

## **TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPOINTS RICHARD A. CARRANZA AS SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Well, the new I'm going to give you today is certainly very joyous, very positive. But before I get into today's announcement about the Department of Education, I want to address the tragedy that occurred just a little while ago in Park Slope – and, for Chirlane and I, obviously, this is very personal. This occurred in our neighborhood, very, very close to our home. Here's what we know so far.

A driver struck a group of pedestrians – a family – at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Ninth Street. There were five victims transported to the hospital. I'm very sad to say that two were pronounced dead upon arrival, and both were young children. It's really, really sad what happened today. And three other victims that, thank God, have non-life threatening injuries are now in the hospital. The driver is in NYPD custody. We do not know exactly what happened yet, there's a full investigation underway. But I will state the obvious – this loss of life is tragic and painful for all of us, particularly those of us who are parents. But it's another reminder of why we have to redouble our efforts on Vision Zero to work to the day when this never happens to any family. This is an intersection, again, we know very, very well. We have crossed it many times with Dante and Chiara when they were kids, so this is personal. And we are praying for the families who have gone through this tragedy, and we will do everything we can to help them.

So, as I said, despite that very painful moment, what we have to announce is something really wonderful. And I think everyone here knows, nothing is more important to me than the future of our schools and the needs of our kids, and this is a passion for Chirlane and I in this work. We have felt such a strong commitment to making sure that our school system – the biggest in the country by far – 1.1 million kids – the flagship school system in the nation. We have been focused on making sure we had then best leader.

I want to thank Chirlane for the many, many hours she has put into this effort. I want to thank First Deputy Mayor Dean Fuleihan as well. The three of us acted as a team, and I'm sure we'll get into some of the conversations over the last few days, but suffice it to say we had many, many conversations with Richard and several meals together in the last 48 hours. And I want to thank Chirlane and Dean for all of the energy they put into this process.

Let me tell you about Richard Carranza. And I want to tell you, his story is the story of the American Dream if ever there was one. His grandparents came to the United States from Mexico, settled in Tucson, Arizona. His parents – working-class Americans, hardworking people – his dad, a sheet metal worker; his mom, a hairdresser. Humble origins, but they believed in

education. Also, we're very, very proud of who they were and their heritage. And Richard grew up speaking Spanish at home and learned English for the first time in public school.

Now, Richard, I didn't say this to you before, but I'm going to give you the highest compliment I could possibly give you, because the person in my life who went through that exact same experience was my mother, Maria. And she was the child of immigrants, but she was born here, but never spoke English until she walked into a school building for the first time, and she turned out pretty good. So, I have a special feeling for English-language learners, but what's so beautiful about Richard's story is from the moment he started to experience our public schools – in this case, in Tucson – he blossomed, he was off to a great, great future.

Richard, in everything he's done, has been devoted to children, and he has been a change-agent through his work. And you'll hear when he speaks how much he has a profound understanding of education and what it can do to change the lives of kids and how much we have to keep changing the way we educate to create a fairer society. He did this work in Tucson, he did this work in Las Vegas, in San Francisco, and, most recently, in Houston.

He has been a teacher – for many years was a teacher – a principal, and administrator, and a superintendent of two of the most prominent school systems in America. What we saw in San Francisco – in San Francisco, Richard was the deputy superintendent for three years, and then the superintendent for four more – so, seven years continuous. And what we saw in San Francisco was remarkable, as we were doing our research. And I talked to a number of people in San Francisco who had worked closely with Richard, and the response was uniformly positive.

The beliefs he brings to this work played out very deeply in San Francisco. His focus was on increasing equity. His focus was overcoming the divisions of the past and, at the same time, creating academic rigor. In San Francisco, graduation rates increased substantially on Richard's watch, test scores increased substantially compared to other cities in California. He also did a very impressive job of working to close the achievement gap, and a lot of the biggest increases in test scores were among Latino and African-American students, including many of whom were low income. So, he's had a proven record of someone who can get results while moving an equity agenda, and that certainly is so powerful to us when we think about our core vision of Equity and Excellence.

When he went on to Houston, he knew he was going into a very tough situation – a school district that had been historically underfunded. I will say this gently – a State government that perhaps did not invest all it could have in education. Richard went into a tough situation with that same equity agenda for Houston, and he was just getting into the work when the worst natural disaster in the history of Houston struck with Hurricane Harvey. When you look at Richard

Carranza's leadership in Houston during Hurricane Harvey, you see extraordinary strength, and amazing ability to stay calm, despite the magnitude of the crisis. He is one of the people that helped get Houston back on its feet. And he determined very early on that the school district had to lead the way, and audaciously determined that schools would reopen two weeks after the disaster. Again, we all saw the footage from Houston – it was devastating, the worst flooding the city had ever known. But Richard Carranza said we can't become whole again unless our schools are working, and, for so many families, unless the schools work, the rest of their lives wouldn't be working. So, he got those schools up and running, and he also determined that the schools would be a source of help and support for families in all neighborhoods. So, he made sure that kids could get three meals a day in those schools in the midst of that crisis. He made sure that if family members needed meals, they could come to the schools and get them because he knew that he, as a leader, had an opportunity to serve and to get something done. Because of the sheer magnitude of the school district, he could get something done for Houston that very few others could. He also did a great job of bringing in outside support and outside resources to help the children of Houston during that crisis.

So, I want to commend him for those extraordinary achievements. I also want to say, as a man who has shown a lot of courage as a leader, let's face it, going to the State of Texas means you're going to hit some political headwinds for sure, but Richard Carranza said the same things in Houston, Texas that he said in San Francisco, California. He stood up for the rights of LGBT students, he stood up for the rights of transgender students, he believed every child deserved a great education regardless of what zip code they lived in, and that's the way he has lived wherever he's been.

I will tell you that I've heard his passion, and I've talked to people who have served with him – he is an educator's educator. And I know that the extraordinary men and women who work for the Department of Education will quickly sense that he is a kindred soul and someone who's walked a mile in their shoes, and he's someone who understands our children and our parents. When you think about his life and the life of his family, this is someone who every day will related to the kids he serves and will be able to communicate with the parents who care so deeply about their children's future, and that gives me tremendous confidence.

Let me say a few words in Spanish – my Spanish will not be as good as Richard's Spanish, or Carmen's for that matter, or Chirlane's Spanish, but I'm going to try anyway.

[Laughter]

So, basically, I can't compete with anyone here.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, I want to turn to our First Lady and want to thank her for her deep involvement in this process and for asking all the right questions and helping us get to this day.

Chirlane –

**First Lady Chirlane McCray:** Thank you, Bill. I am delighted to welcome Richard Carranza as our new Schools Chancellor. Welcome, Richard. We're so excited for him to bring his experience, expertise, and energy to New York City. With a proven record of leadership and success in Houston, San Francisco, and Las Vegas, and a tremendous warmth that will help him connect with students, parents, and teachers alike. Richard is uniquely well positioned to build on the progress that we have made here. In many ways, the hallmark of Richard's long career as an educator is his holistic understanding of how children learn – that is so important in New York City where 1.1 million school children of all different backgrounds and experiences come together to learn and to grow.

