

Dan Rather Reports

Episode Number: 806

Episode Title: Teaching to the Test

Description: Saying it's a waste of time, teachers in Seattle are refusing to give standardized tests to high schoolers because the tests don't effectively assess students and educators don't want their evaluations tied to a faulty test. The move is receiving widespread support across the nation.

ACT 1: TEASE

DAN RATHER (VOICE OVER)

TONIGHT...

JESSE HAGOPIAN,
HISTORY TEACHER, GARFIELD HIGH SCHOOL (AT A RALLY)

Garfield speaks with one voice today...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

EDUCATORS IN SEATTLE ARE GAINING NATIONAL ATTENTION FOR REFUSING TO GIVE A STANDARDIZED TEST.

HAGOPIAN

There's no chance we're going to back down in this struggle. We know this test is wrong for students. And so that means ethically and professionally, we will refuse to give it.

ROBYN GAUDINEER,
TEACHER, MCKITRICK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (TO CLASS)

Read the sentence with me.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ALSO, A REALITY CHECK. A NEW PROGRAM TO BETTER ASSESS WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON IN AMERICA'S CLASSROOMS.

MARYELLEN ELIA,
SUPERINTENDENT, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

For many years-- teachers had an evaluation process that really was based wholly on-- one person-- their principal's evaluation. And for the most part-- 99.5% of the teachers were all great.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AND A SCIENTIST WHO WARNED ABOUT FLOODING BEFORE HURRICANE SANDY SAYS RADICAL STEPS MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE THE NEXT STORM HITS...INCLUDING HI-TECH BARRIERS...

MALCOLM BOWMAN,
PROFESSOR OF PHYSICAL OCEANOGRAPHY, STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

If a barrier system such as this that-- had been built, properly located-- working-- correctly, there would have been no damage. No-- no flooding damage.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WE'LL BRING YOU THE NEWS, TONIGHT, ON DAN RATHER REPORTS...

ACT 2: THE MAP TEST

DAN RATHER (ON CAMERA)

GOOD EVENING. IT'S NO SECRET THAT STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES ARE NOT KEEPING UP WITH THEIR CONTEMPORARIES IN CLASSROOMS AROUND THE WORLD. THE MOST RECENT INTERNATIONAL TEST SCORES SHOW AMERICAN CHILDREN FALLING BEHIND STUDENTS FROM MANY EUROPEAN AND ASIAN COUNTRIES.

HOPING TO CHANGE THAT THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION BACK IN 2001 PASSED WHAT HAS SINCE BECOME A LIGHTNING ROD PIECE OF LEGISLATION CALLED "NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND".

ONE OF THE HALLMARKS OF THE BILL WAS AN INCREASE IN MANDATORY STANDARDIZED TESTING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS. WHAT WAS A MINIMUM OF 6 TESTS THROUGHOUT A STUDENT'S CAREER SUDDENLY BECAME 17. PRESIDENT OBAMA CONTINUED THE PLEDGE FOR TESTING WITH HIS PROGRAM CALLED "RACE TO THE TOP".

IT'S A SUBJECT THAT IS BEING HOTLY DEBATED IN LIVING ROOMS AND CLASSROOMS ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY WITH MANY FAMILIES, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS SAYING ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

NEAR DOWNTOWN SEATTLE IS GARFIELD HIGH...HOME OF THE BULLDOGS. IT'S A BEAUTIFUL OLD BUILDING THAT DATES BACK TO THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY.

OF ALL THE STUDENTS WHO'VE WALKED THESE HALLS...SEVERAL HAVE GONE ON TO FAME AND FORTUNE...INCLUDING ROCK STAR JIMI HENDRIX...AND LEGENDARY MUSIC PRODUCER QUINCY JONES. A NEW PERFORMING ARTS CENTER IS DEDICATED TO HIM.

GARFIELD IS HOME TO ONE OF THE MOST RECOGNIZED HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BANDS IN THE COUNTRY.

IT'S ALSO BEEN VOTED ONE OF THE BEST PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR ACADEMICS BY U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT.

BUT LAST MONTH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS HERE BEGAN SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE.

GARFIELD HIGH HAS SUDDENLY BECOME THE CENTER OF THE REVOLT AGAINST STANDARDIZED TESTING.

