on test prep, that are trying to get at real teaching and learning and critical thinking and decision making and all the things and God bless them. But I think it's just not an apples to apples comparison because the charter schools structure is not based on the same set of rules that our structure is in our traditional public schools. So my position remains admirably consistent. We are going to focus first and foremost on where 90 percent of our kids are which is our traditional public schools and we are never going to make our decisions based on a single test. Who else? Okay, last call on anything on test scores or education? Please.

**Question:** So you mentioned earlier –

**Mayor:** You're an outlier over there. I don't know what – that's the real cheap seats.

**Question:** You mentioned earlier that you're looking forward to the next two years when the test scores will be apples to apples.

**Mayor:** Right.

**Question:** And you know, you may start to see the effects of pre-K. I am curious how you're going to judge – like what sort of benchmarks you're looking to for success. What would you expect the test scores to look like?

**Mayor:** It's a great question. I don't have a magic number yet but I want these guys to come up with a magic number. I mean, again this is one of multiple measures. But we still should and can start to model what we think these extraordinary new inputs can help us achieve. I mean obviously, if you're talking about the tests scores we're looking at here are based on a year where 20,000 kids got full day pre-K. Next years will be based on a year where 53,000 kids got it. I think we'll start to see next year more of the results of having a universal literacy approach. But even that I think could take another year or more to really fully play out. I do expect progress. And I'll say it now and get it out of the way. If we don't make progress after those inputs – something is wrong and we have to make further changes and further adjustments. But I do expect progress. So I think it begins with the actual experts saying, okay let's do some [inaudible] projections about what we think that will mean. Now that said, last point – I am going to be even more interested honestly in whether we can continue to make progress on graduation rate, on college readiness, on kids taking SAT's and AP classes. Those to me – the beauty of those measures versus standardized test scores is those are much higher impact, much more tangible. But yeah, we will be modeling what we think all of those things should look like.

**Question:** [Inaudible] specific benchmarks though in any of the other areas you mentioned where we hold you accountable for specific?

**Mayor:** I will be very straightforward. We've had this discussion. We have not come up with something that we're ready to say publicly yet. I have always been comfortable putting out metrics and holding ourselves to them. And we need that. But we don't have them today. It's the kinds of thing we want to do going forward because we now do have I think both a lot of the inputs we need and a team and a structure that can help us achieve. And I am not afraid of accountability. So we'll have more to say on that as we analyze these results and think about what's next. Last call, anything education – going once, going – was that education? Okay.

**Question:** Yes. This is a question for you and Chancellor Carranza. Your [inaudible] is running out of space for new charter schools [inaudible] proposal for a charter statewide federation approvals 29 [inaudible] have been proposed for the city and [inaudible] charters left in the charter [inaudible] so for specifically for New York City. So I am just wondering where [inaudible] stand in this issue of raising a charter path [inaudible] eliminating [staff]?

**Mayor:** I'll just reiterate and pass it to the Chancellor. I believe that the charter cap is perfectly sufficient the way it is and that our focus should not be on the expansion of charters. Our focus should be on doing the hard work of making our traditional public schools better.

**Chancellor Carranza:** I would add to what the Mayor says. I agree with what Mayor de Blasio said. I would say we should not be talking about lifting a charter cap, we should be talking about investing more resources from the state and fully funding our fair student funding formula. That's what we should be talking about.

[Applause]

**Mayor:** The always insightful and on-message Richard Carranza, reminds me of the fact that in just a few short weeks there is an election. And this will be a moment of reckoning, because the campaign for fiscal equity cases is now about a decade old. The highest court in New York State

very specifically instructed the City – excuse me the State of New York to provide more money for New York City public schools, for the upstate cities schools, for the rural areas public schools. Which is a really interesting coalition that can come together in Albany in what I think will be a very different state senate and finally say okay its time. The State of New York obviously economically is in a lot stronger shape than it was a decade ago. The court spoke, the time is now. That could be one of the most decisive moments in education in this state in a long time. If when we go to Albany and there's finally a reckoning on the CFE decision. That could give us the resources to really create equity and funding that we've been trying to achieve for so many years, so stay tuned. Yes?

**Question:** [Inaudible] question goes back to last week with the District 15 approval. I wonder about what parts of that weren't [inaudible] specifically the busing component which would do a lot to actually physically help move students and give them those opportunities to go to schools without [inaudible] screens are down. So why not approve that part of it and [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** I'll start by saying – I think it was six out 66 recommendations were not approved. That's a pretty good hit rate for a task force to get 60 of their recommendations approved. But the broad answer I gave last week that some of them have real budgetary ramifications and precedent setting ramifications in terms of other districts and logistical ramifications and we just didn't feel comfortable approving them on their face. We'll look at them, but there's bigger, bigger decisions that have to be made in light of those recommendations. Okay. Yes, Marcia.

**Question:** So, Chancellor last week you fired Eric Goldstein , the President of the [inaudible] company [inaudible]. But Eric Goldstein was also in charge of school food which is under investigation. I wonder [inaudible] more [inaudible].