In San Francisco, he helped add social and emotional metrics to the new district accountability system, and valued restorative approaches to student behavior issues. In Houston, he has worked to strengthen social and emotional supports in underachieving schools, bringing on more nurses and social workers, and patterning with community agencies to serve struggling families, because Richard understands that schools are so much more than just buildings – they are the heart of our communities, a vital resource, and a bridge to opportunity, support and wellness, and not just for students, but their families as well. That's why when the disaster hit Houston last year, in the form of Hurricane Harvey, Richard acted decisively and collaboratively to get the schools up and running right away. He knew that schools would help families and communities recover more quickly. And by providing crisis and trauma training to staff, he made sure that Houston's teachers were better equipped to help children navigate the long-lasting and often hidden effects of devastation. Needless to say, he has a deep understanding and unbridled enthusiasm for what we're doing here with ThriveNYC.

He will be an excellent partner as we fully integrate behavioral health services into our schools. As he has said before, Richard is not interested in system improvement, he is interested in system change, and he understands at a fundamental level that, here in New York City, the vibrant diversity of our school communities is our greatest strength, and love and compassion are our greatest tools. That's why he has been a lifelong champion for the most vulnerable children under his care, including LGBTQ students, immigrants, students with disabilities and mental illness, and victims of bullying. It's why he has consistently elevated women and people of color to senior leadership positions and promoted opportunities for all different kinds of learners,

including those who are learning English in school, as he did. All of this makes Richard the ideal successor for Chancellor Fariña – a public-service powerhouse, whose career has been defined by a love of learning and deep compassion for all of New York City’s students. She has lead with love throughout her entire career, touching countless lives along the way and building a legacy that is well worth building upon.

One of the many qualities that makes Carmen so effective is that she is a storyteller with purpose, and that is Richard as well. He understands the power of a story well told or a song well sung, perhaps because of how his own story, living the American dream has shaped him so profoundly.

En Español –

[First Lady McCray speaks in Spanish]

Richard likes to describe himself as a man of action – someone who does not spend time admiring the problem. I share his sense of urgency as we look ahead to the coming years for New York City public schools, and I look forward to working closely with him to help all of New York City’s children and their families to thrive.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Chirlane – very lovely. I now have the opportunity to introduce the Chancellor. And I’ve introduced Carmen Fariña many times – we were comparing notes earlier since we first met in 2001. And this is going to be one of the last times I get to do it while you’re working for the government, although I have a feeling I’ll see you even after you’re working for the government. But I love talking about her 50-plus years in education, even though she doesn’t like it when I do it. I continue to do it because it’s extraordinary. Our Chancellor Carmen Fariña has lived a life of profound service to the children of this city. There was a day when I talked to her, shortly after the election in 2013, and she told me she was not interested in the role, and then there was a very good day when she told me she reconsidered. And that lead us to spend over four great years together. And, I’ve got to tell you, at the end of this good run, Chancellor, you’ve got a lot to be proud of, and our parents and our kids got to see your heart in your work every single day. And I heard it from them all the time – even heard it from elected officials – how much they understood your passion for the work and they saw the changes you were making, and what an impact it made.

So, this may be one of the last time I get to formally introduce you, but your legacy will surely live on for many, many years – our Chancellor Carmen Fariña.

**Chancellor Carmen Fariña:** Thank you. I couldn't be more thrilled. When you work this hard at something, you want to make sure you're bequeathing what you've done to someone who's like-minded. And as I've had conversations with Richard over the last few days, we started talking about our personal life, and every time he said something, I said – check, we're similar.

[Laughter]

Not only were we both non-English speakers, our families were laborers and they came to the understanding that working with your hands is not a bad thing if that's what you had to do to earn a living for your family. He's also a social studies buff, and I said, oh my God – check.

[Laughter]

He really understands that dual language is the way for many of our children to speak two languages, not to make up just something else. But there's something else that I think is very important that I just really discovered today – I met his wife, Monique, and if there's anything I have to say about this job or any job at this level, that if you don't have someone along your side who shares your enthusiasm, who understands what you're going through, you're really not going to be able to do this job. I've been fortunate to have a man in my life – as much as he says, what time are you getting home today? Three o'clock in the morning? I think Monique understands that and is embracing it. And I think also, when you hear the passion in both of them for this city, you have to love New York City to do well here. You really have to want to be in New York City. We talked Brooklyn – right, guys? I offered to help them find an apartment – nothing in interest, but just because I want them to love Brooklyn as much as I do.

He's an educator's educator. He's nationally recognized by Education Week as a leader to learn from. But in my conversations with him, I also understand that he knows he has a lot to learn. The one thing I have to say about my last four years, I have learned so much more than I knew before, and we have to go into this job as a learner, as well as a teacher.

Richard kept using the words over and over again – this is what's good for the kids. That's what this job is all about – it's about the kids. Then he kept sticking in – well, you know, the parents have to be involved too, they have to know what their responsibilities are and what the kids need. So, empowering parents, making the best principals possible, being innovative – I mean, one of the things many of you have asked and certainly I've considered – there's a lot of work to be done in New York City. No matter how much we did, it's never going to be enough, and a lot of the things that I feel could go deeper are things that he's passionate about as well. So, I also asked him – could I keep a little bit of my job? And he said, anything you want.

[Laughter]

So, I'm not – yeah, I'm leaving the stage. When I talk about retirement this time, it's going to stick, but if there's anything I can do to be a mentor or give advice, I'm open for it. But what I can say, honestly, I can really go and spend a vacation. I really feel comfortable that I am leaving the most difficult job, other than the Mayor's, in the most capable hands that I can imagine, and I'm really, really thrilled that he's going to be the Chancellor. So, there'll be two Chancellors simultaneously for a while, but it's okay with me if it's okay with you.

**Mayor:** You're forgetting something –

**Chancellor Fariña:** En Español –

[Chancellor Carmen Fariña speaks in Spanish]

**Mayor:** *Muchas gracia.*

**Chancellor Fariña:** *De nada.*

**Mayor:** So, I just want to say, as I introduce Richard, the central mission – we talked about this on inauguration day and we talked about it at the State of the City. The central mission is to make this the fairest big city in America. One of the most essential parts of this mission is to make our schools work for all of our children, again, regardless of zip code. If you want to summarize the pillar of education when it comes to making this the fairest big city in America, it is what Equity and Excellence is all about – every child having opportunity, no child being left out because of who they are or where they come from, and that's what I wanted to see in our next Chancellor, and, I'm proud to say, we found him.

So, ladies and gentlemen, the next Chancellor of the New York City public schools, Richard Carranza.

[Applause]

**Incoming Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza:** So, thank you, Mayor de Blasio for that introduction. I also want to thank you First Lady McCray for your words and to one of my educational heroes, Chancellor Fariña, for what you share with us today. I guess for a little while I'm going to be the spare Chancellor – I'm the spare one.

**Chancellor Fariña:** Everything is equal around here.

[Laughter]

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** And, obviously, I'm very honored to be joined by my life partner, my wife, Monique. Thank you for being here. I'd like to share a few words with you this afternoon and just express how incredibly honored I am – the son of a journeyman sheet metal worker and hairdresser from a barrio in Tucson, Arizona who by all accounts should be somewhere in Tucson right now installing sheet metal because that's what my dad did. Yet it was because of these two non-college-educated parents who had no idea what financial was about, had no idea what enrolling in a university was about, had no idea about what a course of study was about, but knew that for their boys – their twins sons – that the path forward had to include an education. So I know that across this incredibly city the city of can-doers, New York City, that there are thousands upon thousands of parents who have the same aspirations that Simon and Dolores Carranza had for their twin boys.

