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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning, everyone. This crisis has been tough on New Yorkers in so many ways. And we've really got to reflect now on the toll is taken not only in human lives – most importantly human lives and the health of our people – but also, people's livelihoods. So many folks have been struggling to make ends meet and are feeling the challenges now as a second wave is bearing down on us – particularly concerned about so many of our small businesses, mom and pop stores, neighborhood stores, multi-generational stores, places that we really cherish and we need them. We need them for the jobs they provide, all that they provide to our communities, the sense of identity. So much of what we feel about our city is really about our neighborhoods and our neighborhood stores. So, right now, we're focused on how we can help save these stores in this moment and help them through to the time we get the vaccine and we get past the coronavirus. And it's really part of the bigger discussion we need to have in the city about what our future looks like, what an equitable future looks like, what it looks like to learn the lessons of this crisis, to understand what the disparities that have been shown to us mean and what we need to do differently.

So, we will recover. We will build back, but we will not repeat the status quo. We can't. We have to think differently, and that includes right down to the grassroots with our small businesses, because, in truth, a lot of businesses are struggling right now and folks who own those businesses are wondering if they can keep going. A lot of them, in fact, [inaudible] made the decision that it doesn't work for them anymore, but it may work for their employees to keep the business going. In many cases, it does work for their employees to keep the businesses going. And this is an option we have to turn to more and more in the city and all over this country, because employee-owned businesses create a tremendous reality of equity and fairness, of buy-in, of opportunity to create capital and have an ownership stake that changes the whole reality, particularly for working class folks and particularly in communities of color. This has been a real concern of our Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity and a focal point of how we can create a more just future for New York City. And so, today, we're launching Employee Ownership NYC. And I like when we announced something and you can tell immediately what it means. Employee Ownership NYC, this is going to be a systematic effort to ensure that employees have an opportunity to own. And that particularly in communities of color, we shift that painful reality where there hasn't been enough ownership and enough capital built and maintained in communities because of structural racism. We do something about it by literally changing the rules of the game, and the City right there, supporting this effort every step of the way. And we know what it means is that working people have more control over their lives. Consistently means that businesses can thrive, because the workers are fully invested, but they also get a

better share of the wealth that they create. This is something I think is very powerful. We've got a video here to introduce this new concept. Let's look at the video.

[Video plays in background]

Mayor: What a powerful testimony and what a beautiful example of what it can mean for the folks who do the work to have that opportunity to own. And, again, remember they are invested in the business and making it work. And sometimes an owner or the family that owns a business has gotten to a point where it doesn't work for them to continue. But for the employees who feel it, who for whom it's so important to keep that business going a whole burst of energy and passion comes forward – you just saw it there – and good things happen for working people.

Now, someone who has been working on this – literally his lifetime – this is a labor of love for him, for sure. And I've heard him over decades tell me about the power of employee ownership. And now, he is taking this model and making it come alive here in New York City, Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson.

Deputy Mayor Phillip J. Thompson, Strategic Policy Initiatives: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As we all know, many businesses have closed as a result of COVID-19, workers across the board have been hurt by this, but workers of color have been especially hard hit. Closures due to COVID-19 come on top of a looming wave of potential closures coming from aging business owners who want to retire. 85 percent of these aging business owners did not have a succession plan and 80 percent of those wanting to sell their businesses can't find a buyer. There's a real chance that these businesses will simply disappear and even more people will lose jobs. In many cases, as the Mayor said, an alternative to shutting down a business is employee ownership. The employer can sell the business to the workers in their business. Workers who own their own business tend to work harder and they have more opportunities to succeed economically. Workers of color benefit especially from employee ownership – they make 30 percent more income and have almost 80 percent higher household wealth than workers and other kinds of businesses.

This is why our Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity has made worker ownership an important part of our strategy for reducing the racial wealth gap. Worker ownership, often in cooperatives, has long been a standing aspiration in black communities in this country. Former slaves try to convert plantations they had labored on for hundreds of years into property owned by the workers themselves right after the Civil War. Marcus Garvey based in Harlem 100 years ago built one of the largest community movements in history on an economic platform of worker and community ownership of business. Ella Baker, head of the New York State NAACP in the 1940s and head of organizing for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference under Martin Luther King founded and led the Harlem Cooperative League in the 1930s. They believed rightly that the more workers and community members owned, the more their communities would prosper.

We are building on these foundations to make New York City's recovery one that lifts up communities of color above where they were before the pandemic. We're also building on an initiative started by the New York City Council, and hats off to Councilwoman Helen Rosenthal,

who's been a champion of worker ownership on the Council. Today, we are launching owner-to-owners hotline, as the Mayor said, as part of Employee Ownership NYC, the first big city municipal initiative to educate business owners about employee ownership and offer a high touch support for owners exploring selling their businesses to their employees. This is a citywide outreach effort to reach 20,000 business owners and connect them to the owner-to-owner hotline that will quickly help a business owner determine whether employee ownership would be a good option for them. Services that cost \$10,000 or more on the private market will be offered at no cost. If you are a business owner in need of options, please call (646)-363-6592, or visit Owner2Owners.nyc to be connected to our expert employee ownership conversion partner organizations. And thank you again, Mr. Mayor, for putting your leadership into this initiative.