**Chancellor Carranza:** So, Marcia we're taking a look at all aspects of support services and direct services to students. Transportation obviously has gotten the most print recently and airtime. But school nutrition, school food is a critical component of equity for our students. So we're looking at the operations in school food, in school nutrition as well. As well as in our [inaudible] our sports and the opportunities for all students to have access to sports as well. So we're taking a look at that entire portfolio. I am very proud of the leadership of Kevin Moran stepping up and being the senior adviser to me on transportation. He and I are communicating daily, sometimes multiple times during the day. I am telling you that he is really – got the hood up. And he is right in there with his hands trying to understand what the root cause issues are around our transportation system. We have additional colleagues that are pushing into food and student nutrition in a similar way. So again, I think as we find things that we want to fix or rearrange I would not be surprised to see more changes coming. But I will tell you, the mandate from the Mayor is very clear. We want to provide the best service to our students and our families every single day in all aspects of what we do in the DOE and that's what we'll do.

**Mayor:** Amen, last call on education – once, twice, other topics.

**Question:** So once you said that if developers from New York Wheel were willing to submit another required or proposal you'd be willing to consider it. Can you elaborate on what the developers from the New York Wheel need to do to get the city to work with them? And what kind of proposal –

**Mayor:** The City has been working with them for years and years. I am going to try one more time to put this in perspective. This is a private sector development project on public land, which got the opportunity to base itself on public land and other considerations from the city. But this decision was made in the previous administration on the promise that this would all be done with private funding. Look, I will say I think the previous administration was willing to do certain types of subsidies and public support for private sector activity that I never would have been willing to do. But to be fair to the Bloomberg administration they did not offer public subsidies in this case. They said it's supposed to be done with private dollars. Along they went and they had cost overruns followed by more cost overruns, followed by more cost overruns. So the problem now is you've got what was supposed to be a purely private sector endeavor that now cost a whole lot more money. And so the developers have come to the city seeking aid. What they asked for is something that we do not feel is appropriate offer. It's the kind of tax free bond financing that we would reserve only for situations that we felt were smart investments for the City and that were economically viable projects. And so far what we've seen in this case unfortunately is a project that has not been proven to be economically viable. Now for the people of Staten Island I want to see more jobs, I want to see economic development. That site will either be the wheel, because they get their act together or it will be something else that will benefit the people of Staten Island. But our door is open if they have a different – if the developers have a different proposal we will listen. But let's be clear. Our team has met with them for years – constant communication. Not our project, someone else's project that has not been made right. That's the problem here.

**Question:** [Inaudible] proposal would you want to see?

**Mayor:** I am not going to put forward ideas to them, they have to – it's their money, it's their project. They have to figure out something they think could be helpful but is not tax free financing, and we're listening. Yes?

**Question:** Mayor there was an MTA board meeting today with Chairman Andy Byford, once again he said he expects the City to pay for a portion of the subway rescue plan. He said he was working on intensifying advocacy campaign to “progressively build up in Seminal vote” which will happen in spring for the Senate, and in June for the City Council since its [inaudible] budget there. And he says he's intending to prevail in those votes. Are you changing your position?

**Mayor:** God bless him. He's a good man from everything I've seen and I think his vision, the Fast Forward vision, is a good one but I am not sure he understands that the City of New York, given all our other obligations, is not in the position to provide that financing. What would solve the problem – he's right about Albany. The State runs the MTA, the Legislature has the power, once and for all, to provide the permanent funding that the MTA needs.

Everyone knows I believe in the millionaire's tax. Everyone knows other folks are advocating congestion pricing. There may be a third way. There may be a hybrid. But one thing that all New Yorkers should feel equally is that vote in Albany around the budget [inaudible] April 1st should be decisive moment for our subways and for the MTA. Everyone should be working for that to be the decisive moment.

And if that is done properly, it will be a very bright future. If that opportunity is missed in what is a non-election year – everyone understands, therefore, a better time to deal with something as tough as this – then I'm really worried about our future. So, that's where my focus is. Marcia –

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, the Sanitation Department [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Wait, the what and the garage?

**Question:** The lease –

**Mayor:** The lease, okay.

**Question:** [Inaudible] parking spots that residents [inaudible]. The Sanitation Commissioner says that [inaudible]. My question to you is – how do you feel about the idea of parking garbage trucks in residential areas as just a new norm and is this acceptable?

**Mayor:** Well, first of all, I have to hear the details of what's happening in terms of the – that lease issue you refer to. But the bottom line to your question – do we want garbage trucks parked on residential streets? Of course not. And you know what we're trying to do every day is figure out the kind of facilities that will help avoid that in the future. And we've had some success in some places.

There are some really important new Sanitation facilities we've built that have helped make sure that the garbage gets picked up and the trucks are kept in the garage where they belong. But it's the same space problem we're having all over New York City. In some cases we need more space and new space. I'll talk to the Commissioner and figure out what we can do to relieve the immediate pressure. We certainly don't want those residential areas to feel the burden.