So it is in that spirit that I share with you and aligned with the best tradition of my culture where you honor your *antepasados* – you honor those who came before you – I want to again thank you Mayor de Blasio for this opportunity to serve the 1.1 million children who are the children of the New York City public schools.

With that said, my trajectory has always been that of a teacher. I consider myself a teacher now. Where I used to work with children in classrooms, I now work with adults in bigger environments, and I still make it a point every week to visit classrooms. That's where I find my inspiration. That's where I find my strength, and quite frankly that's where I find the good things that are happening as we think about educating our children.

But make no mistake my friends – education is the cornerstone of our democracy. It is the great equalizer. It is the great empower-er of the next generation, and right now as we speak the 1.1 million children in New York are the future tax payers of New York. They are the future doctors and lawyers and teachers. They are the future mayors. They are the future of this vibrant city that is like no other in the United States. So, it is a great honor that we have every day to serve those children in the best way that we can.

I will tell you that I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to my school board in Houston, Texas who gave me an opportunity to come to Houston and serve. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Mayor Sylvester Turner in Houston who was a true partner, and I want to thank them for the opportunity. But just as I one day longed to serve more than the 30 students in my classroom and serve a school for a students as a principal and then longed to have an impact on more than just one school of children but a district of children, I stand before you here – or sit before you here –



with no greater opportunity than the largest school system in America in the greatest city in America the most diverse city in America – New York City.

So, I don't take that lightly, but I take that with every ounce of conviction that the equity agenda championed by our mayor is my equity agenda. And when I considered this opportunity there is no daylight between Mayor de Blasio and myself in terms of what we believe in, what our aspiration are for the children of New York City. So I think when you have that kind of synergy it makes sense, and that's what I hope to be part of this team that will continue to empower teachers as Chancellor Fariña has done, continue to talk about not arming teachers with anything but great professional development and great opportunities to move within the systems to serve other students and many students.

I hope to move the conversation so that we're not talking about bathrooms and we are talking about classrooms. I hope to a part of the solution and part of the innovation that has started, that is gaining momentum, and that we can actually accelerate what we're doing in New York City. But I do have a message directly for the children of New York City – if you're a student who does not yet speak English, we hear you. If you're a dreamer, we hear you. If you are formerly not being served, we will serve you. And if you are parents, we are going to take care of your children as if you are taking care of them yourselves. That is our mission. That is what we're here for, and I am very honored to follow a great chancellor but more importantly to work with a great mayor in America's largest city.

[Incoming Chancellor Carranza speaks in Spanish]

So with that, very happy to be here Mr. Mayor and happy to answer any question we may have.

**Mayor:** Well done, well done. *Bien hecho.*

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Muchas gracias.

**Mayor:** Okay, who have questions for the new chancellor? Go ahead.

**Question:** Wondering, you know, we all know that there was someone else who is supposed to take this job and made a decision not to. Can you sort to speak to your decision making process? Was this a hard decision for you? Did you struggle with it or was it kind of an easy one? And secondly, what will the new Chancellor's salary be?

**Mayor:** The chancellor's salary will be the same as his base pay in Houston. The decision was straightforward. Richard Carranza has done amazing work and I will give you this much of the payout of the last few days because I think it speaks volumes.

The – on the Wednesday afternoon last week I called Richard Carranza and I said, look we had great process with you, this has gone on for weeks. We first made contact well over a month ago. I said we had a great process with you, but it came down to two people and we made a different choice. But I told him how much I admired him, how much I was impressed. I said it was a very tough choice. And I said, Richard, I really liked and I hope our paths will cross again someday.

24 hours later.

[Laughter]

I did not know that I could predict things that quickly, that was quite amazing.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Man of your word.

**Mayor:** Yeah.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Man of your word.

**Mayor:** Yeah, really called that one.

24 hours later I was on the phone with Richard Carranza. As soon as things changed I immediately reached out to Richard. I said someday is today, I want to reengage you immediately, he agreed. This was about 5 o'clock on Thursday.

I said how soon can you be in New York, he said I'll be there by Saturday, came in around noon on Saturday, and we spent all of Saturday and all of Sunday in intensive discussions along with Chirlane and Dean, and a very, very fruitful discussions, we covered everything and anything. And it was obviously important to have Richard talk to Carmen, and they had a great conversation by phone, and Carmen strongly after that urging me to go ahead and we felt very, very confident, again after probably, if I'm counting, well over 12 hours of discussion.

And I made an offer at 10:00 last night and sitting at the dining room table at Gracie Mansion and Richard agreed immediately. And here we are, I just want to emphasize one point that Richard made, he was hired by the schoolboard down in Houston, that's how their system runs,

they don't have Mayoral Control Education. But he had a tremendously close working relationship with Mayor Sylvester Turner in Houston.

I had a very powerful conversation with Mayor Turner a few hours ago. And although he was obviously saddened that Richard was coming here, he understood fully was very professional and very understanding, but he immediately wanted me to know what a good man Richard Carranza is and how positive of a working relationship they had and what an honest and consistent person he is, what an extraordinary public servant he is. And that was very important to hear from my fellow mayor.

So that's exactly how it went down, but it was this close to automatic that the first thing I did was to reach out to Richard.

**Question:** A question for Mr. Carranza, the decision to take the job?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Well, I think, I've been an admirer of Mayor de Blasio since he was first selected. And what he has talked about is equity agenda and what he has talked about in terms of education is you cannot have a world class city without a world class public education system and many times we admire the issue or we will talk about the issue, but there are very few times where you actually put resources and you actually put effort, and the Mayor has in every one of his comments, something about how important education is. And you have Mayor here in New York walks the talk.

So for me, when there was an opportunity to have a conversation about education and I actually got to sit across the table from and have the conversation, and have a robust conversation about various topics, quickly realized that we are synergistically on the same page in many respects, but especially as it pertains to empowering and equity for communities. So when the conversations became real, and the offer was made, it was very easy for me to say absolutely, I'd like to be part of this movement that is happening in New York City to empower through an equity lens all of our different communities.

You know, there was a question that was asked as well about, you know, why now? And how did you know? And I will just say this, I am who I am, and I – my brother and I the incredible opportunity to be with my father when he passed away. And the three things my father said to my brother and I were, number one, take care of each other. Number two take care of your mother. And number three, he said, the only thing I have to leave you is our name, so don't spoil that name for anyone. So when Mayor de Blasio extended his hand, and said, I would like you to be the next Chancellor of Schools in New York City, and we shook hands, that handshake is

more powerful than any contract. That's my name, that's my word, and I promised him that we will work tirelessly to make the equity agenda real for all students in New York.

**Mayor:** Amen. Okay, I saw a hand, Melissa.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, given that Mr. Carranza was already your runner up for the job the first time. What was it that you were trying to confirm this past weekend spending so many hours with him, was it just – want to make sure he wasn't going to back out, [inaudible]

**Mayor:** It's – this was about the kind of conversation that you have when you are talking about working together for four years and everything I had seen previously I liked, but I wanted to go issue by issue. I wanted to understand what had happened over the past four years and how it informed what we are going to do going forward. I wanted him to understand the challenges. I really wanted to make sure that we were fully aligned and I thought it was fantastic conversation. It was one of those conversations with each passing hour I grew more and more confident. So, you know, I think everything happens for a reason in life and I feel that we ended up in a very, very good place.