Mayor: Well, thank you, Deputy Mayor, Phil Thompson. Thank you to everyone at the Task Force on Racial Inclusion and Equity for making this a priority. And we mentioned this owner-to-owners hotline – this is a reality now, because of the leadership of Council Member Helen Rosenthal. And Phil Thompson's right, this has been a passion for her as well, making something happen that's going to have an effect right now, because right now companies are hanging in the balance, stores are hanging in the balance, and it's a chance to get that employee ownership going in the City of New York, it's to be there every step of the way. So, let's welcome and thank Council Member Helen Rosenthal.

[...]

Mayor: Thank you so much, Council Member. Thank you for leading the way and helping to make sure the funding was available for this initiative. And what the City can do is a crucial part of this, but we also have desire to make this a really big new movement that will affect us for generations to come. And to do that, of course, we need our State partners. The State of New York can do so much to help spur on employee ownership. And we have a champion at the State level as well, and he also feels this as a labor of love, understanding how much of an impact this can make for all working people in New York City, and particularly in communities of color, where we need to build more capital and more opportunity. So, thrilled to have with us today State Senator Jamaal Bailey.

[...]

Mayor: Thank you, Senator. And, Senator Bailey, first of all, your pride in the Bronx, having the largest worker cooperative in the country, that's quite clear. So, you are representing your borough well. This is exciting on so many levels. And I want to say a further congratulations – I spoke to Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins last week to congratulate you and all your colleagues on the extraordinary majority you now have in the State Senate, which I think opens the door for new and important actions to be taken for economic justice. And here's one of them right here. So, with your leadership, and we're going to be looking to you, this could be actually – in the aftermath of such a painful moment could come something that truly creates a whole new series of possibilities for this city. And with your leadership, we're going to get there. So, thank you, Senator. Thank you.

All right, everyone. Let's talk about something else that's absolutely crucial to not only in our present, but our future and our recovery, and that is our public schools. As everyone knows, we're bringing back public school instruction in-person, starting Monday for our K-to-five levels, K-to-five grades. We're coming back with a pre-K and 3-K, we're coming back with District 75 special needs programs. And we're going to keep going from there. But what I want to emphasize right now is the importance of everyone understanding how we're going to make this work as we bring school back. And, again, bring school back and then keep it back in session, because the model we're now working with is a sustainable model that will take us all the way to when the vaccine is here and we've been able to widely distribute it. So, crucial to this equation are the testing consent forms – we've talked about that a lot. I know the Department of Education is sending the information over and over to parents. Again, you go to mystudent.nyc if you have not yet signed up for your child to be tested. Testing is the key to keeping everyone safe in the school community. It's going to be weekly from now on, but we need every student to be signed up for testing or have a proper medical exemption. We need that now, because when we get to the first day of school, we're going to be having school for kids who are signed up for a testing. If they're not, the school is going to reach out to the family and say, you've got to rectify this right now or your child isn't able to attend school. I want to be very straightforward about that. Equally, we need the kids in school who are signed up for in-person learning and any family that signed up for in-person learning and does not actually intend for their child to be in school, we respect that, we want you then to be placed into the all-remote education approach so we can free up seats. We've talked about this many times, want to say it really clearly to all parents – if you are holding a seat in in-person learning, remember, we want to convert that now in as many schools as possible, as quickly as possible, to five days a week – five days a week, wherever possible, and as quickly as possible. Some schools that's going to take longer, some it'll take shorter period of time. Some schools will get to five days a week across the board. Some schools will have to do some kind of mix where some kids, the most needy kids, will get five days a week. Other kids will get as many days as possible. There will be a clear system of priority based on need to make sure the kids who need the support get the most get the most days. But it all hinges on this – parents, next week, if you're in one of those schools that's open. Your child is expected to be in school on the days that they are programmed to be in school. If in the course of your week your child doesn't show up, what the school is going to say to you is, this is your last chance, you have to show up during this week or have a legitimate excuse or communicate with the school what's going on. If you don't, the school is going to let you know that your child will be moved to all remote. So, I want to say this in a very straightforward way to parents. These seats are precious. Kids need these seats. A seat should not go unutilized. So, everyone, this as an opportunity to just declare your intentions and live by them. If you want your child in the school, your child needs to show up in school. If you don't want your child school, you want them in all remote – that's great, we can do that too. But, by the end of next week, we want to resolve this as much as humanly possible once and for all so we can then finish up reworking our schools to maximize the number of schools in five days a week and the number of kids who get to benefit from five days a week, or as close to it as possible.