**Question:** Right now [inaudible] hundreds of NYCHA residents testifying in federal court [inaudible] hearing about the conditions inside their apartment, the developments [inaudible] consent decree from the federal monitor. Listening to many of these tenants – they really wish the City had done more whether [inaudible]. What do you say to these, I think, seven people gave written [inaudible] testified – what do you say to these residents of City-owned property who felt really let down by the City and think that there should have been more done for the people involved within NYCHA who [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** I think there's a couple of different things happening, but it begins with the people. So, I've for 20 years had a lot of contact with NYCHA residents and I've spent a lot of time in NYCHA developments, and I've talked to a lot of folks about their lives. I've been in a lot of people's apartments. I think that so many New Yorkers who live in public housing are working really hard to make the best of their situation, and they do a lot to make their developments better, and they deserve to know that NYCHA is on their side, the City of New York is on their side, and that's what we're trying to show. One of the very first things we did in this administration was, we canceled the historic practice, decades-old practice of NYCHA having to pay for its own police coverage, and we gave that money back to NYCHA to make repairs and apartments and in buildings, and we've done a lot of other things since then. My point of view is, I understand why people are frustrated, I'd be frustrated too, but we've got to be honest about the root of the problem. And I have not met a single NYCHA resident who misses the history here.

They understand the original sin – the original sin is, this was built to be federally and State subsidized housing, except for the federal government and the State government stepped away from it and left a huge, gaping hole that the City of New York could not fill. That number, as you know, now is \$31 billion. It's a staggering number for housing that supports 400,000 people. We've added already in this administration over \$3 billion more in resources. We've committed to a lot more, going forward – no administration's ever done that before. And we've been honest with people, we're going to need to find a way to somehow break the log-jam with the federal government, somehow get the State of New York to give us the hundreds of millions that they say they're going to give us but never give us, somehow get private dollars in. Now, where we've done that, and you may have been with us when we went to a couple of developments where we got private financing and refurbished the entire development. Composts in Manhattan, in Ocean Bay, in Queens are two great examples. We're going to do a lot more of that. And we have a plan on the table, but we're going to have some very big, new plans coming out soon for how we're going to maximize investment into public housing. Anyone who's frustrated, I understand it and I agree with it, but I also know that this is going to be a long battle to get our public housing to where it needs to be. The one thing that is clear is the City is the one player in this whole equation that's actually putting billions and billions of dollars into trying to fix the problem.

Yes?

**Question:** There is legislation being introduced in the City Council today that will add 400 street vending license [inaudible] over the next 10 years. You've said before that you want to change the way [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** I haven't seen that bill, but I can tell you the conversations I've had with Speaker Johnson have been very consistent about the standards that we hold in terms of the Mayor's Office. We want to see clear geographical restrictions that will respect existing brick and mortar small businesses, but still give opportunities for food vendors. And in a growing city, I think you can do both. We want to see strong and consistent enforcement and stop some of the scamming that's been going on in that industry. And if we can get those things right, there is room for more permits and more opportunity for folks who want to be food vendors. But we've got to strike that balance. So, I have not seen the new legislation, but those are the ground rules from my point of view in terms of what I would be willing to support.

**Question:** Mayor, why did [inaudible] meet with the President of Cuba? And can you tell us, do you believe him and the Cuban government when they say they weren't involved in [inaudible] attacks on U.S. diplomats?

**Mayor:** First of all, I want to just announce that the Cold War is over, but if you want to ask about Cuba, it's cool. I'm meeting with the President of Cuba because he asked for a meeting and we are the host of the U.N. General Assembly and I thought it was respectful to meet with him. But I'm also meeting with him because it's a crucial moment in the relationship between our countries. We have a big Cuban-American community in the Tri-State area. We have a lot of connection to the Caribbean. We'd like to see a positive relationship between our two countries. Unfortunately, I think some of the decisions of the Trump administration are making that harder rather than easier. I don't know enough about the allegations and what's caused the illness to our diplomats, so I just can't say. But I do think the more we normalize the relationship with Cuba,



the better for democracy, the better for human rights, the better for the free flow of information, and I want to support that kind of change in every way I can.

Other questions? Yes, way back –

**Question:** Question regarding the Rebuild by Design project to build up the waterfront?

**Mayor:** Say, which one now?

**Question:** Rebuild by Design – the federally funded project to build [inaudible] waterfront area, the storm prevention. There's one area in Lower Manhattan, Battery Park, I think, referred to as The Big U, seems to have stalled whereas other areas have moved forward [inaudible]. Is that true?

**Mayor:** I think that's the right way to say it. The U is – just for your help – is much bigger than just Battery Park, it's a big swath of Lower Manhattan. Those plans are moving apace. All of our resiliency plans are moving. I mean, it's a \$20 billion resiliency effort, which means some pieces are moving right this minute and under construction, or have already been completed, like the Rockaways Boardwalk, which is a 5.5 mile barrier now – it's built a storm-resistant barrier. So, some are completed, some are being built, and some are in design and will start to be built, that includes a lot of the activity you'll see in the U. So, we've done a lot of work to try to improve the design. We'll have more to say on that soon. But that will be built with the schedule we put forward.

Okay, anything else? Going once, twice –

Thank you, everyone.

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