Marcia?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, with all due respect to the new Chancellor, I [inaudible] if there was anybody in the Department of Education you could have promoted to further your equity agenda, much [inaudible] promoted James O'Neill to replace Commissioner Bratton?

**Mayor:** Very fair question, Marcia, and I certainly thought about that. I told you we had a nationwide search, and I mean a nationwide search. We looked at many dozens of candidates over the last few months and talked extensively to experts around the country and of course we looked at people in the DOE now, we looked at people who had been in the DOE, but in terms of what I wanted, the kind of ability to move the Equity and Excellence agenda, and the ability to play at this level.

This is a grueling, grueling job being Chancellor to this school system and I always say to Carmen Farina, I don't know what you eat for breakfast in the morning, but I want to eat it too. I don't know how she has always found the energy she has, but to do this day and day out, you have to of very, very special talent. You have to have tremendous energy, tremendous commitment.

And to me, when I looked around, I saw that in Richard. I saw the ability he had to succeed in city after city. Very important indicator of the ability to bring success here, but it just comes

down to evaluating who can put all the pieces together. I mean, Marcia, this is an incredibly complex job being Chancellor of the biggest school system in the country and very few people I think have the ability to put all the pieces together. Carmen Fariña was one of them, and Richard Carranza is going to be the next.

Yes?

**Question:** Can I first ask Carmen a question and then – When you say there is going to be two Chancellors, what does that mean? Like, when are you leaving? Is this the kind of side project that you did actually before you came out of retirement?

**Mayor:** Can I start for clarification and then pass to Chancellor? This is – I don't want you to misunderstand from the beginning. Chancellor is on board until the end of the month, end of March, we are working out the exact start date for the new Chancellor. Some details have to be wrapped up in Houston. So they may overlap a little bit. We certainly want to leave room for that. Go ahead.

**Chancellor Carmen Fariña:** Yeah, that's basically it. You know, because I really care about this job so much, there is one little project that I started, which is the Co-located High School Campuses, that I would like to stay involved in. It is a little piece of the pie, but we've had so many good results with 25 campuses, 154 schools that I asked, Richard would he mind if I stayed involved in that little work, and he said it would be his pleasure.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Absolutely.

**Chancellor Carmen Fariña:** So, that's the only project I expect to be involved in.

**Question:** And I was just going to ask the new Chancellor, you've had experience in urban school districts, but obviously New York is in a league of its own. You don't know New York, your predecessor knows New York schools quite well, how are you planning to actually learn about these [inaudible] schools of 1.1 million kids, and then actually transform the schools –

**Mayor:** We have more than 800 schools.

**Question:** Sorry – Carmen has been to 800. There are 1,800.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Correct. Yeah, it's a great question. I think, again, I am who I am, and one of the things I was taught from infancy almost is you respect those that have come before you, so I'm incredibly honored that Carmen Fariña is going to, but wants to, be a part of

my transition and helping me to understand what is happened and why has it happened and why is there a reason. I think that's an invaluable opportunity that quite frankly in many transitions of large systems you don't get that opportunity.

That being said, when you look at public education in America especially in urban environment there are some similarities that exist across the country. So everyone talks about graduation rates, but do we always talk about college persistence rates and how does that relate to what you do in schools? Equity is an issue, and I will tell you that from the work that we did in San Francisco carrying onto Houston, when you look at schools that by whatever metrics are quote unquote – and that's one of the last times you'll hear me use that term in reference to schools – my experience has been, again, now in four different states in four different school systems is that the schools just don't decided to be underperforming. There are issues. There are situations. There are structural inequities that lead to under performance.

So, I refer to schools as historically underserved because schools that are historically underserved if you by the proposition that if they're underserved then we if we're a system can choose to actually serve them. That is common in terms of how you support schools – what are the systems and structures? I think what is also incredibly important here in New York City and part of the work that I've been able to be part of my history is really looking at social-emotional learning and mental social wellbeing of students in schools and quite frankly the adults that serve our students in schools.

We know that by the very nature of living in an urban environment there are some modicum of trauma or stress that students undergo, yet in the past perhaps it wasn't recognized as a legitimate part of educating students. What I love about what's happening in New York – and I know that the first lady her visionary work is the thrive movement in New York is actually setting the pace for what's happening across America – so imagine if we can ensure that students are emotionally and mentally health while they're also being rigorously challenged to develop academic press and we wrap that around with really great fine arts and opportunities to enrich, I think that's the kind of student we want to graduate from our schools and be a resident of New York.

So, those things are just incredibly, incredibly attractive to me because they go to the core of who I am as an educator, but those are issues that are also prevalent across other large urban environments. So I think there's a lot that can be brought to New York, but that being said there's only one New York – *una grand manzana* – and that's just New York right here.

[Laughter]

**Mayor:** Excellent. David?

**Question:** And just to follow up on that, I wanted to ask how much time you've actually spent in New York City and where you've gone, where you plan on living.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Again, we're going to pick Carmen Fariña's brain about good places to live. Obviously, there's a lot to do, and I also want to mention the Mayor has mentioned this as well, I still have some responsibilities to fulfill, so I'm looking forward to getting back there and working with my board to plan when those dates are going to look like. I have to say that Monique has spent much more time in New York because of her professional activities than I have, but I will tell you the time that I've been in New York I've absolutely enjoyed not necessarily going to the tourist places, but just getting to know how the city feels and how it's organized and where are the neighborhoods or the boroughs, so I'm looking forward to getting to know the city and making the city mine.

**Mayor:** [Inaudible]

**Question:** [Inaudible]

[Incoming Chancellor Carranza Speaks in in Spanish]

[Laughter]

**Mayor:** *Ingles!*

[Laughter]

It's good stuff. We want it in English.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** So the question was we understand that you like music, and we've heard rumors that every now and then you'll play and sing. So absolutely since a child my father was a guitar player and you know as a kid wanting to stay up with my dad and my uncles and they would say the only people that get to stay up are people playing instruments, so you have to go bed. So, I learned to play guitar. And I'm a mariachi musician, and I've been a mariachi museum since about the age of six, and I also played the saxophone in the band, but mariachi is where my passion has been. I worked my way through college gigging as a mariachi, and there may be a video or two that may be floating out there in the universe of me singing. And you know if I'm asked to sing, chances are I'm going to sing. I'm asked to play? Chances are I'm going to sing. If I'm not asked to sing or play, chances are I'm going to sing and play.

[Laughter]

And so the question was, have I ever sung for the mayor, and the answer is no. I've actually sang for the Mayor and the First Lady.

[Laughter]

When we crossed this topic they said you really do sing – absolutely – well too bad we don't have a guitar. I said Mr. Mayor don't you worry, we'll do it a cappella. And the song that dedicated to the First Lady on behalf of the Mayor was a song called [inaudible]. So I sang it to him, I hope it was okay.

**Mayor:** It was fantastic.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Some brownie point for you Mr. Mayor?

**Mayor:** Yes, it felt very special.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Great.

**Mayor:** But we're not going to do it here – we're going to give you a chance to have a separate debut.

**Question:** [Inaudible] in New York City schools or are they already graduated?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** So yes, I have two daughters. They don't live in new York – they don't live in Texas. My oldest daughter is a senior in college, and my other daughter lives with her mom in Arizona.

**Mayor:** Okay, way back?

**Question:** Sorry to take this in a different direction.

**Mayor:** We're only doing mariachi question at this point.

[Laughter]

**Question:** Where are the areas where there was a little bit of daylight? What were the areas in your conversation where you have something going in New York City and you chancellor-to-be



Carranza were – that's no something you've done, not something you've particularly thought was the right direction, what were the areas of tension in the conversation.

