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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning, everybody. There's a story that needs to be told about what's happened in these last couple of months with our schools. We all know the basics of the story. We all know that the greatest school system in the country, 1.1 million kids in the face of a pandemic had to be closed. We all know that that asked of everyone an extraordinary challenge, something literally unheard of in the history of New York City or even this entire country to somehow create something new. To create an online learning approach again for over a million kids with very little time to prepare without all the advantages that you'd want if you're going to try such a massive endeavor. If I had said to you, hey, we're going to provide online learning to 1.1 million kids. If I had asked a panel of experts, how much time would you like to prepare for that? I bet they were said, oh give us a year, give us two years, we'll have something great for you. We had precisely a week in which to prepare educators, many of whom had never attempted an approach like this, but all of whom embraced it with tremendous energy and love for the kids they serve. That's why people become educators to begin with, and I want people to understand that. Known a lot of teachers, a lot of principals, a lot of educators. This is the subject matter I've put my heart and soul into over decades, and my kids went to New York City public schools the whole way through and they got a great education from incredibly devoted educators. What was clear to me throughout was people, people don't go into this field because it's a way to make a quick buck I assure you.

People who become educators do it because they love kids, they care about them, they want to help them, they want to build their future. There's an incredible sense of satisfaction when you help a child to realize their potential. And I want you to remember something. I've talked to so many people, I bet you know people in your own life that have had this experience, maybe you yourself. How many people do you know, maybe things weren't so great for them when they were a kid. Maybe they weren't sure what was going to happen. Maybe they didn't have a lot of sense of goal, but one teacher, one principal, one educator gave them that hope, that confidence, that sense of their own self-worth. I can't tell you how many times I've heard a story where it was one teacher started a young person on a very different road. And so many of the people we depend on right now in the middle of this crisis can look back to that one teacher, or maybe it was a group of teachers in their school who made all the difference. Now we're asking those very same people to achieve that same inspiration, have that same impact, but not be in the same classroom with the kids they serve, imagine how difficult that is.

Now, our teachers are tough. Our teachers are strong. The educators in New York City don't shirk from a challenge, and they're used to dealing with some of the toughest conditions in

America. So, when told you have a whole week to get ready and you're going to have to figure it out as you go along, they said, we're ready, let's do it. And it's been inspiring to watch them. It's been inspiring to watch the parents, many of whom again had no experience trying to figure out how to support their kids with online learning, but they've put their heart and soul into it, out of love of their children. How about the kids themselves? Let's note the heroism in our young people who are cooped up going through so much, but they've applied themselves to online learning too. There's a big story to be told here about just how good the New York City public schools are, just how good our families are, our educators, our kids. And today we want to talk about how we move forward over the course of this school year and beyond, and how we prepare for next year. And I've already said, next year is going to have to be the greatest school year in the history of New York City. I'm not saying that as a flourish of words. I'm saying that because that has to be a sense of mission. We're going to have to do, starting in September, things we've never done before. We're going to have to help kids come into the year with an incredible sense of inspiration, incredible desire to make up for any loss ground, but also to overcome the pain they've been through. I have absolute faith in our educators and the leadership of our Department of Education, and you'll hear from Chancellor Carranza today. I have absolute faith that we will achieve that mission, but I want to set that bar high right now. Say that's going to have to be kind of a historic achievement, what we have to do this coming school year, but I know we're up to it.

Now, everyone, everyone who serves our kids, principals, teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, the folks who work in food service, the crossing guards, the custodians, everybody who makes up the school community, there's so many more. Everyone's feeling this moment. Everyone's devoted to our kids, but everyone has that sense. Our kids are going through a lot right now, and I want to just make sure we're all sensitive to them, we're all thinking about them. Look, I think all of us can take ourselves back to when we were kids, especially those really confusing middle school years, all the challenges of high school. I think every high school student kind of has a self-doubt, fear about the future, anxiety, not knowing if they're going to fit in, not knowing if they're going to succeed. Loving all the good things about being young, but with that constant anxiety. Now imagine you take that, and you overlay a pandemic. That creates so much more fear and confusion and anxiety about the future.

I often reflect upon the experience I've had as a parent, and what my kids went through and now what I even see from them as 20 somethings. This generation came up with a lot, even before this pandemic. The kids who experienced the great recession and the aftermath. There the kids who growing up in the shadow of global warming, they're a tough generation. They remind me of what my older relatives used to tell me about that experience they had grown up in the depression. There's something that I see in this generation too, and I wished they hadn't gone through all this before the pandemic, and I wish they weren't going through everything they're experiencing in the pandemic, but they are, and it's hurting them. It's in some cases traumatizing them. Some kids have already seen so much just in the last weeks, the losses in their own family, in their own schools. They're tough kids, New York City kids, and they're going to find a way through, but we have to be there for them. We really have to understand how much they've experienced, how much pain they're going through.

Our job is to help them, help them with the mental health support and really that effort that all educators do, but it's going to have to be even greater now to raise up their self-esteem for the

moments ahead, for the tough times ahead. But what is inspiring to me is even with that tough, tough backdrop, the fact that we have seen our educators rise to this occasion gives me a lot of hope. You know, when I talked about the online learning and everything we've had to create in these last weeks, this kind of gives definition to that analogy that's often used when they say building a plane while it's gone down the runway. This is the ultimate example of that. But the plane has been being built week after week, more and more online learning working better and better, and the incredible adaptability of young people to figure out how to connect with it, and make something of it. We're seeing it and it's given me a lot of hope, but we also know we have to respond to this moment, be smart about it, be flexible about it, understand the changes that are going on and how we deal with them. And that's why today we're announcing the new grading policy, because we want to make sure the grading policy we use now fits the moment we're in now, and the reality of our kids, our parents, our educators now.

So, the Chancellor and his team worked with parents, teachers, elected officials, advocates, listened to all different viewpoints. We've had a series of conversations confirming the direction of this policy, and it came to the notion of what we owe our kids at this moment. First of all, flexibility. This is literally a once in a century crisis, and the pain its inflicting on children and families has to be taken into account. There has to be a sense of flexibility in a moment like that, but there also has to be a reminder of our ultimate responsibility to our kids to prepare them for the future, to make them as strong as they can be, to give them the best education we can. This is a moment, a horrible moment, a moment we'll remember all our lives, but remember our kids have decades and decades ahead. We have to prepare them for that, so we have to continue to have high expectations for them. We have to continue to take an approach that helps them be their best. That work continues, and it will even more going into the next school year. We have to do both. We have to understand the moment, be flexible about the moment, but also hold those high expectations. If we didn't do both, we would be doing a disservice to our children.

So, the policy is built with some important foundations. First of all, we must help our seniors graduate, any senior who can graduate, we're going to help them get there. We have to keep our kids engaged. We have to keep improving distance learning, but also have them stick with it all the way up to the next school year to the maximum extent possible. We have to recognize that some kids are having a tougher time, because there's crisis emotionally and academically, we have to help them catch up and use all the time between now and the next school year to do it. So, that piece, that question of will kids be able to catch up? But that's not in the minds of a lot of families. A lot of parents are very worried about that, so let's talk about that first, because that's so important to address. Here's the bottom line, every student is going to get the help they need. The school year, as we know it is so different now because everything's virtual, so that also means we don't have to see the same boundaries we often did in the past. We're going to help students all the way through the spring, through the summer if they need it into the fall. Some kids will not need a lot of help, some kids will need a whole lot of help, some kids in between, but whatever it is, we're going to find ways to continue education for kids who need it. Those who need the most support are going to get the most help, obviously, the seniors need to graduate and they're having trouble that's our first priority, but there's also going to be a lot of kids in eighth grade getting ready to go to high school, we want them to be ready. Anyone, any child who needs that extra help, we have not just May and June, we have July and August as well we're going to use them to the maximum extent— possible.