Okay. Let's talk about our daily indicators. Number one, daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for suspected COVID-19, threshold is 200 patients – today's report 146, with a 48.34 percent positivity level. Now, this is an example of an indicator we've been using for a long time. I'm going to say at the outset today, our health care team is looking at these

indicators, looking at the way we present information given this second wave that's been bearing down on us. We're going to come back with an updated set of information – indicators and other information, going forward, because, obviously, the situation is changing rapidly. So, I'll go over this today, but I want to provide people a sense of that's coming soon. So, that's, again, number one in terms of hospitalization.

Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average threshold 550 cases, today's report 1,809 cases. And number three, percentage of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold five percent, today's report 4.76 percent is the daily. And then on a seven-day rolling average, 4.08 percent. So obviously these numbers have changed a lot very rapidly. We need to address that with everything we're doing in terms of protecting people, but we also need to address it in terms of how we present information and help people understand it and make sense of it. Okay, a few words in Spanish, and this goes back again to how we're going to support working people.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

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

Moderator: Hi all, we'll now begin our Q and A, with us today as Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson, Small Business Commissioner Jonnel Doris, State Senator Jamaal Bailey, First Deputy Commissioner of Health Torian Easterling, and Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. With that we'll go to Andrew from WNBC.

Question: Hi, good morning everyone on the call. With regard to the schools and Mayor you said on Sunday and you reiterated today that you would like as many schools as possible to go to five-day in-person learning. We are hearing from principals at various schools across the city saying they just don't have the capacity and they're essentially going to stick with the same blended model they had before you closed down. Can you quantify at this point how many schools are going to go to five-day and whether it's realistic for parents to expect that to actually happen?

Mayor: Yeah, look, I respect our principals for sure, but again, we're dealing with a policy of the City of New York and Department of Education. So I don't know what individual principals have said, but we are going to make sure that everyone's working from the same playbook here, Andrew, this is the decision of where we're going. Clearly most schools can get there because we just – we know how much space is available and we know how many kids have been actually showing up. That's why the week of December 7th is so important to once and for all resolve exactly which kids are planning to be – which families are planning to have their kids in the classroom and which are not. That's going to lead to a number that we fundamentally believe will be manageable in some schools, again, across the board, five days a week. In other schools, some kids will get five days a week, some kids might get less, but that will be done on the priority basis according to need. But what you're going to see in most schools is the presence of five-day-a-week education. I think most will have it for all kids. Some will have it for some kids, but it's going to become more and more the norm. Go ahead, Andrew.

Question: Okay, the second question has to do with your seven-day rolling average which is now approaching five percent. I know that originally when the city had that three percent trigger to the schools, it was much more aggressive than the States trigger which was I believe nine percent, but the state has said five percent is a warning sign. Do we still – is there still a threshold at which despite your hope and intention to reopen schools, that it gets too high and you're not going to be able to do it?

Mayor: Right now, we have seen the schools as the safest places in New York City. I mean we just have the evidence of it. So we'll follow State guidance for sure, but this is a new approach. As I said, we've talked about the previous three percent standard back in the summer, that standard made sense, but then we saw what actually happened in the schools. They became extraordinarily safe because the hard work of the entire school community, we saw extraordinarily low levels of positivity in testing in the schools. We're now adding even more testing and very obviously have a very rigorous situation room standard. So, this is what we're going to be doing for the duration, we'll follow any State guidance for sure, but I feel very confident about our ability to keep people in the school community safe.

Moderator: Next is Nolan from The Post.

Question: Hey Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Good Nolan, how you doing?

Question: I'm good. I want to follow up on Andrew's question. He asked if you guys had a tally of the number of schools that could go to five-day learning and you didn't provide a number, so I'm wondering, do you have one?

Mayor: Again, Nolan that's – we're going through that right now with principals, we need to know the final count in some cases. There are honestly right now schools that are already able to be five-days on Monday. There are other schools that need that final count to get clarified. That's what we're going to get in the course of the next week when we see exactly every tile that shows up and we make very clear to parents, and I'm saying it very clearly to parents, DOE will be saying it clearly to parents, this week and next week, if your child doesn't show up next week, we're saying to you we're about to move your child into remote, unless you have a specific excuse or you make clear to us what's going on. And we respect, again, a lot of parents prefer remote. That's great. And the parents who prefer in-person, that's great, but you can't be betwixt in between. You have to choose. And so we'll know next week, once and for all what that number is going to be, and that will help the schools that still need to make those final decisions to have the exact numbers they need. Go ahead, Nolan.

Question: It is there no tentative count ye? And on the question of remote learning, the Fairfax school system in Virginia said that they've seen the number of kids getting failing grades doubling year over year. They attribute that mostly to remote learning. We aren't doing grades this year in the city public schools, but have we seen similar drop-offs in learning? And if so, should the city have invested more and its remote learning system?