**Mayor:** I'll start and say I don't think there was a lot of tension. I think there was a lot of alignment. You know, I feel very urgent that we have to keep building on what we've done, and I feel that dynamic you feel when there is a term limit that I think I can – help me count here, we've got three years, nine months, and 25 days or 24 days to get a whole lot done. And I feel urgency, so I want to see more and take what Carmen Fariña started and super charge it and go as far as we possibly can. So, to me that was my question to Richard, how much can we get done how fast?

And the good news was that he shared a sense of urgency and had some real experience particularly in his time in San Francisco in moving a change agenda at real intense speed. That was – there wasn't tension, but that was like the challenge if you will that we talked about – but philosophically I don't think there was an area of meaningful disagreement.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** I would second that. I think philosophically we are completely aligned now. You know, I just got here, so as you know I kind of lift the hood and look under the hood and really understand why is it we are doing certain things, why are is it that we're not doing certain things, and I get my hands around that I think there's going to be more robust conversations about perhaps maybe we take a little more divergent path or we stay on the course we're on. But I do want to say it's important, and if there's one thing the Mayor and I talked, and the First Lady and I talked a lot about was how do we use data to drive some of the decision we're doing?

But, and again I want to be really careful about this, I am not ever advocating that we should have a testing culture. That's just anathema to – in my perspective, from my perspective – to educating the whole child. But I do think that you need to have some indicators, you need to know and be able to have a pulse on how are you progressing. So I'm really looking forward to understand how we do that here in New York and as the Mayor has said there's a finite time so we don't want to waste on minute of that to actually start accelerating and continue to accelerate the great work that Carmen Fariña and her team have already begun here in New York.

**Mayor:** Yes?

**Question:** There's been a – New York City is known as the most segregated racially and economically school system in the country and there's been a lot of conversations in this room and outside of this room about how important that is and what this City can do about that and what the Schools Chancellor can do about that. Do you have any thoughts on tackling

segregation from the position of Schools Chancellor, and how much of a focus will that be for you?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** So again, I'm – I just got here but I can tell you that in every community that I've lived and worked in segregation and integration are issues, it comes with living in large urban systems and patterns of where people choose to live, where they choose to spend their time contributes to a lot of these types of issues. I firmly believe that it is not the school districts – within the school districts purview in and of itself to actually solve some of those big issues.

But I do think we have a conversation to have and I do think that we have the opportunity to be part of a broader salutation that is actually much more citywide and city based. I know that Mayor de Blasio, in some of the conversations that we've had, we've touched upon that and I can't tell you, again I just got here, but I can't tell you what that's going to look like.

But I can tell you that if you're talking about access and equity for all students you have to talk about all of the potential artifacts that go with that kind of a conversation and having an integrated school district, and quite frankly, you talk about integrated school districts you talk about integrated cities. So, it's a broader conversation than that. But, I know it fits within equity and access.

**Mayor:** In the back.

**Question:** Thank you and welcome. I'm wondering if I were a parent of a special needs person or child I might be concerned because there were big investigations in Texas and Houston that thousands of children were denied their special-ed services for budget reasons of what have you. I know there was a lot of finger pointing with that in various directions, but can you help us understand why parents of special needs children should – how they should be feeling about this and what you can do to make them feel comfortable?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Sure. So, thank you. So, I'm going to give context by talking about California first. So when I arrived in California, in San Francisco as the Deputy Superintendent, within two weeks of arriving in San Francisco I went to the superintendent and asked to do a special education audit because my philosophy is that all too many times special education and students with disabilities – we talk about special education as a program and it is not a program, it's a service. And the best environment, not only by law, but by best practice for a student with disabilities is in a mainstream classroom, by in large. So how we build that capacity to give students the full array of access to the curriculum is incredibly important. And in

that situation it was very evident that there was a program – programmatic approach rather than a service approach.

We absolutely revolutionized, or turned it upside down what we were doing in San Francisco. That was directly related to the work that I led in San Francisco, so I would actually say to parents that I am a great champion of all students but particularly of students that don't always get the attention that they need.

I think one of the other things that you have to look at when you're looking at students with disabilities or students that are being categorized as students with disabilities is the over-identification of certain student groups. Again, in San Francisco we noticed that African-American male students were eight times more likely to be identified as special education students. And either you believe that it's their biologically, physiologically, genealogically special-ed students or it's the system that's actually not working in their behalf. We changed that. We were able to lower the over-identification and change that aspect that was very problematic.

Now moving to Texas, when I arrived in Texas almost upon my arrival in Texas there was some great reporting that was done by a reporter with the Houston Chronical, I believe now here in New York. And what he had found was that there was a systematic artificial cap that was at the state level. So in other words the agency at the state level was penalizing school districts if they identified too many students with disabilities. Now, again, as a new superintendent in Texas and a fresh set of eyes once – once that was brought to my attention we immediately acted. Again we called for a special education audit to come and give us some third party professional insight to what was happening.

But we didn't wait for that. We held community meetings with parents. I held community meetings as the superintendent with teachers of special education. And in those meetings I didn't allow anyone else. It was the superintendent and teachers. So there was no team. I wanted to hear from teachers. We had the meetings with parents, with principals. That informed some immediate changes that we made to programming, professional development, structuring, and those reforms are ongoing right now in Houston.

And most recently the United States Department of Education civil rights has issued some guidance to the state department – the Texas Education Agency, around those issues that the state agency had with artificial caps for school districts.

So, in every one of those – every one of those positions I have championed the rights of students with disabilities, really fought to empower parents, have clear processes, we've even hired

ombudspersons so that parents don't have to go get an advocate, they have somebody right on staff that can help them navigate the process.

So I would say to parents in New York City that in your new chancellor, as I know with the current chancellor, you have a champion for all students including students with disabilities.

**Mayor:** Yes?

**Question:** Mayor, over the weekend you called for an outright ban on plastic bags –

**Mayor:** Let's do this. We're going to do this. I'm going to take other questions later on in the week, but let's do this now.

**Question:** Did you sign a contract with the City?

**Mayor:** I can answer that. No. We don't do contracts.

**Question:** So, he didn't have to sign in blood or anything like that?

**Mayor:** No, we don't do blood either.

[Laughter]

Okay, Bridget?

**Question:** Welcome, Chancellor Carranza.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Thank you.

**Question:** You talked about how you make it a policy to go and visit classrooms, something the Chancellor Fariña beamed at when you said. I'm wondering, what is it that you look for when you're going to classrooms? Why do you do that and what's – what are you trying to find out when you're doing that?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Great question. So, number one it's for my mental health because that always is a safe spot for me. That's where I originally started by career, so a classroom just feels comfortable, it feels where I should be. But number two, you can read many reports, you can do a literature search about effective classrooms and effective schools and it can all be very beautifully written, but until you walk over that threshold and actually feel that

environment, and you feel how – how do adults interact with each other, how do adults interact with children, how do children interact with each other? What do you see on the walls? What do you see – how are you greeted when you come into a classroom? Are the clean? Is the school clean? Do they have a sense of pride? When you talk to teachers, do they feel – or do they have a sense that they're empowered and they have a voice in the decision making? What is the curriculum look like? It is, you know, 1970s or is it cutting edge and what are students – all of those things are probably reportable in a report but they are absolutely front and center when you walk into a classroom.