So, let's talk about the different grade levels and grades K to five and this is such a crucial time. Obviously, I'm a big believer in 3-K and pre-K, but when we look at the times when we really start traditionally to grade kids, all of this from 3-K, pre-K, K-to-five has all the foundation building of course. So, we want to take advantage every day and we want to give clear direction to our kids. So, in light of the moment we're in now, instead of traditional grades, there'll be two grading standards for kids grade to five, either they are meeting the standards or they need improvement very simple, straightforward. But even kids need improvement, we're going to stick with them because we know we can get them to the point where they meet those standards. The Chancellor will talk about more detail, but it will be an evaluation based on a lot of the same things that we normally would, school projects, assignments, writing entries, the same kind of things we would do in person a lot of that can be done online as well. And any child who we need more time with, we're going to find ways to use the summer, we don't know what the summer holds this is something I'll keep saying to you, there's things we do not know yet. We do know that we can use online learning all the time, so we'll have options for the summer for the kids who need that extra help. Middle school, well, middle school is an incredibly difficult time in general when there is no pandemic, middle school is a tough time, every parent out there of a middle school child, you know what I'm talking about. So, we want to make sure we reflect that reality and we work with those kids one-on-one, get them where they need to be. Stand the grades there again, instead of the traditional grades, we'll have three meet standards, needs improvement and course in progress, that's for a young person who particularly needs more time to finish the schoolwork before them.

Again, not the same as in-person classroom instruction, but a lot of similarities there's still class discussions that happen online. There's still presentations and assignments, they're still the kinds of tests that a teacher gives to their own classroom. All of that continues in one form or another and that can be the basis for the evaluation. We're going to make sure those kids who go through so much get the help they need. We can carry that through the summer, we can carry that into the new school year in terms of knowing kids who might need extra help when everyone does come back together as well.

High school, well again, time of so much hope, but so much confusion and anxiety and regular times even more now kids are thinking about future, that's what high school kids do one eye to the future at all times. So, the big question now is, you know, will the future happen on time? And the answer is yes. We're going to work with all of our high school kids, keep things moving forward but with rigor, with real focus on quality and with support. So, in the high schools we'll use the existing grade scales, it's the most pertinent level to continue the grading scales that we've had previously. The same range of things you're graded on the written assignments to turn papers, exams, the presentations, all that continues online. Teachers will be watching to see if young people have gotten where they need to go. But we want to offer an option, again, the flexibility given the moment. Any high school student that's earned credit by completing a course, traditionally they would get a grade, one of the traditional grading structures and that will go into their grade point average and that would obviously have a lot to say about their future, including things like college admission. In this environment, we're giving young people an option in a high school level that given the disruption that's occurred has been different for each student. They have the option, if they have completed a course, they're going to get the credit,

but they have the option to choose and this is for the, again, this half of the school year, not for the previous grading that happened earlier in the school year, but for this half of the school year, they can choose to have a passing grade rather than a specific grade in the traditional structure. If that's what they think makes more sense and they have completed the coursework and they have earned the credit, they have that option rather than something that they think might adversely affect their GPA because of aberrant circumstances. That's a choice for each young person and if they need more time, there'll be a course in progress designation that allows them to keep working on that course into the summer even beyond if they need.

For the seniors, of course the focus is on graduation and traditionally there's been June graduation, but also a lot of seniors have finished in August, so we have more than one way to succeed here. We just want to make sure that every senior can graduate does and they'll get the most intense support of any students in our school system. So, that gives you a sense of what we're trying to achieve, we're keeping standards in place, we're keeping a log continuity, we're adding flexibility for this crisis. And our educators are smart, they're going to use a word we normally associate with business, but I've seen this with educators they're entrepreneurial they're creative. They'll figure out what makes sense for their classroom so long as they have clear standards to work from and these will be consistent standards throughout the school system. Now, I just want to speak for a moment to our high school seniors and to their parents, their families. Wasn't that long ago, I've got a 25-year-old and a 22-year-old, so it wasn't that long ago that I was going through with my kids senior year in high school – what a powerful time. Again, a lot of confusion, a lot of doubt, but also a lot of hope and a moment of profound importance to the future, we're going to be there with you every step of the way. Can't do it some of the ways we used to do it, but we're going to be there for you, we need to foster your future.

You are literally the future of New York City, you're our hope, we're going to be there for you and we need to celebrate you. This disruption has been so intense, but that does not take away our belief in you and our sense of the human moment. This moment is so special to you as you approach graduation, we don't want you to lose that. So, every school will have its own approach and every school will look for the opportunity to celebrate you for sure, and right now that all means virtual, but maybe down the line, maybe we'll get lucky enough that some gatherings can start to occur, but here's what I will guarantee you. We're going to do one big citywide virtual graduation ceremony. We're going to do one big celebration of New York City's high school seniors, we're going to make it something very special. You may not have the traditional ceremony that you were looking forward to, we're going to give you something you will remember for the rest of your life and you will cherish. We're going to bring together some very special guests to celebrate you, to salute you the way you stuck with it, not just in the years before, but particularly during this crisis. And you know what's wonderful, some of the people who will be the special stars of this gathering will be graduates themselves of the New York City public schools. That's an extraordinary roster of talented people who make an amazing impact, not just on this City, but on the nation and the whole world. They're going to celebrate you and remind you of the greatness of the students who come out of the New York City public schools. You're going to have a day of inspiration and support and celebration, no matter what this pandemic has thrown at us. We'll have details announced in the weeks ahead, but expect it to be something very special, very memorable, and all about appreciation for you and family members. Parents, that means you too, because we all know God bless our kids in the hard work they do,

but every kid gets there because of the love and support of their family. So, we're going to celebrate the parents and the family members as well.

Now, before I conclude on schools, a big question has come up throughout last few weeks – how could we make sure that every kid got what they needed? The technology they needed to be able to participate in online learning we were honest in the beginning, it wasn't in place. Kids didn't all have it, that's part of the digital divide, it's not good, it's not acceptable it's something we need to fight. And I've talked about this horrible crisis also being a moment where we get to learn what's wrong that needs to be fixed and we will fix it going forward. But in the middle of this pain, there's been a chance to— really deal a blow to the digital divide, really fight back against that divide and put technology in the hands of lots of kids who have never had it. And so, the iPad deliveries, the latest best iPads delivered directly to the homes of so many kids who didn't have access before. We said that for every single child who we knew needed one, they would get that delivery by the end of April and that is precisely what is happening. Right now, 247,000 iPads either arrived at the homes of the students or in the process of being shipped to them as we speak – 247,000. That is many more students – and Chancellor, you'll remind us of the exact number of students in the Houston school system, for example, but that's one of the places that the number of kids getting iPads in New York City through this initiative over the last few weeks is more than there are total students in the Houston school system. It's been a vast undertaking and it had to be created very, very rapidly to reach all these kids in time – it's happening. Now, we had an order for a bigger supply. That means there's some kids that still have not come forward and families not come forward and I'm saying that with empathy. I want you to come forward. If you for any reason or if anyone in your life, anybody watching, listening, anybody in your life, a kid who needs that iPad, doesn't have that technology at home, needs that access and still hasn't asked for it - all you got to do is pick up the phone and call 3-1-1 or you can go to schools.nyc.gov and we can ship it, have it to you in a matter of days. So, we know there's still more kids who need them. We want to find those kids, we want to get them to them and until the, you know, any, any child who still needs it, we're going to serve. Even if they call today, tomorrow, a week from now, we're going to get it to them. But what I'm so proud of our DOE team and all the folks who helped us in the private sector is we're approaching a quarter million kids who have gotten iPads in a matter of weeks and that's tremendous with the internet service attached. This is how you fight the digital divide and this is going to supercharge the online learning in the months ahead.

