



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 9, 2018
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR CARRANZA VISIT
SCHOOL AND DELIVER REMARKS**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, you guys saw what I just saw. I mean, that's amazing. That is absolutely beautiful. Whenever I come to a pre-K or a 3-K classroom, I'm just amazed at what is happening here. And you just saw there the passion those kids felt for learning and the energy. The fact that everyone wanted to answer the question – they were jumping in trying to answer the question, and the way the teacher guided them and brought that out in them.

And I want to remind everyone, you've seen today three-year-olds and four-year-olds and they're already learning so much here in our public schools, and it's just a beautiful thing.

This school is one of the trailblazer locations. This is a history-making school and I want to thank Principal Toledo and all of her team –

[Applause]

Not only for the great work they're doing with dual-language but also this is one of the very first schools in New York City to have 3-K. I want everyone to remember, before September there was no such thing as a classroom full of three-year-olds in New York City.

This is a brand new reality. And what's so amazing is that it has come to life so quickly. We were talking to Ms. Figueroa in the first classroom about the difference she sees in the children between September and now. And she said the development, the blossoming of these kids has been outstanding.

And the fact that you can see with your own eyes three-year-olds and four-year-olds working together, playing together in harmony. When the teacher gave an instruction they all knew exactly what to do and they all knew how to participate the right way. This is the foundation of creating a whole generation of lifelong learners.

So, I want to say – first of three things – I want to say, we're seeing the dream of Pre-K and now 3-K come alive. It's amazing how quickly it is working for these kids. It is amazing what it

means for their future and this is the beginning of something much bigger because over the next few years 3-K will become a universal right in this city.

And these two guys who you're going to hear from – our Chancellor and our Deputy Mayor – are going to be in the forefront of creating this whole new reality and making sure that every family and every child benefits.

Second thing I want to say is this is all about a vision of equity and excellence. And you get to see it here in real terms. It's not just a phrase. It's not just a book with a lot of programs in it. You got to see today Equity and Excellence in action.

First of all, these kids are being given something that didn't exist a few years ago. That's equity – full-day, high-quality, early childhood education for free. There are many elements of Equity and Excellence but here's one clear example – an opportunity to learn that didn't use to exist unless you had the money to afford it.

And we know for a long time a lot of families just couldn't get their children early childhood education. They couldn't afford it. But now here in a district that's actually one of the lowest income in the entire city, parents now know this will be a universal right. So, it's equity because every single person has the same opportunity. Every single child has the same chance to learn.

But it's excellence because you can already see the beginning of rigor and achievement. Even at three and four, you can see these kids being given the opportunity to go as far as they can because they're now learning how to learn. They're learning how to be productive in a group. They're learning how to think critically. You can see the beginning of it.

These kids have tremendous potential and it starts to get tapped now but the sad reality for years and years was in this city and honestly all over the country, we were leaving out some of the very best years for learning because we weren't reaching kids when they were three and four at a time of immense potential intellectual development.

We literally were just leaving those years behind and picking up kids later and missing that chance. So for a lot of kids it meant they couldn't reach their full potential. These kids are getting the chance from the beginning to really go to extraordinary places.

That's the excellence part of the equation, to find out in each child just how far they can go because they actually got the support from the very beginning.

And then finally – I'm going to turn to the Chancellor and then the Deputy Mayor – the third point I want to make is about the Chancellor himself because when I talk to him about equity and excellence, it wasn't just an idea to him, it wasn't a phrase, it was his life, it was everything he devoted his life to but it was also the life of his own family.

The Chancellor will tell you he didn't come from a privileged family and his opportunities were created by public education. And he said to me during one of the first discussion we ever had, he said, "Hey if it weren't for public education I would have been a sheet metal worker like my

dad.” But because of public education he not only went to college, he not only became a teacher, he became a principal, he became a superintendent, and worked his way up in the classic idea of this country and what we feel so deeply in this city that anyone can work their way up if they are truly given a chance.

Richard Carranza got that chance because of public education and today is the leader of the biggest school system in America. It’s my pleasure to introduce our Chancellor, Richard Carranza.

[Applause]

Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza: So thank you Mr. Mayor. It’s a true honor to be here with you Sir, and our Deputy Mayor as well. We – you – this is going to be the three amigos as it pertains to Pre-K and 3-K because we whole heartily believe in what we’re doing and what you saw here.

I want to also – you know Mr. Mayor we have an incredible school and one of the things we also talked about is you can’t have an incredible school without incredible leadership. And I want to thank Principal Carmen Toledo for her leadership here as well.

[Applause]

Thank you for what you do. And we have our superintendent Richard Cintron who’s also here – thank you for being here to support what’s happening at the school.

[Applause]

Now why is this important? Because Principal Toledo also did not speak English until she went to the public schools. So, if anyone has any doubt about Equity and Excellence means, as the Mayor has so eloquently said, you saw it demonstrated here. You see equity means giving our students, who were it not for the public school system and the vision of this administration, the opportunity to have not pre-k, not 3-K, but high quality 3-K and high quality pre-k. These students, many of whom don’t have the economic resources in their families to avail themselves of that, would probably not have had that experience. Yet we know, and the literature is complete with reports of how this is a game changer. This is a game changer for students. It’s a game changer particularly for students in poverty. So, there is no controversy. We know it works and we know it works well.