JESSE HAGOPIAN,
HISTORY TEACHER, GARFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

I went to Garfield High School and graduated from Garfield High School

HAGOPIAN (TO STUDENTS)

Have a seat please...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AND AFTER GRADUATING FROM COLLEGE, JESSE HAGOPIAN RETURNED TO SEATTLE WHERE HE WAS OFFERED A JOB TEACHING HISTORY AT HIS OLD ALMA MATER...

HAGOPIAN (TO STUDENTS)

Welcome back to this exciting day my good people...

HAGOPIAN

Garfield High School is the greatest high school. I mean, I guess everybody who-- has so much invested in their school says that. But to me-- it's a really special place.

And, you know, we take scholarship very seriously here. And we also take the arts and critical thinking-- and developing the whole child very seriously here.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THEY ALSO TAKE TESTING VERY SERIOUSLY HERE TOO.

HAGOPIAN (TO STUDENTS)

Your challenge today is to write an essay that has a well-developed thesis.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BESIDES REGULAR CLASSROOM TESTS, THERE ARE THE MULTITUDE OF MANDATED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS, AND THERE IS THE MAP TEST. MAP STANDS FOR "MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS".

MEASURE OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS DEMONSTRATION VIDEO

The test you take may have questions from different subjects.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THIS IS WHAT THE TEST LOOKS LIKE. THE NORTHWEST EVALUATION ASSOCIATION, THE COMPANY THAT MAKES THE EXAM, SENT US A DEMONSTRATION VIDEO. STUDENTS TAKE THE TEST ON A COMPUTER AND IT'S ALL MULTIPLE CHOICE.

MEASURE OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS DEMONSTRATION VIDEO

When you are sure of your answer, click the next arrow to go on ...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IT'S GIVEN IN SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND IT'S BECOME A WIDELY-USED STANDARDIZED TEST FOR SUPPOSEDLY MEASURING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT. BUT NOW THE FACULTY OF GARFIELD HIGH HAS BANDED TOGETHER TO SAY THE MAP TEST IS DOING MORE HARM THAN GOOD.

HAGOPIAN

The MAP test is a deeply flawed exam. Because number one, it's not aligned to our curriculum. Teachers in ninth grade algebra tell me that they see questions on the test relating to geometry, which would be like if a French teacher is giving a test and there's Spanish questions on it.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AND IT'S NOT JUST THE DIFFERENCE IN CURRICULUM THAT HAS JESSE HAGOPIAN AND SEATTLE TEACHERS ANGRY...IT'S THE FACT THAT THEIR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS...AND THEIR SALARY ... ARE TIED TO HOW STUDENTS PERFORM ON THE TEST. THE TEACHERS SAY THAT USING A FLAWED TEST THAT STUDENTS DON'T TAKE SERIOUSLY TO MEASURE HOW TEACHERS ARE DOING IS A BAD AND UNFAIR IDEA. THIS APPROACH THEY BELIEVE, DOES NOT RECOGNIZE OR REWARD GOOD TEACHING.

HAGOPIAN

What that means is, the students have very little invested in it and oftentimes they race each other to see who can finish first. Or, they pick their favorite letter and hit that for the entire test. For them, there's no consequence. But for teachers, it's tied to our evaluation. That's-- that's crazy.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE MAP TEST WAS SOLD TO THE SEATTLE SCHOOLS FOR MORE THAN 4 MILLION DOLLARS. ON ITS WEBSITE...THE NORTHWEST EVALUATION ASSOCIATION SAYS THE TEST WILL HELP TEACHERS.

THE CEO OF THE COMPANY, MATT CHAPMAN WROTE A RECENT OP-ED FOR THE SEATTLE TIMES THAT SAID "WE SHOULD NOT DENY MEASURES THAT EFFECTIVELY MEASURE STUDENT LEARNING...AND...WE SHOULD USE MAP TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT GOOD TEACHING."

MEASURE OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS DEMONSTRATION VIDEO

Every child starts at a different place, learning at a different pace. And no assessment or product is better able to capture those differences than NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress or MAP.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS THOUGHT OTHERWISE...

PHIL SHERBURNE,
GARFIELD PARENT-TEACHER STUDENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

We will continue to speak up in the name of our students and in the name of public education. Thank you.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE TEACHERS THEN DECIDED TO TAKE AN UNPRECEDENTED STEP.... BOYCOTT THE EXAM. JESSE HAGOPIAN BECAME ONE OF THE MOST VOCAL LEADERS.