Let me go to a few other topics, well one other topic and then I want to go to our daily indicators. So small businesses, I have talked to so many people, small business owners and people who love their neighborhood small businesses and there are, there's so much concern for our small businesses right now. You know, it's going to be hard for everyone to make it through so we can restart our economy and I'm sure bigger businesses are deeply challenged as well, but the brunt is being born by small business. They don't have the reserves and the big apparatus and all the experts that they hire to help them navigate this. Small business has taken on a chin and we need to help them every step of the way. Now look, I've said from the beginning that the city put together a loan and grant program almost \$50 million; that's being exhausted immediately. That's what we could do, but what we really needed was intensive federal support and, and some has really come in the previous stimulus and in the action taken in the last few days in Washington as well; that's a good thing. We were all very distressed to see a lot of that money siphoned off by

big businesses and some of that is now being returned so it can go to small and medium sized businesses who really need it. But what we saw is as good as it is that the federal government actually is stepping up and putting real money out there for small, medium sized businesses, the way it's being done is creating a lot of problems. First, that those big businesses tried to usurp it, but second, it's a first-come, first-serve basis and some businesses are in much better position to take advantage of it than others. And the ones that need it the most, the ones that have the fewest resources actually are getting boxed out; we cannot let that happen. So, the Paycheck Protection Program – that money – we saw how quickly it was used up the first time around. Now there's another round; came out of what was referred to as stimulus 3.5 and the program is replenished and with serious money, \$310 billion. And there's two particular heroes in this effort, one, our own Senator Chuck Schumer, who led the way and fought intensely on the Senate side and then on the House side, the Chair of the Small Business Committee for the House of Representatives for the whole nation, is New York City's own, Congressmember Nydia Velázquez. And she fought not only for all that money and to push back the usurping by big business and make sure it was reserved for the businesses that need it, but she also made sure that the process was much fairer to community based businesses, to businesses that fuel resources, to businesses that don't use big banks, but use community credit unions and other sources of financing, to businesses in communities of color that have for a long time been denied access to credit. Senator Schumer, Congressmember Velázquez, really pushed to change this program to make it more about every day small businesses and make it more fair for all. Now, everyone out there who is a small business owner or close to a small business owner, it's time to get you in the game and get you the support. You deserve this money. You've been hit so hard. We need to help you survive. So, we want to make sure you get access to this federal money. It's first come first serve, so you have to apply immediately and the simple way to apply is the federal government website, SBA, “small business administration,” [sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov), [sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov) that's where you apply. The application is certainly not the easiest in the world, but you got to do it; you've got to do it quickly. Now, we're hearing from a lot of small businesses that it's tough to navigate that application. We're today putting together an initiative to help you immediately. In the next few hours, you'll be able to call 3-1-1 and get connected to sources of help; experts who can help you navigate the application. This is something we're putting together quickly as we see this need. We're hearing it so deeply from small businesses. So we're going to get you some help, some facilitation. But the most important thing is to immediately start working on the application. So, if you haven't yet small business owners, go to [sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov), please immediately. Get that application, get ready, the information you need and if you need some special help, call 3-1-1 this afternoon and beyond and we'll be able to help you out.

Okay, it's time for our daily indicators and again, what we've seen is over the whole course of almost two weeks now; definite and serious progress, not the progress we ideally want, which is for all the indicators to go down steadily and in the same direction, but clearly progress and that's getting us closer to the day when we can start to make some of the moves to open things up. But I've said it before, I'll keep saying it – we're going to be cautious, we're going to be careful, we're [inaudible] governed. We will be governed by the facts and the facts have to get consistent for us to make some of those moves and we're going to be very smart and cautious when we do it. Today a good day, not a perfectly good day, but definitely a good day. Indicator one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID - that went down from 122 to 112. Daily, excuse me, indicator two, daily number of people in ICUs across our public hospitals for

suspected COVID-19 that went down from 766 to 745. Indicator three, percentage of people tested positive for COVID-19 citywide – that went down 29 percent to 27 percent. The only category went up is in some ways the toughest category, the testing at the public health lab of some of the folks dealing with the most illness - that went up, but only by one percent – that's a good sign – from 55 percent to 56 percent. So, a very strong day – further evidence that what you all are doing is working, keep doing the social distancing, keep doing the shelter-in-place, stay at home, it's working. We're getting closer and closer to those days when we see steady downward trend every single day and that's what we need.

So, I'm going to just say one more thing to the kids in New York City and then a few words in Spanish and I'm going to turn to our Chancellor. So, to every kid out there, every student, every young person, if you feel like you're going through a lot right now, guess what? We understand that you are; you're going through a hell of a lot. I feel bad for you, I do, because you're being asked to shoulder a burden that honestly, young people haven't been asked to shoulder in a long, long time. You're being asked to make sense of this crisis in your own lives while going through everything else you go through as young people; it's a lot. Sometimes parents and family members you think may not understand everything you're going through. I'm sure that's true on one level, but we all try with all our might to appreciate everything you're grappling with and we will be there for you. The times we're living in, they're literally unprecedented. There's nothing like this we can find a parallel for – certainly not in our memory – but what we know is we have to support you. The love we all feel for you has to come out as support and understanding. We have to express it as a real empathy for what you are going through. And so, we're going to be there with you every step of the way. I have faith in you, I really do. I have spent the last six years going to New York City public schools, it's literally the most inspiring thing I do as part of my job as Mayor is meet all of you and see how extraordinary you are. There's a bright, bright future ahead. We're going to have to fight our way through these months ahead, but there is a bright future ahead and it is because of you. So, thank you.

Few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, I have to say one of the things that people may not remember well is at the time that I hired Richard Carranza to lead the largest school system in the country, he had just been a leader in Houston in the valiant, extraordinary effort to bring that city and that school system back after Hurricane Harvey. Again, an unprecedented disaster that afflicted one of the nation's biggest and greatest cities. And then, as superintendent of the Houston schools, Richard Carranza was the man who had to innovate a whole new approach and speed up the process of bringing back education in a place that had been put back on its heels deeply. I was so impressed when I spoke to him about those tough days he went through, and everyone in Houston went through, because he had this clear spirit, this can-do attitude, this belief that any challenge could be overcome. It was unmistakable and it gave me a lot of hope thinking about what he would do as our chance or Lord knows, I never expected him and everyone at the Department of Education to have to deal with a pandemic, but how telling that this man had already brought his school system back previously in another place from another disaster and it was in his DNA to do so. So, Chancellor, what you have done, what your team has done has been pretty miraculous. And I have great faith

that we're going to have a strong spring, a strong summer and an outstanding, absolutely outstanding next school year with your leadership.

Chancellor Richard Carranza –

Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza: Mr. Mayor, thank you very much. I am humbled to be here and honored to be here. And I want to echo everything that you said about our students, about our teachers, our principals and our families. But before I say anything else, I want to give – you know, I've spent every week visiting our regional enrichment centers and seeing heroes in action – our school safety agents, our student nutrition workers, our teachers, our administrators – really tending to the children are of our first responders and our medical personnel in a very caring, loving and trauma-informed way. It's been nothing short of miraculous. But I do want to take a moment to thank the teachers who are teaching, the administrators that are supervising and clearing the way and clearing the obstacles for teachers to be able to do what they do, and our parents at home. I have seen countless examples of incredibly innovative and enriching activities that our teachers are putting forward for our students. I've seen teachers engaging every single day with their students, finding their students, making sure they're engaged. So, I want to say to all the teachers out there and all the principals, thank you. One of the fallacies that we often hear is that we've been out of school for a number of weeks. Well, I want to be very clear that school has been in session. We have never stopped being in session. What has changed is the manner in which we've engaged with our students. Instead of face to face, in-person, we are doing it remotely, which is why we say this is remote learning. So, to all of our teachers and administrators that are on the front lines, I want to say thank you to you as well. You also are the heroes that are continuing to keep our students engaged. So, thank you.