But the credit that I want to give to the administration and to you Mr. de Blasio – Mayor de Blasio is that this is something that has its rewards farther down the educational line. It’s not immediate gratification. You won’t see this just tomorrow – although what you’re seeing here is incredible. But when these students get to the third grade I can assure you they will be reading on grade level. Why? Because you’ve already seen the incredible literacy skills that they are demonstrating. You’re seeing the skills around being able to work together and work cooperatively. Can you imagine if adults worked cooperatively like our children do? We would have much less tumult and a lot more productivity, I predict.

So we're thrilled about this. And I want to also remind everyone that we're – we don't plan on stopping here. We have at least four other districts that are going to be receiving 3-K and already have Pre-K. We're going to continue to grow it. And when we talk about community schools – this is also part of a community schools approach, giving communities what they need to be successful. Not giving anybody a handout, not lowering the bar, but keeping the bar high but providing the supports for everyone to avail themselves of the opportunity to reach that bar.

Unas pocas palabras en Español.

[Chancellor Carranza speaks in Spanish]

With that, I'd like to turn it over to our Deputy Mayor – Mayor Thompson because he has a huge role in this and working under the vision of our Mayor we want to make sure that everyone knows what is about to come for the entire City of New York. So with that, Deputy Mayor Thompson.

[Applause]

Deputy Mayor J. Phillip Thompson: Thank you.

[Deputy Mayor Thompson speaks in Spanish]

I would like to say, first of all, this is really my most exciting day since having started a few weeks ago with the administration. And to see your work, Principal Toledo, to see your leadership, Mr. Mayor, it just means so much. It's very moving.

I'm the son of an eighth grade school teacher, and, you know, I felt privileged as a child – in retrospect, I didn't enjoy it so much at the time – but my mom made sure from the earliest stage that I was able to have the kinds of interactions that these children are having now, and she made it happen one way or another. And to see the school system actually taking this challenge up and reaching so many children, I agree with the Mayor – this is the true equity platform, this is the biggest thing we can do to change America, and to change New York City, and to change its future – it's right here.

I wanted to say that this work is being done here in the Bronx and in Brooklyn, but soon it will be in Queens and East Harlem, and I'm looking forward to jumping into it in visiting classrooms all across the City. I also know – I taught for 18 years at MIT, and I also know that the common thread that runs through students at MIT is, it started early. Almost a quarter of those students are the first ones in their family to ever go to college – 92 percent are in scholarship. So, it's not wealth. It was really exposure at an early age. And I also know from Nobel laureates, like Jerome Freedman, who went to public school in Brooklyn, who said over and over again the key in excellence in science and math is really that children learn to play with objects, learn to play with shapes, and that is really learn to play with math and not to be afraid of it, but to know they can master it at a young age – that is actually the key in instilling that love of learning, that curiosity that leads to great things in their future.

Two years of pre-K improves kindergarten preparedness and, as the Mayor said, everything from the likelihood of your child reading recreationally at home, to gains all throughout their educational career. And we also know that one dollar invested in pre-K actually has a payoff of seven dollars in benefits to society, and it will be greater in the future given the way that our economy is moving.

It is my mission, and this administration's clear vision, that a child here in the South Bronx or in Central Brooklyn can actually prosper and thrive, as well as any child anywhere in America from any kind of background, and that's exactly what this 3-K initiative is all about. So, I'm really looking forward, I'm excited to work with Chancellor Carranza, with our partners at the federal and State level, and, of course, with the leadership of the Mayor in making 3-K possible for every single child in New York City.

Thank you.

[Applause]

Mayor: And I want to thank the Deputy Mayor. The role he's going to play is going to be crucial, following on the great work of his predecessor, Deputy Mayor Richard Buery, because what we learned with pre-K we know we're going to go through again with 3-K. To make something work on this magnitude, to essentially create an entirely new grade – we're going to be adding an additional grade onto our school system over the next few years – takes not only the work of the great folks at the Department of Education, but it's going to take work with City agencies across the board to get everything ready, to get all the space ready, to get everything prepared for our kids – and a lot of work with community organizations, and not just with our public schools, but other schools as well. So, this is a huge endeavor. The Deputy Mayor is going to be right in the thick of it in bringing all of the pieces together with us, and it's very exciting what it means for the future of this city.

I want to conclude with appreciation to everyone at PS 25. Coming into the door, it's obvious there's a very warm community here, and people care about each other and they're there for each other. And you could see immediately in the classroom how the kids pick up on that, they pick up on the fact that it's a very positive place, and a place filled with possibilities. And it takes a lot to build that kind of community, but it's been built here at this school.

So, I thank everyone. Give yourselves a round of applause.

[Applause]

Thank you, everyone.

###