Mayor: Again, Nolan, I couldn't be clearer and the Chancellor couldn't be clearer that for so many kids, in-person learning is absolutely necessary and we know it's a challenging year. We know kids are not getting everything we could give them if everyone was in school, but we're going to provide the best possible education in person for those who choose it, and its hundreds of thousands of kids, which makes it, you know, right there one of the biggest school systems in the country, just the kids will be in-person, New York City, it would be one of the biggest school systems in the country alone, and we're constantly working to improve remote. But in pandemic conditions, we cannot do everything that we want to do. The goal here is to fight back this second wave, get people vaccinated as quickly as possible, I have a lot of confidence in our Department of Health's ability to do it. Work to see if we can even get a lot more kids back in in-person learning before the school year is out and then of course go into September with the expectation that everyone will be back again in person.

Moderator: Next is Rich from WCBS Radio.

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

Mayor: Good, Rich. How are you today?

Question: Well, I'm doing all right, you know. So these numbers look a little bit scary, don't they? I mean, are you – what do you think of them? And, and, and do you foresee, you know, more restrictions coming if if these numbers go over five percent? You said something about changing the metrics or changing the presentation, I didn't quite understand that if you could expand on that?

Mayor: We want to give people a clear picture, given that the thresholds that we've set are now being approached or surpassed. We need to give people a clearer picture of where we're going from here. This is a new reality. This is not the same as what we experienced in the spring. I think this is the crux of the matter, Rich. We are very, very worried about this uptick in cases. There's a lot we need to do to address it. Our Health Commissioner couldn't have been clearer yesterday that if you are over 65 or have those pre-existing conditions, you really need to alter your lifestyle right away and not go out except for the most essential reasons. We're working with the State on everything else we're going to have to be doing. So, clearly, we have to address this, but at the same time, it's not like the spring because we're seeing such a different reality in the hospitals and thank God for that. And we need to protect them and maintain them, but we need to help express to people where we are now, which is different than where we were previously and we've seen that now time and again. We've seen it with the hospitalizations. We've seen it with the schools. We have different realities than what we came out of the spring assuming, and we need to express that better. Go ahead, Rich.

Question: Okay. So, just in regard to testing, Mr. Mayor, are you tested regularly? And if so, how often? Were are you tested? At a clinic, a hospital, in your office, or how does it work?

Mayor: I get tested typically at a Health + Hospitals facility and pretty much weekly now, and sometimes there's – sometimes something happens at city hall for a whole group of people, but

typically I go to a Health + Hospitals facility. And by the way, I'm going to take this opportunity, Rich, to say people should get tested regularly. And so again, anyone who is not – there are people who've never been tested, please go out and get tested. Folks who are looking for a regular standard, once a month is a good standard for getting tested and we now have more ways to know where you can get tested, more places available, more information about where the waits are longer and shorter, and you get all that through calling 3-1-1 or going on the city website.

Moderator: Next is Kala from PIX 11.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. I hope you had a nice Thanksgiving.

Mayor: Yes, Kala, I did, how about you?

Question: It was nice.

Mayor: I liked that. I liked that pause.

Question: The Legal Aid Society has filed a lawsuit to get Wi-Fi and remote learning access to shelters across the city. I know earlier we had reported that, you know, the goal was the summer, but they're asking for January 4th, the first day back after the holidays for students in school. So what's your response and is this possible?

Mayor: Look, it's a litigation matter, so I'll keep it broad, Kala. We are doing the thing that will have the impact right now for kids who are in shelter. We're going - we have gone before Thanksgiving comprehensively to every family, if they needed a device, they would get a device right away. But what we found overwhelmingly was families did have devices but needed sometimes different service, so we've switched internet providers. We sent tech support folks right out into the shelters. That's the way to address the right now question. To get these shelters all rewired is obviously a bigger job and one we're committed to, but that is something that we need to be realistic about the timeline and I'll leave it there, given that it's litigation matter. Go ahead.

Question: All right. I know you just asked all parents to get their consent forms and this morning, do you have an update on the percentage or even a hard number of the consent forms that have been returned so far because kids are going back on Monday?

Mayor: Yeah, I don't have the exact number. I know the number has been consistently rising. I think we have to continue to get this message out intensely that it is a requirement for coming back to school. Again, you need a consent form on file, or you need to bring it with you, child needs to bring it with them when they arrive at school, whatever day they first go to school next week, or obviously a valid medical exemption from a health care professional. So, we're really getting this message out intensely, the numbers have continued to grow. I don't have the exact number, but I want to caution, Kala, I think a of parents are going to deal with this the day that their child first goes back and send them in with the form or go online the night before. I think we'll see a lot of activity right before kids first arrive in school.

Moderator: Next is Henry from Bloomberg.