What we're announcing today is a result of a tremendous amount of collaboration and discussion. And on this particular topic, the opinions and ideas are vast and wide. On one end, there is the notion that nothing should change, we should continue to have everything as it was prior to COVID-19, that accountability is important; on the other end is, listen, it's a traumatic event, we've never gone through this, so everybody passes, everybody gets an A, everybody just moves forward – and everything in between. We've heard all of those comments, but, at the end of the day, Mr. Mayor, you and I have the responsibility. You and I have the accountability of having a policy that will not inadvertently harm students when they decide to do the next thing in their careers, whether it's going to college, whether it's a scholarship, whether it's a career. So, we have to craft the policy that recognizes the trauma, that recognizes the voice, that recognizes what our students and our community have been through, yet still provides for a path forward for our students, given the fact that we've never stopped being in session. So, the policy we were introducing takes into account all the feedback that we received. We've heard from students, parents, principals, teachers, we've heard from professors, we've heard from elected officials. We've taken all of that input into consideration with a policy, but we've remained focused on keeping our students learning well, taking this into account in this new reality. Mr. Mayor, as you said, we've developed a policy that keeps our students on track, especially our seniors who are about to graduate. And I want to thank you for the commitment of this city to recognize and celebrate our seniors. We will celebrate you. It may not be in the manner that you thought and we know that there are a number of schools that are thinking about what they're going to do as well, we're going to support them as well, but we want to make sure that you know we're proud

of you. This policy also accounts for the extra support that students are going to need and helps us to identify those students that are going to need those extra supports. I fully stand behind this policy. I think it's an elegant way to thread the needle of keeping students engaged while still recognizing that our community has suffered trauma. Remember, that this is about recognizing the needs and the strengths of our students as we go forward.

This policy also recognizes that an enormous number of our students are bringing the acute trauma they've suffered that COVID-19 crisis has wrought for them, their families, and for the city. It also takes the current environment into account when assessing students and ensuring that we have a uniform equitable system across the board. The number-one thing that I've heard from every stakeholder that I've engaged with is we need something that is citywide and that is standard. It maintains our standards and require students to complete the work, but recognizes as well that we as educators, we, as a system, an educational system, must be flexible in how we go about that work. Our teachers, as you've mentioned, Mr. Mayor, are our experts in meeting students where they are and responding to differentiated levels, but they need to know and they need to have the information at their fingertips to be able to make those assessments. We're providing and we will continue to provide, but with this new policy, we will provide guidance specifically to schools immediately, and if you're a parent or guardian with questions, don't hesitate to ask. We're here to walk you through this and we're here to support you every step of the way. The extent of this public health crisis has become clear that we need to close buildings. And, as you remember, Mr. Mayor, this was a very deeply painful but necessary decision. However, through all of the ups and downs, our families and school communities have remained resolute while tackling this tremendous undertaking. As always, we know that our students can rise to the occasion, but we've already seen our educators take this on into the largest school system in America, entering our sixth week of remote learning where other school systems are starting today. So, this is kudos to our educators who have made this heavy lift. And, Mr. Mayor, I just want to clarify one data point. You asked with our iPad distribution, we have now shipped 247,000 iPads – Wi-Fi-equipped iPads – that's equivalent to the entire school system of Atlanta, Seattle, Detroit and San Francisco combined is that number – 247,000 iPads. So, we should be very proud of the work that we've done, but also understand that there's much more work to do.

Mayor: Thank you for – thank you for that update very much, Chancellor. Okay, we're going to turn to our colleagues in the media. And please remember to give me the name and the outlet of each journalist. And here we go.

Moderator: Just a quick reminder to folks that in addition to having Chancellor Carranza in the Blue Room, we also have Dr. Barbot and Commissioner Banks on the phone. Juliet from 1010 WINS is up first. Juliet?

Question: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Mayor and Chancellor. How are you doing?

Mayor: Good, Juliet. How you doing?

Question: I'm fine, thank you. So, I actually have a two-part question for you regarding the education issue. There had been about 300 parents on a Zoom meeting, I believe yesterday or last night, that were opposed to this proposal that you're making, the announcement that you're

making. And they are supportive of this measure that would allow the lowest grade to be dropped so that students can still receive a grade for, you know, three-quarters of the work that they did during the year. So, that's the proposal – question number one. Number two is, how are you dealing with – will [inaudible] days exist at all for this school year? How are you working at coordinating that?

Mayor: Hey, Juliette helped me just understand that question a little bit better. What are you saying with that second part?

Question: About snow days? Are they going to exist anymore or do you account for them at all?

Mayor: I'll see if I can get that. I mean, the notion for the future certainly exists, but I think the question here has always been, you know, once you broke out – and it was horrible to have to do this, but once we broke out of the traditional model of kids going to a school building, you know, everything changed. So, you know, if we were to have physical schools the way they were, something like a snow day would be an issue, but everything like that is now been subsumed by distance learning. When we come back in the future, we'll resume the focus on education in school buildings and, you know, for next school year, the concept of school of snow days and all will exist. Hopefully we won't have the snow to go with it, but it'll exist. But to the first point, I'll pass to the Chancellor, but just say, remember that the work done in the first half of the school year happened and is in the books and what we're talking about really is the second half of the school year, which got disrupted very early on. The kids came back just weeks before, you know, for the – for the second half of the year, they came back just weeks before this all happened. And so, this is about really acknowledging how disruptive this all was for kids and how it makes it really hard to adjust, do what we were doing before with no modification. It was smart to add some flexibility, but that does not affect everything that was in the books previously.

Chancellor?

Chancellor Carranza: Yeah. So, we've actually taken into consideration that particular question. It's important, as the Mayor has mentioned, to recognize that three quarters of this school year were in the books when we adjourn to remote learning. So, teachers do have an academic record of students. At the high school level, which is what I read into this question, because it's much more germane at the high school level, there is a provision which is aligned to what CUNY does, which allows students at the end of this marking period – first of all, a student won't get a final grade that is lower than any of the grades they got in any one of the marking periods this year. That's a safety net for our students. But secondly, once a student is ready for a letter grade, the student and family will have the option of either taking the letter grade or instead opting for a pass. Now, the difference is – is that if the student chooses to keep the letter grade, that gets factored into the grade point average, the GPA. But if the student opts to take a pass, then it does not impact the GPA. It just shows credit has been earned. So, it's another flexibility and flexible – flexibility point that we've built into this grading policy that, again, recognizes the trauma. It's aligned to State education department regulations and it's aligned to what CUNY does as well. So, again, trying to make sure our students are being well-served while providing the maximum amount of flexibility as possible.

Moderator: Katie from the Wall Street Journal is up next. Katie?

Question: Hey, good morning. I have a two-part question and it's focused on, you know, the students who have an alternate assessment who have school year-round, if there's any plan to update that program. And I guess it will continue remotely. And then, additionally, what is the DOE working on to provide that additional needed support for students who may need – maybe missed a lot of remote learning – whether it's in September or will they be allowed to kind of enroll in summer school when maybe they wouldn't usually have enrolled?

Mayor: And let me just preface what the Chancellor will answer to both those questions by saying we are working through the shape of summer as we speak. We'll have more to say on that soon in terms of what summer learning options there will be. We all understand that summer and what summer's going to look like in the atmosphere of this crisis is a big open question. But what we – what is not an open question is that the DOE will have more than one contingency ready for how we're going to support kids online at minimum. And so, I want to be very clear that, you know, when the day comes when we're going to flesh that out and show the exact nature of that, we will present it. But as we speak, different elements of a summer plan are being put together by the DOE.

Go ahead, Richard.