So, for me, it's my mental health but number two, it's for me – I get to – I get to experience what that environment is in a school. And you can't do it unless you're in a classroom. And I will tell you that my motto is, one Chancellor in the field is worth three in the seat.

**Chancellor Fariña:** I just have to put a disclaimer. I did not rehearse him for that answer.

[Laughter]

**Mayor:** That – Carmen, that is in the vein of great minds think alike. Go ahead Bridget, we'll follow up.

**Question:** Follow-up, there has been some criticism from folks outside, education advocated who wanted to have more of a stake in this process. But this is the process that has played out. You're not new to a new place, so you've had to, you know, get the lay of the land. So how will you go about sort of understanding who's involved with the system? And, you know, who feels like their a stakeholder? Who wants to have a say? Potentially reaching out to some of those people who felt like they needed – should have had more of a say?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Absolutely, great question. So I've already mentioned that I'm going to tap Chancellor Farina's vast memory and rolodex about who does she know that I should probably be meeting with. I know Mayor de Blasio and the First Lady and the First Vice Mayor have talked about as well a list of people that I'm going to go out and meet.

But then I'm going to kind of guide my way as well. And I want to meet with, for example, I want to meet with parent groups. I want to meet with some of the stakeholder groups in the City of New York. Who they are, I will find out.

But I also want to meet with the arts organizations. I am a huge believer in the integration of arts. You have to integrate – you have to educate the whole child. So I want to know who are the movers and shakers in New York City around arts education.

I want to meet with philanthropy in New York City and talk to them about not why should you be working with us, but why can you – how can you afford not to work with the 1.1 million future residents in New York City. I know that when I most recently entered Houston, I went on a three-month listen-and-learn tour where I went into neighborhoods and listened to parents so that there would be some sort of listen-and-learn opportunity here as well. But, more than anything, I want to be able to connect with the people. Again, one Chancellor in the field is worth three in the seat.

**Mayor:** Amen. Just one more point, Bridgett – look, I understand anyone who says we want input, but, I want to remind everyone, there's 8.5 million New Yorkers and they have 8.5 million different opinions, and you have to be honest about – you can seek a lot of input, but, in the end, because of mayoral control of education, I'm responsible for the well-being of 1.1 million kids. I have to make a decision, and I'm not going to make the best decision by crowdsourcing it, I'm going to make the best decision by using my experience and my values and talking to people who I have come to trust over time to get their insights, and choose a Chancellor who I think can do the whole job – and it's a really, really tough job – extraordinarily complex job. I saw this in Carmen Fariña – that she had the whole package – and we've all seen that play out for four years, and that certainly informed the way I went about this approach as well. So, I get why people say we want input, but I want people to think about that. If everybody wants input, where does that lead to? There's no way to square all of the different views, all of the different philosophies. Ultimately, we have mayoral control for a reason, and I have to decide, and I have to take on the responsibility for the people.

Go ahead, Juliet –

**Question:** Since you were speaking about the arts, and you play mariachi music, what role does that play in your professional life and the life of the students that [inaudible] district?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Great question – so, in my personal life, it's – as we sit here answering questions, I have a song going through my head – it's a narrative. It tends to calm me. It tends to invigorate me. It's one of the passions that Monique and I share – is music. And it's not just mariachi music, but, more than that, I think as a newly minted bilingual social studies teacher in Tucson, Arizona, when I got the school that I taught in, I realized that there was an absence of arts in the school, culturally relevant arts. So, I also started a youth mariachi program in that school. And I'll tell you why that was important – by the way, it still is in existence today, over 25 years later it's still in existence. But the reason that was so important was not to produce professional mariachi musicians, the whole point was to get students to understand that – by the way, do you like wearing that uniform? That costume? Oh yeah, we love it. Do you like going

and performing in places that you've never been? Oh, we love it. Then the price of admission is that you must be eligible, you must not have any academic disciplinary issues, and, by the way, when we would go out and perform, any honorarium that we had would be put into a scholarship fund so that when students graduated, they had a modest college scholarship to go on. Our graduation rates were almost 100 percent. We didn't have kids that dropped out because they had something – you know, it's important for students to read and to write, but it's also important for students to read and write about something, and the arts is what gave them that passion. So, I'm a big believer in that. And I'll tell you, you know, in college, where you're making ends-meet, and while some of my colleagues were flipping burgers or valeting cars – and there's nothing wrong with that – I got to put on my mariachi [inaudible] and go play at a wedding or go play at a [inaudible] and gig my way through college. So, there are some intrinsic benefits and there are also some real practical benefits for students having –

**Mayor:** We want to urge all New York City public school students to gig their way through college.

[Laughter]

That's a new phrase we'll be using. Go ahead, Rich.

**Question:** So, I wonder if we can take it back to last Wednesday and Thursday when you got the one call that you weren't being picked. Did you hear about the Miami 180 before you got the phone call from the Mayor? And, if so, what was going through your mind?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** I heard it through Mayor de Blasio when – I have a day job.

[Laughter]

So, as I was out doing presentations, I had a speaking engagement that day, I was in schools – a number of things – and when I checked my phone after speaking – one of my speaking engagements, sure enough I had a phone call and a text from Mayor de Blasio – please call me. And when I called him, he broke the news to me, and, of course, we've not looked in the rearview mirror ever since, we've only looked ahead. You were breaking news that day, sir.

**Mayor:** Hey, the whole thing's come around.

Yes?

**Question:** Mr. Carranza, how do you plan to work with the community education councils? To what extent will they be involved in your decision making? And do you think mayoral control is effective?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Well, again, I'm looking forward to meeting him. I'm looking forward to having conversation about what the role is and how the role functions. All of my experience [inaudible] has been in a school board governance environment. This is my first experience with a role that's mayoral control, so I can't tell you what that's going to look like or, you know, whether – I can't tell you about it. What I can tell you is it has been so incredibly powerful to be able to sit at a table and talk shop, and take philosophy, and talk about educating students with the person who is going to hire you, and the person who's broader agenda this is a major part of, and to have synergy, for me, just eliminates a lot of the need, I think, to kind of navigate some of the other politics that sometimes happens. I'm extremely excited about this. I'm extremely excited about what's happening in New York, and I am just really excited about kicking the tires on this new relationship and seeing how far we can go down the road.

**Mayor:** Amen. Who has not gone yet? Anyone not gone yet?

**Question:** Hi, Chancellor. New York City has, I think, about 100,000 homeless students. I'd love to hear about your work in Houston and your thoughts about how to best serve them.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Great, thank you. So, obviously, homeless students are one of the categories of students that are at-risk students. And we know that if you look at any environment, you're going to have issues that are particularly exacerbated in an urban environment – issues of intergenerational poverty, issues of food deserts, issues of incarceration, issues of homelessness. In particular, with homeless students, I'm really excited about the community schools approach that is blossoming here as part of the movement around Thrive in New York, where you can connect students and families with resources that exist in the communities. I don't know the exact number, but I do know that New York probably per capita has the greatest number of community-based organizations and effective community-based organizations. So, if we create an effective environment and an infrastructure where we're able to connect homeless students in particular with those organizations that can provide not only housing but can provide training, can provide meals, can provide sustenance for those families, then we can actually solidify that family unit and help them be successful. Most recently in Houston, I had a tremendous experience – and, unfortunately, we're still going through that as a result of Hurricane Harvey – imagine an entire city where you have swaths of neighborhoods where every single house now has been destroyed. There's not a single house left. And where do those families go? And where do those students go? And how do those students get supported on top of the fact that they've undergone trauma? So, how do we support them to work through the



trauma that they've experienced. It's given me a whole other level of really trauma-informed supports for homeless students. I know that Chancellor Fariña and I know that City of New York has done incredible work around providing that kind of support system. And I know Chancellor Fariña's team has been very involved with that. I look forward to learning more, but it is definitely one of those issues, which I think we have to pay attention to.