Question: Hello Mr. Mayor, how are you doing today?

Mayor: I'm doing well, Henry, how about you?

Question: I'm doing pretty well. I'm hanging in there. I'll kick it back to this question of five-day-a-week schooling because it's so uncertain. And the –why does the number of kids who don't show up have any bearing or relationship to how many kids are going to be able to do five-day-a-week schooling? It would seem to me that if kids don't show up that should have no relation with the fact that a school should be able to accommodate five-day-a-week schooling.

Mayor: Okay, fair question. But let me lay it out to you sort of from the ground level. So, right now, we know that on Monday there's a substantial number of schools that will be at five-day already, but we also know a number of other schools will need time to get their final alignment done. Why? Because every school, literally every school is different. The percentages we gave you, the numbers we give you, that's about a whole massive school system, but each school system had a different reality of how many parents chose in-person learning, blended learning versus remote. And then remember, we've been very open about the fact that we have really big number of students who never were quite fully in one or the other system. They hadn't signed up for all remote. They hadn't signed up for blended or they hadn't shown up even if they did sign up for blended. So, we've got a group of students that are still not really defined what their intention is. That's what we've got it resolved, because if you're in a school, let's say you're in a school that half the kids in theory will be coming in for in-person learning, and your classroom size is, you know, 35, 40 percent of what it was. That's a hard scenario to make work to go to five-day-a-week for everyone. But if in fact it turns out that a number of those kids really don't intend to come in, we can put them into all remote. That's really what they want. That's great. The number of kids going to be in-person becomes smaller and therefore more manageable. Now you can use your classroom size appropriately. You got to keep it at that classroom limit because the distancing, but now you can divide the kids in classrooms in a way that you can get everyone into five-day-a-week or in some schools, it will not be everyone in five-day-a-week, but it will still be a number of kids in five-day-a-week with priority given to kids with special needs and kids who have particular disadvantages, we want them to get the benefit of in-person learning the most. Go ahead, Henry.

Question: Okay. Thank you for that answer. My second question has to do with the criteria, the three percent criteria, which has been scrapped, is there a tipping point in the community, of community spread where these rising percentages do create a risk that the schools will become infection vectors, even though they're not now, even though they appear safe now? When you have large percentages of the population, six percent, seven percent, eight percent, 12 percent testing positive, is there a tipping point where the schools actually become an infection vector and they're not a safe haven?

Mayor: Look, I will say it this way, and then I'll turn to Dr. Varma and Dr. Easterling, the reality of our schools has been striking. So I'll be the layman, there'll be the actual doctors. The reality

of our schools has been striking. We believe they could be safe. The numbers have been unbelievably favorable. Levels – low levels of coronavirus positivity that we literally couldn't have imagined, and that is because unlike almost any place else, the schools have had every conceivable health and safety measure layer one on top of the other, what I call that gold standard. Imagine a world in which literally everyone's wearing their mask all the time, kid and adult alike, that's our schools, cleaning every day, that's our schools, the ventilation work that was done, the distancing, all of these things plus constant testing, obviously the school population kids, educators, staff are tested much more frequently than almost any other part of our society. And you have a situation room, which is very meticulous about closing a classroom and closing a school when they need to be and bringing in Test and Trace to figure out after there's been a case what to do. This doesn't resemble any other part of our society. This is the most controlled and supported place in all of New York City. Now we're going to go to weekly testing and everyone has to have the testing consent form. This again just takes us even higher up the ladder of safety. So, I fully believe, Henry, the schools are going to have reality different than anything else around them. We're still, of course, going to abide by any State standards and we're going to watch the situation carefully, but we really are talking about a different reality than the rest of our society. Dr. Varma, then Dr. Easterling.

Senior Advisor Jay Varma: Great. Thank you for the question. I think one point I want to emphasize, which I think everybody knows, but it's just important to keep in mind is that, you know, the schools can't prevent people from getting infected outside the school. So if it's a student or a staff member somewhere else. So as community rates rise, as Henry is asking, there are going to be more infections that occur in people that they acquire outside the schools. So the best that we can do in our school system is to strengthen those lines of defense and as the Mayor noted, one of the additional lines of defense we're adding is going to be additional testing. And then when you combine that with the protocols that we have in the situation room, I think that we can be very confident that even though rates of infection will arise and even though more people might get diagnosed outside of school, the school itself can be a place where there are no outbreaks or that if there is a transmission occurs, it's very limited to somebody who had very close contact or a lapse in mask wearing or something, you know, normal disruptions in human behavior. And that's what we've seen so far and I think that's something that we'll continue to be able to do.

Mayor: Dr. Easterling?

First Deputy Commissioner and Chief Equity Officer Torian Easterling, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: I have nothing else. I think you and Dr. Varma covered it.

Mayor: Okay, great. Thank you. Go ahead.

Moderator: Next is Shant from the Daily News.