Chancellor Carranza: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. So, really good question – questions. So, the grading policy and the flexibilities will apply to all students, including students that have alternate assessments. As we know, students that have alternate assessments have individual education plans, IEPs. So, that is being noted in their IEPs and there's outreach to parents, because parents have a voice in what that IEP looks like. That started on day-one when we went into remote learning. That continues to this day. And again, the focus here is to provide the maximum flexibility to students and to parents that recognizes traumatic events that we're currently in. It also applies to our students that are immigrant students, students that are multilingual learners. So, any subgroup of student that you can think of, our schools, our teachers, our administrators are focused on making sure that they're being served to the greatest extent possible. Just to add to what the Mayor said about summer school, there are multiple scenarios that we are modeling and working through about what summer school would look like. Obviously, the medical advice and what it looks like in terms of this virus in the community is going to have a big role to play in what summer school can or will look like. What is absolutely clear though, is that this grading policy will give us the opportunity to identify students that need additional support, that need additional enrichment, that need additional time, and then provide them the time to be able to actually complete. The goal here is not to fail students. I can't think of any educator that would say, I want to be a teacher because I want to fail students. The goal is to have students master the subject matter. That's always been the goal. So, if some students need more time, this is a perfect opportunity to actually create that system where students get that time.

Moderator: Henry from Bloomberg is up next. Henry?

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor. There's a report in Yahoo News that says that the federal government is going to support the City in a massive antibody testing program. And I'd like to know whether or not this report is accurate, and, if it is, how many tests are going to be conducted? When will it start? Who will be tested? And what's the intent of this program?

Mayor: So, Henry, there's been a number of discussions with the federal government on the question of testing, to say the least. I have had the conversation about testing with the President, and the Vice President, and a whole range of the key health officials in the federal government. So, this has been going on for weeks on one level. We are trying to figure out how we can do more testing of every kind – antibody testing, which, you know, I've been clear and our health leadership has been clear, brings some real virtues, obviously has to be done the right way and has to be done with the qualification that it isn't a perfect answer. But – and, of course, the PCR testing that will be the backbone of what we need to do with testing and tracing. And that's really the central strategy, going forward. We need federal help to do all of the above. So, we have been in real conversations about how to do that and how to expand it. My hope is we'll have something more tangible to say in the next few days. But the fact is, as with all things federal, it's been a kind of uneven situation. I'd like to get clear answers so that we can present them to the people in New York City. And I'd like to see a lot of federal support for testing here in the city. As soon as we have something that is ready to go, we're certainly going to announce it.

Moderator: Next up is Marcia from CBS-2. Marcia?

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

Mayor: Good, Marcia. How are you?

Question: Good. I'd like to talk to you about the homeless on the subways. I have a multi-part question, but they're all related. The fact that you've announced this new program, are you now accepting responsibility for getting the homeless off the subways? And since the NYPD flooded the end of line station at the World Trade Center today with cops and workers, are you planning to do it at the other end of line stations? There are 38 total. I know you're focusing on 10. And I just also was wondering, since you've [inaudible] about a billion dollars out of your affordable housing plan over the next two years, will that adversely affect the number of homeless in the city because there'll be less places for them to live?

Mayor: Thank you, Marcia. I appreciate those questions. The last piece, I don't think – I mean, look, we're all [inaudible] that we've had the largest affordable housing program in the history of New York City. It's been an incredible success and I want to tip my cap to everyone who has been a part of it from day-one, creating such an aggressive affordable housing program and that has been consistently ahead of schedule and on budget. It's been amazing. It's sad to have to delay some of that. It's very sad, but that is the budgetary reality we're dealing with. And of all the things we had to deal with in the immediate term, that was something that we decided we would just grudgingly have to make a tough choice on, but it will continue, unquestionably Marcia, on that piece, I would say, like everything, the more affordable housing, the better off you're always going to be in terms of fighting homelessness, because the shape of homelessness today in terms of shelter homelessness is more and more, as we've talked about, it's families. It's

families who found economic struggles not because mental health or substance abuse, but it was an economic problem, end up in shelter. The more affordable housing you build, the more you can address the shelter homeless reality, unquestionably. But when it comes to street homelessness, which is a painful, painful problem – a very painful and historic problem in the city, but it is a much smaller problem. It's a few thousand people. That has always been about, you know, the outreach efforts in recent years. The HOME-STAT effort, the, the Safe Havens that we've talked about a lot, those smaller places that we bring people in to try and get them off the street and keep them off the street, the supportive housing, which is affordable housing specifically for people who have mental health challenges and other challenges and need social services in the place they live. That work all continues. In fact, we announced yesterday that additional Safe Haven space and affordable housing space for homeless people is being brought online right now.

So, I would separate the two pieces, Marcia and say the pieces that are most focused on the homeless are continuing unabated. The larger reality of our affordable housing plan, some of it, unfortunately, is going to have to be delayed. But here's why I remind you, and Marcia, I know we talked about this back around the holidays, that Journey Home vision of getting street homeless people off the street, those who have been on the street a year, two years, three years, four years. We believe we can consistently get more and more of them off the street. We've seen a lot of success with the HOME-STAT initiative that now we're going to build it out. And even in this crisis, I spoke to Commissioner Banks about this in the last couple of days. Marcia, we've seen a number of street homeless, permanently homeless folks, come in and accept those Safe Haven placements. And we want to do a lot more of that. So that work does not stop now.

Now on the question of who's responsible for homelessness in the subways? It's like other questions I've been asked lately. We're all responsible. It's all of our jobs to get this done. The State runs the MTA clearly. The State has a whole lot of the pieces to the puzzle here. All the employees of the MTA who we need to help in this effort in a variety of ways. We need to be the eyes and ears, the MTA police. There's lots of pieces of the equation that are run by the State. But the City has a big piece of this too because we have the NYPD as the primary element of safety in the subways. Also, the NYPD doing more and more work in recent years on homeless outreach and teaming up with Social Services, with health care providers to do more to help homeless people get into shelter. The NYPD has been outstanding. And, of course, Social Services, all the organizations that do outreach that are part of the City's efforts, all the nonprofits. I see this as a big team effort and the joint responsibility. What we announced yesterday is more places to bring homeless folks from the subway or the street to get them off the street, out of the subway permanently. And what we announced is a vision that we need the MTA to help us with. We'll do our share. We'll devote the police resources, we'll devote the outreach workers, we'll do whatever it takes, but we need the MTA to agree to this plan.

It's a common sense plan, Marcia. Here's how it goes. We've got 10 key stations. They're the end points of subway lines. That's where we have a particular problem. We all know for decades there have been homeless people in the subways going from one end of a line back again, back again, all night long. That needs to stop. The way to stop that is to support those people and help them come in and accept housing, but also to disrupt the pattern. The way to disrupt the pattern is between midnight and 5:00 am, close those stations. Deep clean those stations, which is good for

everyone in this moment. Have a shuttle bus that takes any customers who need to get on the subway, take some one-stop up to the next station. So literally you're talking about between midnight and 5:00 am, in a subway system that's got a small fraction of the number of strap hangers that it normally would have, so that can be done with shuttle buses. We will help get that done too. But deep clean the stations and everyone has to get out of the stations. Instead of what's happened for years and years, that a homeless person just sits there on the train or maybe gets off the train temporarily gets right back on it. Goes then the whole way back. We want to create a change where everyone gets out of the station. Our homeless outreach workers are there to engage and get people support, take them right away, if they're ready to come into a Safe Haven. NYPD is there to assist and make sure that we get the help to people they need.

This would be a game changer, Marcia. We just need the MTA to say yes. It's not hard. They just need to say yes to this innovation and we'll do our share and then some. I'm going to tell you the stations, just so everyone hears them. It's Coney Island Stillwell Avenue on the D and F, Flatbush Avenue Brooklyn College on the 2 and 5, Jamaica 179th Street on the F train, Jamaica Center, Parsons/Archer on the E, World Trade Center on the E, 96th Street Second Avenue on the Q, Pelham Bay Park on the 6, Van Cortlandt Park 242nd Street on the 1 train, Wakefield 241st Street on the 2 and 5, and Woodlawn on the 4 train. The MTA just has to say yes and we can together, do something really important to reduce the number of homeless people in the subways and get them the help they need. So asking the MTA to join us in that effort and let's get to work on it together.