**Mayor:** And I also want to say, I know the question was asked in very good faith, but I just want to clarify that I think the phrase may be a little misleading. We have a huge and real problem of young people who are in our shelter system that is fewer than half the number you talked about – the remaining is families that are doubled up, tripled up in secure housing – things that are very real and very pertinent – but I don't want people to have the impression that that's the number of kids in shelter because it's a very different number.

Okay, who has not gone yet? Anyone not gone? Okay, let's go for round two –

**Question:** Chancellor, I'm wondering, you know, while there have been steady gains in reading and math scores, and the graduation rate has steadily ticked up, do you have a philosophy of making more rapid change? Is there a way to take chronically “underperforming” schools and improve them more quickly?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** So, I think one of the things we have to keep in mind is that there's no magic bullet. There's no program, there's no canned program – it all goes back to rolling up your sleeves and being very attentive to keeping the work, the work, and the work always is students at the center. Our approach, which I'm really excited about – what I've read about the renewal schools and what's happening with renewal schools. What I would say is that, in my experience, if you really want to create conditions for historically underserved schools in historically underserved communities to accelerate, you have to pay attention to six things – and I can give you the research base, but [inaudible] has written a lot about this, Doug Reeves has written a tremendous amount about this as well – but there are six things that you must pay attention to. Number one – you must pay attention to the leadership in the school, and the leader must have the capacity to lead the change and create the environment that you want. So, leadership is important. The second characteristic, or the second bucket of work you have to pay attention to is teaching. So, who are the teachers? And how are the teachers being supported to build capacity? And if you think about how we talk about accountability in America, especially in some of the movements that get a lot of press – we talk about, it's all about accountability. How are we going to hold ourselves accountable? But rarely do we talk about building capacity for what you want to accomplish, because if you build capacity, accountability will come. So, teaching and teachers are very, very important. My philosophy is, I want teachers that want to be at that school, with those children, not necessarily teachers that long for the children they used to

have, or long for the children they wish they could have had. I want teachers to work with the students that they have. I want them to love them. I want them to push them. And I want them to make sure they're going to keep them moving forward. The third bucket is your curriculum. So, what is a curriculum? Now, I love dinosaurs, but I don't want to have a dinosaur lesson in all five grade levels, right? So you have to look at your curriculum – what are you teaching? Why are you teaching it? Is it aligned to the standards? And how do you know that students are actually mastering what they supposed to be mastering. The fourth thing is, how do you organize your school? So, is your school organized for instructional press? Are things purposeful? Are things joyful? Now, here's a concept – watch out – is learning joyful in a school? And there seems to be this notion that if it's academic press and it's really rigorous, it can't be joyful. I disagree. The student that's building a robot is going to have a lot of joy, but it's still going to be rigorous if you want to make that robot do what you want it to do. So, how is the school organized to really have joyful learning that's rigorous. The fifth is critical – wraparound services, social emotional support, and it's critical because we know that students and families don't always have the conditions that are ideal, so when you don't have those conditions – I'm not asking teachers to be the social worker and I'm not asking teachers to be the mental health experts, but teachers should know that there is way when they've identified some triggers, they've identified some evidence that a student may have some needs – who can they connect with the get resources to serve that student and, in some cases, the family? Social-emotional learning is critically important. In San Francisco, it's how we were able to reduce our suspension rate by over 50 percent once we put our mind to it. So, that's important – that exists in New York City's public schools. Restorative practices as part of a restorative justice approach – so, that's the fifth, and that's critical. And then, the sixth is not going to be a surprise to you – parent empowerment. Now, I will say to you right now, I'm not an advocate of parent engagement alone. And some of you may say, what do you mean? You don't believe in engaging parents? It's an awfully low bar. We can all engage parents – have the student not get into that after school program that they wanted to get into – I guarantee you the parent will be engaged.

[Laughter]

Have the student not get into a specialty program, I guarantee you the parent will be engaged. Engagement is a very low bar. But when you empower parents – how do we empower parents to be advocates for their children? Because we know that there are parents who are advocates for their children – those children get what they need. So, do parents know what they should be taking to teachers at parent-teacher conference night? Do parents know what their child should know at the end of this school year or at the end of this semester? Or at the end of the unit? Do parents know how to access information to make good decisions for their children. Knowledge is power – empowerment is important. So, when you look at all six of those buckets of work, in my

experience, you can provide the infrastructure for schools to accelerate, particularly school in historically underserved communities and in historically underserved environments.

**Mayor:** Well, I want to add also a very simple point – when you think about what we’ve been trying to do with renewals, what Richard did in San Francisco, some of the same concepts we’ve applied, but he’s had tremendous success there, and I want to say this is an exciting part of this equation. I think he figured out how to do somethings with some schools that were really troubled in San Francisco, turn them around. Not only make them better but make them schools, as you said, ended up with, you know, schools that used to be such that a lot of parents didn’t want to go near them. Then within a number of just a few years these were schools that had a waitlist for kids to get into them. So, it’s really great that Richard has had experience on that particular challenge. Now let’s face it, it’s a much bigger scale here and that’s – that’s one of the things that Chancellor Farina and I always had to deal with was we’re trying to deal with a lot of things simultaneously. But the model in San Francisco is one I think we can learn a lot from.

Okay, Erin?

**Question:** Can you tell us what you’re planning to deal about the ban on plastic bags? Are you –

**Mayor:** Yeah I’d really like to just talk about the new Chancellor today and I’ll be talking to you guys the next day or two on everything else.

Go ahead.

**Question:** You alluded to a movement that gets a lot of press, I’m assuming you’re talking about schools – school reform –

**Mayor:** Could it be?

**Question:** Charter school movement, I have some sense that, you know, you’ve called for charter to serve all kids which is certainly what you’re aiming at here, but New York City has quite a large and politically influential charter school sector that the Mayor has had plenty of encounters with. How are you planning to approach that sector?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** So, I think we talk about the wrong things. So, you know, the issue are you pro-charter, are you anti-charter, you know, I’m pro really good schools. And I’ve seen traditional public schools that have done a great job educating kids, I’ve seen some charter schools that have done a great job at educating kids, and vice-versa I’ve seen traditional public schools that have not served kids well and charters that have not served kids well. So I think if

we stop following the red – you know going for the red herring and actually talk about, you know, peel the onion, what are we talking about? We're talking about children. So when you talk about children and how do you provide great experience for children, I think then you have a platform upon which you can have conversations that directly related back to empowering children and communities.

That being said, I am a vocal, veracious, absolutely passionate supporter of public schools. Why? Because when – think about my parents, who were both bilingual by the way English, Spanish, they were first generation. They made a conscious decision that they would teach their two children only Spanish at home, and they trusted that when they sent their children, their *mihijos*, to the public school system that they public schools would teach them English and that they would become bilingual. Think of the faith that those parents put in the hands of the public schools. And that the faith was actually realized.