Question: Yeah, my apologies. Any chance you can get back to me in a few moments.

Mayor: Sure. There are second chances, Shant, okay. Go ahead.

Moderator: Next, we'll go to Yoav from The City.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I just wanted to ask you about the environmental picture in the city. The most recent greenhouse gas emissions stats show that the emissions have essentially been reduced by half a percentage point since 2013, from 2013 to 2019. Can you discuss I guess what's happening, what some of the challenges are, and why we may not be seeing a further reduction?

Mayor: Yeah, Yoav. I think a couple of different things. I've had some of this conversation, and I don't want to respond to your specific figure because I don't have all of the briefing in front of me here, but what I'd say is I know we've had some impact from weather that caused variations, but I also know that the basic plan has been having a lot of the desired effect because we know that by reducing building emissions, which is a huge percentage of our emissions in the city, we're going to go to the heart of the matter. We now have the toughest law literally in any major city in the world to reduce building emissions. We know a continually going to more of an electric fleet for our city vehicles and providing electric vehicle charging stations around the city is going to – it's having an effect. It'll have even more of an effect going forward. The work that we're doing to focus on investments in renewables is going to have effect. Obviously divesting from fossil fuel companies with our pension funds. All of these things are moving in the right direction. All of these things will have more effect over time, but I think the year to year is affected by intangibles, or things we can't predict like weather that sometimes require more energy expenditure. But I'm very convinced we're on the right track. We just have to keep doubling down on it. Go ahead, Yoav.

Question: Great. Just relatedly on the pension fund divestment, the latest release that I've seen – I can't recall if it was from City Hall or from the Comptroller's Office – it looks like the divestment is focusing on three of the five funds for a total of \$3 billion rather than the full \$5 billion. Is it fair to say that that the police and fire pension funds are not cooperating on this effort and is the new target \$3 billion rather than the \$5 billion?

Mayor: This ball game ain't over, Yoav. I'll get you an update on the exact dollar figure. Obviously, the biggest funds are the three that you talk about and we want to get the maximum done through them. But I also think it's important to recognize that even pension funds that weren't necessarily ready a year or two ago are quickly changing their minds all over the country. Divestment movement is growing. New York City played a really important role in that, and we're encouraging other cities and states to do the same, and even working with cities around the world to see them divest from fossil fuels. So this is a gathering movement that I think is going to pick up more and more adherence. We're going to keep working with those two funds to show them why this is a really smart step, and I refer back to something that Vice President Al Gore said to me the day we announced the divestment plan. He said, a lot of people will talk about different virtues or challenges with divestment, and he said, the most important thing to remind people is if you're just talking about your financial responsibilities to our retirees, that investments in fossil fuels no longer make sense, because a huge percentage of their assets are going to end up being stranded in the ground. So investments in those companies just don't work anymore. Their central product is not a part of the future and we need to get away from them. I think more and more pension funds are going to realize that and join us in divesting.

Moderator: We have time for two more, and second chances. So, with that, we're going to go back to Shant.

Question: Yes, love second chances, thanks for that. I guess I wanted to follow up on Nolan and Andrew's question about the number of schools that may or may not be ready to go to five days a week. I mean, I guess we're not hearing a concrete number on that. Can you say why is that? Why can't we nail down a number? Like, can you, I mean – I'm trying to rearticulate the question, because I think it's important to lot of parents, like, what's the – you know, how many schools – you know, do you have a gut feeling on how many schools are ready to go five days a week?

Mayor: Okay, Shant, I know it's New York City and we don't believe in patience here, but I'm going to ask people to be a little patient. There's a pandemic going on. We're dealing with a lot of variables here. It's as simple as this, truly – we're talking about hundreds of schools, obviously that'll be reopening, starting on Monday. A substantial number are ready to go to five-day right away, but others need to get more information to do that, because of the conversation I had with Henry, trying to lay out a school-by-school reality – we think we're going to have most of that information in the course of next week, because we're saying two things that affect the number of deeply. You got to have a consent form and you've got to actually show up, and this, Shant, I think is a very, very fair standard. Both of them are fair standards, but that second one – school has been open for months. If a child hasn't shown up or has only shown up very occasionally, it's right to say to the parent, as a matter of personal responsibility and respect for all other parents and kids, are you really going to use this seat or not? If you're going to use this seat, you got to start showing up regularly, just like you would during any other normal school year. If you're not going to use the seat, that's cool. We're going to put you into all remote. So that seat can be used constantly by a child who really needs it and wants to be there and a family that wants their child there. But again, it's going to take a couple of weeks to sort that out and with every school, once that equation is locked down, they'll do either all five-day, all kids, or the maximum number of kids five days to begin and give priority to the kids with greatest needs. Go ahead, Shant.

Question: Yeah, so I guess going back to Employee Ownership NYC, you were talking about a hotline that people can use today. Is there anything else in the works for this new initiative?