Moderator: Shant from the Daily News is up next. Shant?

Question: Thank you Mr. Mayor. I gather that homelessness on the subways is just one piece of commuters' reservations about using the subways during coronavirus. There's still a lot of concern about packing close together. I'm wondering what else you can tell New Yorkers to potentially reassure them once the subway -- once the city reopens that the subways are safe? On a completely different note, graduation traditionally being a time when seniors might indulge in pranks, what would you say to seniors who might be contemplating that and they want to blow off some steam?

Mayor: Well, Shant, obviously we were all young ones and it doesn't surprise me that that moment, it's a jubilant moment when you graduate. But I don't, maybe I'm missing some of the mood, but I don't think so. I don't get the feeling that young people are thinking about pranks right now. I think everyone's pretty sober by this moment. I've watched carefully as I've gone all over the city, talked to so many people who are deeply engaged in their communities. I'm not getting the impression so far that young people have somehow missed, what a difficult moment this is. I think they're, you know, they hate being cooped up at home. I think when they go out in parks and all, they still have a tendency to want to gather together. That's all understandable and we got to keep helping them understand for their safety and their family, that doesn't make sense. But I'm not getting the sense of pranks being on people's minds, but it's something we'll certainly keep an eye on. And I think the message would be, Hey, you know, anything that might be upsetting to people or you know, hurtful to people at this moment, people are going through a lot, it's probably not a great time for most of the things we would have thought were pranks in the past.

On the question of the subways, look, Shant, I think this is going to be a step by step thing. We're going to be real clear about these indicators that I go over, when it's time to do a little more and then a little more and a little more. But we're going to be cautious and I think that's what the people believe is right at this point to be careful and smart and really go by the numbers. Which means I don't expect a subway ridership to turn on suddenly. I expect it to be sort of slow and steady in stages. I think people are going to have to feel their way and I think some people are going to be more ready to go back to the subways. Others are going to take their time. Eventually, I believe, you know, we're New Yorkers, we're all going to come back to the subways over time. But will be in direct connection to a couple of things. How much progress we're making overall on the disease, I think will be the single biggest determinant. What is done to keep showing that the subways are being cleaned regularly and that there's a real sensitivity to the health realities, you know, and I think people just having a sense that when they weigh the options, it's the one that makes sense for them in their lives. New Yorkers are very resilient and I think at first, even some of them might be hesitant, over time the convenience of the subways, the fact it is part of our culture, we'll bring people back. But you know, I think we have to do it in stages. I think that's the smart way to go.

Moderator: Yoav from The City is up next. Yoav?

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor, I wanted to ask you about underground yeshivas. There's been recent reports that the efforts are more organized and not perhaps a rogue operation as initially thought. So, I wanted to ask you how you guys are investigating these complaints? And also, what the protocol is because you've heard in one case the NYPD was investigating but in another [inaudible] we heard that City Hall responded directly to someone's complaint? Just how are you guys investigating it and what's the latest you're hearing? Because initially City Hall kind of dismissed it as these kind of rogue teaching operations.

Mayor: Yeah. Yoav, I don't remember anyone dismissing any gathering, honestly. I think we were very, very clear. As you know, I've talked about publicly weeks and weeks ago I had a conference call with key Jewish leaders around the city. And there was tremendous support on that call for shutting down. And it was painful obviously for people, but for shutting down shuls, shutting down all sorts of community gatherings. And I think the leadership of the Jewish community, the rabbinical leadership have been absolutely united in saying all of that has to change. And I've seen a whole lot of adherence to that. The one we saw some specific complaints about, which was identified from the beginning as a very small number of people who were trying to create services, some in their actual synagogues, smaller synagogue, some in homes, we made very clear, I made very clear in my whole team has, that's unacceptable. And the NYPD was ready to enforce. And in a few cases had to enforce, but there wasn't much that I heard of that needed enforcement in the end.

I put the yeshivas in the exact same category and for any faith, any background, any gathering, no gatherings. We are not allowing gatherings now. So, I'm going to say it to you, Yoav and I'm going to say it to all your colleagues. Someone give me an address. We had a point the other day raised by one of your colleagues from one of the Jewish publications. And I said to him, give me an address of the problem. He gave me an address right there. We sent NYPD out to address the

problem immediately and to make clear it's unacceptable. So, if anyone knows of an, I don't know of a specific address of an underground yeshiva. If anyone sees it, knows about it, tell – you can call 3-1-1, you can tell the City Hall team, you can tell the NYPD it's one common approach. It will be shut down period.

Moderator: Alex from Chalkbeat is up next. Alex?

Question: Mr. Mayor, how are you?

Mayor: Good. Alex, how you doing?

Question: Good. I have two questions. One is just whether you guys can explain a little bit more what you mean by in progress, like how that will be determined? And like if you're a student who is just getting an iPad this week, like are you just automatically going to get an in progress grade? And my second question is about screening. Given that obviously grades this year are going to be very different. And attendance is not going to be considered in middle and high school admissions. Like what you're going to tell schools in terms of how they can screen students or whether they will be allowed to screen the students?

Mayor: Go ahead, Chancellor.

Chancellor Carranza: So, on the question of screening and the grades, the Mayor and I have been very clear that we will not penalize students in any way, shape or form because of circumstances out of their control. A pandemic is certainly a circumstance out of their control. We've already said with attendance. So concomitantly with now the grading policy, we will be bringing -- we will be putting forth some guidance in the coming weeks around what that will look like in terms of the screening and admissions process as well. As it pertains to in progress classification that is being used for students where there's just not enough information for teachers to assess where are they. Have they met the standard or have they not yet met the standard. So, in progress connotes to the system and to us that these are the students that we particularly have to engage in a rigorous assessment protocol to assess where are they, what do they need? It could be a number of things. It could be the fact that they in fact did not have access to the technology. It could also be that they did have the technology, but were dealing with a number of family members that were sick. It could be that some of these students, especially older students, were essential workers in grocery stores. So, there's a whole myriad of things that could affect a teacher not having enough information to make an assessment of that student's academic progress. In progress is something that gives us not only a marker, but it gives the teacher the ability to say, we need to do a deeper dive with this particular student.

Moderator: Sydney from the Advance is up next. Sydney?

Question: Hey Mr. Mayor, last week I asked you why you weren't including the entire borough of Staten Island and private hospitals in your ICU indicator portion of your daily count. I wanted to see if you might consider, you know, moving forward at least adding Staten Island's private hospitals to that count so that the ICU projections from all of the five boroughs are represented? And if you can just elaborate a little bit more on why you weren't including the ICU count from

private hospitals? Have you tried to do so or have you not tried at all? And I have another question about the ferry. My paper reported that NYC Ferry will retain all existing funding and not receive a budget cut or a fare change while Staten Island's Ferry's budget was cut in your Fiscal 2021 Budget. Wondering why the Staten Island Ferry's budget was cut and not NYC Ferry's? And do you anticipate Staten Island's new fast ferry route will still be able to launch this year given the financial uncertainty the city is facing right now?

Mayor: Okay. On the ferry. One there will be cuts to NYC Ferry and that will certainly be reflected in the next stage of the budget process. Two – obviously, it's never fun to talk about any cuts, but everything that has to be cut will be cut as we deal with more and more challenges. Two, we're certainly trying to figure out the next stages that had been scheduled for the Ferry expansion. Staten Island was a piece of that, Coney Island, in the Bronx. We're trying to figure out what's going to happen with that now in light of everything going on. So we'll have more to say on that as well in the budget process between now and June.