That's why I'm such a supporter of public schools and I think that, you know, we can do really well. And I think in New York City, with 1,800 schools there is a plethora of incredible schools that are doing well by kids.

**Mayor:** Amen.

Okay, Willie?

**Question:** You were in Houston just about a year and a half, a lot of plans begun there but not finished. What do you say to the kids and the parents and the teachers there about that? And what would you say to parents in New York who wonder if you're a guy who follows through given that you're leaving there so quickly?

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Yes I spent – great question – so I spent, you know, close to what 15, 16 years in Arizona, I spent another six years in Las Vegas, seven years in San Francisco, and yes, a year and a half in Houston. Although I didn't know that Chancellor Fariña was going to want to retire, but so you know, that was beyond my control. So I'm not a school district jumper. I spent time in the places that I've been. But every single step of my career I've been in urban environments.

So when I left the classroom where I served 30 students because I wanted to have a bigger impact, I became a high school principal so I could have an impact on the school. And then as a high school principal I said well, I'd like to have a bigger impact and serve more kids. I became a regent superintendent with 6,800 kids that I could impact, and then as a deputy. Well now I have, you know, the same number and then as a superintendent in Houston, 215,000. And I have

to tell you, the opportunity to now serve 1.1 million students is unlike any opportunity that exists anywhere in the world in the education – there is no other New York City public schools.

So for that reason, and because of the fact that, you know, the agenda for education here in New York is so closely aligned to my professional, personal agenda as well, it was an opportunity that I could not say no to. My commitment to the mayor has been, as I mentioned, my word is my bond and we shook hands and because we're so aligned I'm going to be in New York City as long as you will have me.

But while I'm in New York City I'm not going to shy away from asking the tough questions. I'm not going to shy away from being very clear that we're going to serve all of our students.

**Mayor:** David?

**Question:** Two quick questions, given how aligned Mr. Carranza seems with the sort of worldview of the current Chancellor and your own, why was he your number two?

**Mayor:** Yeah, I'm not going to get into a whole lot of details. The bottom line is it was a very, very close call. I feel great about how things have come together in the end.

And we learned things even in these dynamics. We learned things about what people really believe and what their committed to, and here's a guy who has proven through his actions he's committed to the kids of New York City. And I have to say the conversations this weekend were outstanding, it gave us both, I think, tremendous faith in each other. So, we're looking to the future.

**Question:** The second question, you mentioned that your wife has come to the city more than you have. I wondered what she does for a living, or if you want to answer.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** I would never presume to speak for her, so [inaudible]

[Laughter]

**Monique Carranza:** My sister Susie is a professional mariachi, and she owns an entertainment company in Los Angeles. So we've come here for the past five years to the APAP conference – the Association of Performing Arts Presenters – so we did that every year, and I also have by junior high best friend who's still my best friend to this day has lived in New York for I believe about since we graduated from college, so about 22 to 25 years, and she lived in Brooklyn. She just recently moved back to Los Angeles.

**Question:** I read a bit that you often were described as wanting to centralize power in [inaudible] as opposed to leaving it with principals. Is that something you plan to do here [inaudible] take some of the decision making power [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Can I just start and say we over these last four years – and I want to thank Chancellor Fariña for this – you know we, as you may remember, we had a previous life together on a local school board. And then watched with some dismay the way things were handled in the previous administration and the fact that a lot of what worked about having a clear central strategy as a city was being lost, and certainly the power of having leadership at the district level was being reduced, and we from the beginning – this is one the conversations I remember very vividly early on – we said we are going to correct this. So we have done a lot not only to enhance the role of the chancellor and the ability of the department of education to create standards that are applied across the entire city consistently, but also to have strong district superintendents and to reiterate that role as a crucial piece of the equation. So that's been going on for four years. We fully intend to continue that.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** A really fair question, so again it's a work in progress in Houston. Houston went to a decentralized model back in the 19 – the late 1990s. And remember, I've been a principal. I've been a principal in two different schools in two different states, so I tremendously have faith that principals can make great decisions at the local level, and the caveat is if we provide the support, if we provide the training, and if we are clear about what is within the realm of local decision making and what is not within the realm of local decision making, so the situation in Houston – and again I'm not going to bore you with all the details – but I will say that the decentralization has from my very humble opinion run amok. There are no guardrails. So everything being decentralized you become then a confederation of independents schools rather than a school system, and there are some things you cannot just decentralize. So you need to have some central direction – I'll give you some examples. As we talk about social-emotional learning that is something that there is a role for a site-based decision making process – who are your partners? What are the needs of your school site etc.? But the philosophy, the structure about how we provide community schools is something that can only be empowered when you have a centralized approach to provide those resources to those school sites. That's important. And I would also point out that in a decentralized system it works well if you have a very well-funded system. In the state of Texas, unfortunately it's not a well-funded system. In that school system, we started January with a \$206 million cut to the budget, which is 10 percent of that operating budget. It is now whittled down to a mere \$115 million, and by the way that school district, the Houston Independent School District, still has to write a check back to the State of Texas for \$238 million. So we'll get into – actually I want to forget about that – school

finance and taxes, but I would say there are some systemic issues that make it unconscionable not to be very clear and strategic about how you invest your resources.

**Mayor:** Okay, we're going two more on DOE if you got them? Going once? Yes, please?

**Question:** So what's going to be your baseball cap on opening day? Houston? San Francisco? Mets or Yankees?

**Mayor:** Oh, this is a complex situation. This has been thoroughly vetted.

[Laughter]

Been a lot of deep conversation. Alright, we're watching you Richard.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** Okay, so, I love baseball.

**Mayor:** That's good. Stop right there.

[Laughter]

That's what's the question – we already are working on that question, but I would prefer if he didn't go any further into it.

**Question:** [Inaudible] Red Sox

**Mayor:** He started – let me tell you – I'm going to start the conversation in a very promising manner. Because, you know, I'm thinking now the guy is from the West Coast or the West I should say, and this is going to be great. There's not going to be a problem here. So he starts out by saying in Tucson the minor league team was affiliated with the Oakland Athletics. So I'm thinking Oakland Athletics? They're fine. No problem. We don't have a conflict here.

Then it got worse – go ahead Richard.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** So, it got worse because my father's – my father's favorite baseball team were the New York Yankees, the pinstripes. And his favorite players were Joe DiMaggio and Lou Gehrig. So growing up, my dad, there was a lot of pinstripes in the house. But then he cheated on the Yankees and then developed a love for the Dodgers when Fernando Valenzuela was pitching for the Dodgers.

**Mayor:** Okay.

**Incoming Chancellor Carranza:** So for a while there we were Dodgers fans. And then obviously living in Houston, I was cheering those Astros, and then I happen to marry my wife who is a die-hard Dodger fan.

**Mayor:** The Dodgers thing is okay. Let's stay with that.

[Laughter]

Yes, last call? Go ahead.

**Question:** I'm wondering what kind of, say, control over deputy chancellors and top staff the new chancellor is going to have. How did you hash that out in your discussions?

**Mayor:** We've had great conversations just like I experienced with Chancellor Fariña. We would talk stuff through. Look, it would depend on the Chancellor or head of any agency to figure out the right team and figure out the way of taking the ideas, taking the big concepts and applying them. We do talk about senior personnel, what makes sense to do, but ultimately you've got to have a team that you feel good about, so the Chancellor has to ultimately put together a team that he feels confidence in.

Thanks, everyone.