Mayor: I'll start and turn to the Deputy Mayor and Senator. Look, this is an idea whose time had come a long time ago, but it, it hasn't gained the kind of momentum that it deserves. I really think this is a lot of what the future of our economy should be. We now have, because of this crisis, an opportunity to reinterpret how we support businesses and this reality that we're seeing a lot of, of a family or an individual owner deciding, especially given the recent challenges, they don't want to continue, but the employees do want to continue. This is a really important moment. So, we're going to provide the technical support, but literally we can help business by business to figure out what will help the employees to make this work. Help them figure out where they can get financing, help them with legal issues, whatever it may be. So this will be very, hands-on, I'll have the Deputy Mayor talk about, I think, just any other articulation you could give about how this works and what has worked in here in other places, and then the

Senator mentioned a great example in the Bronx and the work that the State can do to help. I'll let him speak to that as well.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. The Mayor covered it, but I will just add a bit more detail, but let me just say that a big part of the American dream has always been owning property, owning your own business, owning your own house. The problem is that those opportunities are too narrow, and what this initiative is to do is to say, workers can own their own business, too. Just like workers can own their own house and that incentivizes them to invest more in the business, and so that's our goal and we have four partner organizations. So once an owner calls our hotline, we connect them with an organization that can help them work through their finances, help them figure out how to access capital, go over a transition plan, a business plan, address the legal issues, and we expect hundreds of businesses to take advantage of this opportunity initially, and it's free of charge, and obviously as more and more businesses go in this direction, we'll be working to streamline the financial services that are available to push for legislation where needed in order to handle some of the legal issues, and that's where the State Senator comes in.

Mayor: Perfect segue. Senator.

State Senator Jamaal Bailey: Well, thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you, Deputy Mayor. Again, co-ops just make sense. Again, shout out to the district Co-op City makes sense, the largest cooperative development in the city, and also the state, and also the country. So the Bronx is leading in that way. We also have places like Green Worker Cooperatives, Bronx Future, BCDI: Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative, and they're doing the work in the borough of the Bronx. We haven't properly mined the talent, so to speak, to use a metaphor. But when you find the talent and you unearth the talent in our borough, in our city, in our state also because we should be looking at this as a statewide proposition, not just in the city. If we're moving away from prison-based economy and further upstate places in New York, we have to replace that with some sort of economic sustenance. My belief system is that worker cooperatives, worker ownership makes sense because it's not just about that job, it is about building wealth in a community. So, it becomes an ecosystem, and I had the opportunity to take a trip to Mondragon, Spain, where they have cooperative ecosystems, where you have the bank, you have the barbershop, you have the business, you have the housing, and it's all in one ecosystem. Those are the things that we should really be looking at towards building – again, ecosystems in our city in order to actually build people, not just a place where they have a decent wage, not just where they have a living wage, where they have a wage that they're proud of, and that they can have wealth to bring to their family so that they can have their version of the American dream.

Mayor: Very powerfully stated, Senator, I thank you. Alright. We got one more.

Moderator: Hard to follow that, but for our last question we'll go to Narmeen from PIX 11.

Question: Hi, good morning, everyone on the call.

Mayor: Hey Narmeen, how are you?

Question: I'm doing well, Mayor. Just locked my kids out of the bedroom, so I'm good.

Mayor: Well done, well done.

Question: Alright, well, I wanted to ask you what we're monitoring, obviously all the numbers in your daily indicators, but also on your map, your ZIP code by ZIP code, and I want to ask you specifically about communities in Breezy Point in Queens and Gravesend [inaudible] because I noticed they have particularly high numbers across the city, 8.47 and 8.88. I wonder if you or your team have any insight into what is going on there in particular, because I feel those numbers are pretty alarming?

Mayor: Yeah. Look, I share your concern. I mean we're seeing different things in different places for sure. I am concerned that there's some, you know, some messages have gone out there about not wearing masks and I think that's dangerous, and I think these numbers growing are a warning sign to everyone that we really have to be careful about social distancing, about wearing masks, about protecting our elders, which is why our health commissioner made very clear, you know, our seniors and folks with preexisting conditions, diabetes, and heart disease, et cetera, need to actually change now what they're doing and not go out any longer, except for the most essential needs. I am concerned there are some communities where there's, you know, too many voices saying don't wear a mask and don't follow these rules, and that's going to put them in danger and the people they love and dangerous. So, I'm hoping that these rather shocking numbers are going to wake people up to the fact that we're all in this together and we all have to protect each other. Go ahead Narmeen.

Question: Yeah, and just to follow up a bit, is there any more targeted effort in those particular communities for the reasons you spoke of, but also I want to touch on the hospitalizations. We talked about seniors yesterday and I just want to get an idea of ICU beds. Obviously, we are in a much better place than we in this spring, but are we seeing the trend stay within the parameters of what we saw in the spring in terms of are these seniors that are taking up most of the ICU beds, are these people with underlying conditions taking up the more serious cases in the hospitals right now?