On the ICUs. What I've said before is that the data related to the Health + Hospitals hospitals is the data that is most consistent and readily available to us for a daily tracking system. As Dr. Katz said over the course of the last two months, we've seen very high levels of consistency between the data in the Health + Hospitals and what we're seeing in the rest of the hospital system. So Health + Hospitals is about 20 percent of all City hospitals, gives us a pretty clear view of what's happening throughout. But it's more readily available, consistent data because 56 hospitals overall, very different systems, very different speeds with which we get their information. So this was about keeping our indicator system going on a regular basis and consistent and informative. We'll check for sure Sydney, to see if there's any dissonance when we factor in not just the Staten Island hospitals but other hospitals around the city if it tells us anything particularly different. But if not, I think you should not see this as an effort to give you a snapshot of what's happening in every hospital. This is a citywide indicator to decide how we're going to approach the restart and what point and which way. So long as we continue to see it as a consistent, accurate citywide indicator, that's what it's there for.

Moderator: Erin from Politico is up next. Erin?

Question: Mr. Mayor, Marcia touched on part of my question, but with regards to the cuts to the affordable housing program, do you know how many units that is going to affect? And why specifically were the cuts chosen to be made in this area?

Mayor: So, Erin, we'll get you more detailed today and obviously we're going to be going through a lot of detail over the next few weeks as we go into the heart of the budget process culminating in the middle of June. But look, I – first of all, the larger vision around affordable housing remains intact. This is about slowing down some investments and postponing some things. It is not taking away the bigger vision and it's a vision that I really, again, commend everyone from the very beginning of the administration to now, who is part of creating and implementing the affordable housing plan. Because it's been extraordinarily consistent and it's reached hundreds of thousands of people. And ultimately, as you know, at its full extent will reach more than 700,000 New Yorkers. So it's an astounding initiative. It will keep going. But when you think about the budget dynamics, we were dealing with suddenly a massive budget

gap. We were dealing with a cash flow crisis on top of that. Anytime that you book a capital project, it has ramifications for the budget. Obviously for the expense side of the budget too because of debt service. We had to slow down a lot of capital investments just to be able to make sure we could pay the bills now. And it's really a horrible situation, but that's what we had to do. But the plan is intact and it will be implemented in the future.

Again, the big question in the month of May will be the federal stimulus and what that will mean for everything we're doing. I spoke to Speaker Pelosi on Sunday and we had a very good detailed conversation. And I want to thank her for her amazing leadership. And the next stimulus bill will initiate in the House of Representatives. That's a very good thing for all the places that have been hurt so much by COVID-19, because I know the House of Representatives is listening to the reality of what we've been through.

So, the stimulus will really determine what we're going to have to do going forward. There'll be tough choices any way you slice it, but the stimulus, if it actually takes into account what has happened here, all the costs, human and otherwise that have been inflicted on New York City and all that's been lost – and including first and foremost the human loss but then, of course, the horrible impact on the budget that's used to provide services to people – if it's really, really heard and understood and acted on, that stimulus could be a lifesaver for us. And if it's not, we're going to be in an even tougher situation, but that's going to then really govern everything else we have to decide in June.

Moderator: Gwen from Crain's is up next – Gwen.

Question: So, real estate is a major –

Moderator: You're really quiet –

Mayor: Yeah. Get close to the phone or –

Question: Yeah, sorry about that.

Mayor: There you go.

Question: Okay, great. So, good morning. Real estate is a major part of the city's tax base. What's your plan to reassure the commercial and residential property owners during a time when so many are calling for a rent strike?

Mayor: It's a good question. Look, I've said the answer lies primarily in Albany and it's time for Albany to act. Rent strike is not the answer, but relief for renters is the answer. So, one, I've called upon our Rent Guidelines Board in the city, this is the piece we can do to ensure a rent freeze for the year ahead. It's the right thing to do given what tenants have gone through. The horrible economic situation we're in. But the State has the power to take other actions, including most immediately to allow renters to pay their rent with a security deposit, which is the ultimate win-win – it helps the renters, it helps the landlords. The State of New Jersey acted on this and I commend them. And I put out a tweet and said, you know, as proud New Yorkers, it's hard to get

the words out of our mouths, you know, we're going to follow New Jersey on this one, but we really should follow New Jersey on this one. The State of New York should do what New Jersey did and give that opportunity to renters.

And then beyond that, create a system that people who have no money – and it'd have to be documented – but if you have no money to pay the rent, you should be allowed to forego it and pay it back later on. There should be a payment plan system. And, of course, tightening up our anti-eviction rules to make sure that there cannot be evictions now during the crisis and for 60 days after to protect people. I think, given that, I know landlords are going through a lot too, and again, the vast majority of landlords go about their business appropriately and fairly. They need, of course, sources of income. But we can't ask tenants who don't have any money – if they don't have any money, they don't have any money. It's not their fault. So, for the tenants who can pay, great key paying on time. If you can't pay, you should have the option to use your security deposit. If you can't pay even after that, you should have the option to defer, but with a payment plan so at least the landlords can plan on that.

Moderator: Last two, Jeff Mays from the New York Times – Jeff.

Question: Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. The Governor said recently that he wished he had blown the bugle earlier about coronavirus and what was happening in Wuhan Province. I'm wondering do you have any thoughts about that? Do you wish you had done anything earlier in relation to dealing with the pandemic that we're experiencing right now?

Mayor: Jeff, look, I respect the question. I know your publication has already put a lot of energy into looking back and I think it's an important endeavor and as a human being, I'll tell you, you know, of course, I think about all the things that have happened in these weeks and months and think about what did we understand – all of us – what did we not understand? You know, what might've been different? But I will also tell you that right now, honestly, we've got lives to save right now. We've got extraordinarily important decisions to make right now about the future, about how we protect people, and how we bring this city forward, and how we figure out the right kind of restart. I don't personally put a lot of time into dwelling on the past when I have people to serve right now and people to protect right now.

I think there will be a time to really evaluate everything and figure out what we can learn, what it can tell us for the future, what we understood, what we didn't, what we did right, what we didn't. That time will clearly come. But I'll tell you one thing and I appreciate, you know, the Governor, I think, was speaking from the heart and I appreciate that. I do know one thing, on January 24th, a group of us gathered at Emergency Management and were very clear about the fact that this virus was coming to New York City. And I remember vividly saying it was not a matter of if, but when, and that the ability to protect the city hinged on testing and that if we could not get not only the physical tests but the authority from the federal government to perform our own tests, our city was in danger.

Remember the weeks and weeks where we pleaded just to be able to do tests locally. Remember all that long stretch of time where every test had to be sent to Atlanta. I mean, when you look back, there'll be plenty to discuss about everyone's role, but the central issue here, the original sin

here, is the question of the federal government's role in testing. Because we had a chance in this city to contain this had we been able to see it. We couldn't see it without testing. But again, we'll analyze and every one of us, you know, if you're a human being with a heart and soul, you're thinking all the time, I'm certainly thinking all the time, you know, not only what was, but every single hour of the day, am I doing the right thing with the information I have, am I making the right choices for my people?

And what I'm crystal clear about is it's about health and safety. That is what governs these choices. And you know, I still am frustrated that knowing that the best way to protect my people would be maximum testing – even this morning as I speak to you, I do not have the cooperation I need from the federal government to do that. So, imagine January 24th, February, March, now almost all of April, asking the same exact question, making the same exact demand and still we're not getting the help we need. That's the big story here. And we're not going to stop fighting until we get it.

Moderator: Last question goes to Gloria of NY1. Gloria?

Question: Thank you. I just wanted to see if it's – I have two questions – if it was possible to get some clarity on the summer school aspect of this. I understand that you're still working out how you're going to do summer school or if you're going to do it, but have you determined how your goal with the – my point being with the grades changing, how will you determine what students have to go to summer school? And then Mr. Mayor, I wanted to ask about the subway announcement. Some of the advocates have talked about the fact that even though you have provided the 200 additional support beds, the Safe Haven beds, the city isn't tapping into the hotel rooms that it could be providing for people and that there just isn't enough being done to provide people a safe option to take shelter in. Obviously with the shelters not being ideal right now with the pandemic. So, can you just talk about that?

Mayor: Yeah. Let's do this. Let me start on the summer school, pass to the Chancellor to add, and then I'll come back and finish up on the subway question. So, on summer school, Gloria, the first thing I want to say is it's hard, I think, for all of us who are used to, you know, a school building and a school year in the traditional sense. And so summer school, we all – and I think the thing a lot of us were used to is relatively few kids needed that extra instruction, and they went to summer school and they were usually not too happy about it. But it was not what most kids experienced. Online learning has changed the whole reality. And it – there's a lot of things you cannot do as well on online learning to say the least.

But one thing it is good for is it's very flexible and for kids who very sadly have to be indoors a lot of the day now it's an option that they can go much more deeply into and they can do it at their own pace and all sorts of good flexibility is there. And it's not just during the school hours, it's the evening, it's the weekend. The online learning really opens up a world of possibility. So, I think to think a little bit more as a continuum than the kind of boundaries we experienced with a regular school year, school calendar. I can't wait until we have that regular school year and regular school calendar back because I think it's the most effective and the most human and the most engaging approach to education. But for now, we have the ability to reach kids in a lot of different ways.

And I think you don't have this – and this is where I'll pass to Richard and say, I don't think it's that kind of binary, oh these kids don't need summer school and you know, these relatively few do need summer school. I think we have a much bigger set of kids who are going to need some more help because the disruption that they went through, the trauma they went through, they didn't yet have the iPad, whatever it is – I think it's going to stretch out the equation into the summer. So, we don't know exactly what summer looks like and there's going to be different options prepared. But I think one thing we can assume is a lot of kids are going to engage summer learning. Some kids are going to engage summer learning, not because they're in a deficit, but because they don't have much else to do and it might be a good time to learn more and get ahead of things. I think we have to see this more of a continuum than we usually do. Richard?

Chancellor Carranza: Yeah. So, adding to what you said, Mr. Mayor, I think that is absolutely on track. It's more of a continuum rather than the compartmentalized way we've thought of school. You have semesters and you have summer and then you have fall and spring. This is going to be much more of a continuum but perhaps to put this in context every grade level and every course at the secondary level there are standards. In other words, there is a body of knowledge that students must demonstrate mastery of to say they've completed the third grade, they've completed the sixth grade, etcetera. So, the in-progress classification as I've said is really an indicator that the teacher is saying, 'I don't have enough evidence yet of whether or not the student has actually mastered this body of knowledge'. Now that's important because whatever the student has not mastered or whatever information the teacher does not have, then becomes the learning plan that students carry on through the summer.

The difficulty that we've had in the past is that not having this kind of remote learning ubiquitous across the system and having recognizing that there's been a technology gap and a technology divide, the opportunity we have during this pandemic is that we are closing that digital divide. We're closing that technological divide. Our teachers who I give tremendous credit to have been building their capacity to be able to provide instruction, the pedagogy, in very different ways than we did seven weeks ago. That's not going to stop after this pandemic is over. We want to continue to build on that capacity so that we are, as the Mayor has said, providing students with opportunities 24/7 to continue to expand and continue to master the standards. That's going to be the cornerstone of – that is the cornerstone of what we're planning for summer and what summer learning looks like. The nuts and bolts about the who, what, when, and where, those are the models that we're working through based on what the medical advice and the medical situation at the time is.

Mayor: Thank you, Richard. So, Gloria, to your other question. Okay, first of all, the work we're doing to help the homeless, as I said, it was really not that long ago when you think about December when we announced the Journey Home vision. This is the most audacious, ambitious effort in the history of the city to end permanent street homelessness. And the reason we announced it then was that we had seen for three years progress in finally figuring out what it took to get someone off the street, how much work it took, but the fact that it could be done. And as I said, I was pleasantly surprised to hear from Commissioner Banks that even in the months of

March and April, we've seen success getting people to come in off the street and stay off the street because of our amazing outreach workers.

That effort is going to continue, but one of the things the outreach workers always report back is they need more Safe Haven options. So, that's part of what we're going to keep doing. And the 200 beds we announced is a crucial piece of the equation. The right Safe Haven bed in the right places is the way you get someone off the street and if you make it stick, you get them the mental health services, the substance abuse services, whatever it is they need, in a lot of cases that person never goes back to the streets again. That's what we're here to do. So, this is crucial to the big equation, but to the other points you're raising, the shelter system now is being constantly reviewed to make sure that it is safe. Anytime where we need to remove people from shelter, we will, and that's what we've said. We will literally make as many hotel beds available as needed. Any shelter that needs more social distancing, has any challenge that requires more access to hotel beds, they will be there period. And there's a constant review being done to make sure that any time that's needed, it's acted on right away.

But what Commissioner Banks has said as well is that we've got to remember a lot of who people are in shelters need tremendous support. The coronavirus is one challenge, but a lot of them have serious mental health issues and other issues that require a support structure in place and not all of that can easily be transferred to a hotel. So, we're trying to strike that balance, making sure we don't, you know, solve one problem and create another problem, figure out what's the right number of people that should be in any shelter and anybody – anything beyond that, those people go to hotels. So, right now we reached that mark, we talked about 6,000 people who – 6,000 homeless folks in hotel settings. We're going to be adding another thousand this week, going out of shelter into hotels. We will keep adding as needed to that number, but it's not like an abstract number. It's according to the medical needs of folks, the social distancing needs, and what's going to keep people safe the best. Is it to be moved to a hotel or to stay in a shelter, but in many cases just reducing the population in that shelter. So, bottom line is whatever it takes, we're going to do. We have no lack of hotel rooms. When we know we're doing the right thing to put someone in a hotel room, we're going to do it.

Okay. Let me close us up today with just a point about, you know, where we started. Today was about what we owe our kids. Today was a day to recognize what our kids have gone through and how much we have to be there for them. Every adult with a child in your life, you know what I'm talking about. You're there for them all the time. Parents, aunts, uncles, guardians, grandparents, you know, so much of your life is being there for the children you love and all the people who take care of kids in all sorts of other settings as well and people who – the guidance counselors and the folks in foster care, and everyone who helps kids, and, of course, our educators, all feel that passion for protecting our children and helping our children. And we owe our kids real understanding and sensitivity and love in this moment they're going through. But we also have to think about what we owe this whole city right now. And I can tell you what I'm committed to and the whole team here at City Hall and in the City government – we're committed to protecting you, we're committed to making sure that the testing that we need, one way or another, we are going to get this testing to happen in this city. We're going to make sure that people are traced if someone tests positive. We're going to make sure there are hotel rooms available for people who need to be isolated. We have an obligation to you to build the biggest testing and tracing

apparatus this city's ever known, something never been done before, but we're going to do it because that's what we do here in New York City. We create things that have never been seen before. And we're going to restart the city. We're going to do it in a smart way, in a way that's based on the facts and the science, but we are going to restart.

And the last thing I'll say is to remember why this city is the greatest city in the world. It's because of the people. The buildings are great, love the buildings, the cultural institutions. That's wonderful, but it's you that makes this the greatest city in the world. Your strength, your resiliency, your creativity, your entrepreneurship, all of that is going to be called upon now. So, we in leadership owe it to you to build the framework to keep you safe and bring us back. And also, we owe it to you to unleash all that you do, all that you're capable of because when all that energy and passion and ability and creativity comes to the fore, the city will come back, will come back strong, and will even come back better because we're going to address some of the very contradictions that have been laid bare by this crisis. I don't have a question in my mind of the fact that this city is capable of a great and strong comeback. We're going to give you the foundation so you can paint that picture, build that story for the ages. Something great will happen in New York City and you will be a part of it and you will be the architects of it in the months to come.

Thank you, everybody.

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