Mayor: Okay, on your first point, yes – there's – whenever we see an uptick in the community, there is a targeted effort to engage community leaders and community institutions who are the most trusted voices to engage faith leaders. Whenever we've seen an uptick and we saw this, for example, in Staten Island a few weeks ago tremendous outpouring of support from community leaders, elected officials, faith leaders, community institutions, telling people, you really got to take these mask rules seriously, and you got to go get tested, and we saw a really big uptick in both and so anywhere where we see a problem, the thing we do is go to the grassroots, go to the people who have the most influence, the most reach, and obviously provide as much testing as possible in nearby locations. On the question of the hospitals, I'll start and turn to Dr. Easterling and Dr. Varma. But Dr. Katz was on the press conference yesterday and said, you know, again, we take it the situation very seriously. We're watching very carefully, but we have seen something at least somewhat different so far in terms of not as many people going into the ICU. Thank God people not needing to go into intubation as frequently, and when they do in many cases, having a better result than last time. So, something's qualitatively different and

quantitatively different this time, but we have to watch it very carefully because we've learned from this virus, there's an unpredictable reality that we constantly have to adjust for. Dr. Easterling, you want to speak to that?

Deputy Commissioner Easterling: Yes, thank you, sir. Thank you for the question. Just actually to the first question I did want to just also raise the point that we've also been working with community-based organizations to bring more testing to the area as well. So as the Mayor had mentioned, you know, we are continuing to do our [inaudible] engagement in community specifically where we're seeing a higher number of cases compared to the rest of the city. So it is important that we still have that on the ground game. Actually, just an hour ago, I was on a call with electeds from Brooklyn, talking to them about the importance of being vigilant around our effective prevention measures. So, we are continuing to engage in making sure that we have on the ground game, and then to the hospitalizations as the Mayor of also mentioned, we're continuing to monitor the trends. We are certainly seeing the trend going in the wrong direction, which is certainly concerning. We're also really looking at the type of cases we know that severe illness will certainly affect those who are older. Certainly, those who have chronic conditions, and I think that's what we're going to have to continue to monitor and see you know, how things play out as we move along.

Mayor: Yeah, and let me say first of all thanks to Dr. Torian Easterling because he has spent a lot of time in these last few months, talking to those very community leaders and organizations and elected officials, I mentioned earlier, he's really been one of the key organizers of the effort to mobilize the grassroots, and I really appreciate that Dr. Easterling and second, the point about older folks and folks with pre-existing conditions, what Dr. Chokshi said yesterday, I think Narmeen, this is going to change the equation. I think when the Health Commissioner of New York City tells older New Yorkers and folks with preexisting conditions is time to stay home until we get this vaccine, and we can really turn this around. I think a lot of people are going to change their behavior based on what he's saying, and that is going to affect some of what we see in terms of hospitalizations. Dr. Varma, you want to add?

Senior Advisor Varma: Yeah, I guess I would just emphasize again, the good news has been that as we have gotten better at diagnosing cases earlier and supporting people earlier, as the Mayor has highlighted, the proportion of people who ended up getting hospitalized and have severe outcomes has definitely gone down. But again, highlighting what Dr. Easterling and the Mayor has just said. The bad news of course, is that the people who are most at risk of that severe infection remain the same groups that have been in that situation before that is people who are elderly and with severe underlying conditions. So, it is very important to keep the guidance that Commissioner Chokshi announced yesterday.

Mayor: Thank you. Well, listen, as we conclude today, everyone we obviously are extremely focused on making sure we're taking all the measures we need to protect New Yorkers, and we're focused every day, every hour. This has been the reality since March, for all of us here at City Hall, our healthcare leadership, for so many other people who work to protect us, our healthcare workers are first responders every day, every hour, since this began, we're focused on protecting people here and now, but we also need to start thinking more and more about the future, and I'll be talking about this more as we go into 2021, we have got to start building that sense of the

future of this city as a place where we can keep people healthy. We can learn the lessons of this crisis, do things in a different way, address the disparities that this crisis has made very painfully clear, but also start to do transformative things, and so today we talked about something very exciting in terms of worker cooperatives, employee-owned businesses. This could be a transcendent part of the future of New York City – it's something that we'll be focusing on as a way to create more fairness, to share wealth differently, to create a better, more sustainable for the city, and I say, very clearly, you know this city will work in the future. If it's a city that works for working people and employee ownership has going to be a crucial part of how we make it, a city that works for working people in a sustainable way. So that's the work ahead. It's powerful and exciting work. Even as we fight this crisis back, we needed to take a lot of hope and encouragement from what the future of this city can be, and every one of you will be part of building that future. Thanks, everyone.

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