HAGOPIAN (AT RALLY)

We're being given this MAP test and they're using this and telling us that this is the way to chart a course for the Seattle public schools. But I'll tell you the destination that we end up using this map. We end up at the destination of inequality. We end up at a destination of unfairness.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE MAP TEST BOYCOTT AT ONE SCHOOL IN SEATTLE SUDDENLY SPREAD TO SEVERAL SCHOOLS ACROSS THE CITY...AND THEN LEADING EDUCATORS IN WASHINGTON, D.C. JUMPED ON THE BANDWAGON...THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION VOICED SUPPORT FOR THE GARFIELD TEACHERS...AS WELL AS THE NATION'S LARGEST TEACHERS' UNION, AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS. MEANWHILE THE INBOX AT GARFIELD HIGH IS OVERFLOWING.

HAGOPIAN (READING LETTER)

"Dear colleges, um, I think it is momentous and symbolic that your courageous actions of resistance is occurring as we are honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." Um, that was fantastic. I mean they're coming in from around the country. We got a letter from Tacoma. Laurie Brown says "in solidarity".

And the world changed...Richmond, California, really nice note. Keeping our spirits up.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE TEACHERS AT GARFIELD HAVE STARTED THEIR OWN FACEBOOK PAGE WHICH NOW HAS THOUSANDS OF FOLLOWERS... AND THEY HAVE A BLOG WHICH LINKS TO SUPPORTERS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY, LIKE THIS GROUP OF TEACHERS IN AUSTIN, TEXAS.

MONTY NEILL,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FAIRTEST

The-- Seattle boycott might be a turning point-- in that-- it's rare to have such a strong stance.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MONTY NEILL IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AN ORGANIZATION CALLED FAIRTEST IN BOSTON THAT MONITORS THE GROWING RESISTANCE TO STANDARDIZED TESTING ACROSS THE COUNTRY. HE BELIEVES WHAT IS HAPPENING IN SEATTLE IS ANOTHER

STEP IN A NATIONAL MOVEMENT QUESTIONING THE WISDOM OF SO MUCH STANDARDIZED TESTING.

NEILL

If you're an adult, certainly if you're over 30 you have no idea how much testing is now going on. And you don't know how it's damaging the kids' education.

And the consequences attached to the tests have become higher and higher so that's there's more and more pressure to turn schooling into a test prep program.

So you end up with Chicago, 14 tests annually for-- for kindergarten. And this piece of insanity is now spreading across the country.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

AND THE TESTING INDUSTRY HAS BALLOONED INTO A BEHEMOTH. ACCORDING TO MARKET RESEARCH FIRM IBIS WORLD THE TESTING AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT INDUSTRY IS WORTH \$16 BILLION AND GROWING EVERY YEAR THANKS TO ALL THE TESTS MANDATED BY NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND.

BUT IS THE MAP TEST IN PARTICULAR AN EFFECTIVE TEACHING TOOL? THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WANTED TO FIND OUT BECAUSE RESEARCHERS NOTICED AN EXPLOSION IN BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT TESTS...

A STUDY WAS CONDUCTED IN DOZENS OF 4TH AND 5TH GRADE CLASSROOMS IN ILLINOIS TO FIND OUT IF THE MAP WAS WORTH THE TIME AND MONEY. THE ANSWER WAS... NO...A GOVERNMENT REPORT, ISSUED IN DECEMBER 2012 SAID: "OVERALL, THE MAP PROGRAM DID NOT HAVE A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON STUDENTS' READING ACHIEVEMENT IN EITHER GRADE 4 OR GRADE 5."

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT BACK IN SEATTLE, THE CITY'S SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS SAYS THE TEACHERS WHO ARE PROTESTING THE MAP TEST ARE MISSING THE POINT.

JOSE BANDA,
SUPERINTENDENT, SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

I've received many emails from teachers who really-- support the MAP as an assessment tool.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

JOSE BANDA AND THE SCHOOL BOARD DEMANDED THAT THE TEACHERS GIVE THE TEST OR FACE A 10-DAY SUSPENSION...WITHOUT PAY. HE SAYS IF THE TEACHERS HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE TEST, THEY COULD VOICE THEIR CONCERNS IN A LESS CONFRONTATIONAL WAY.

BANDA

I don't think that the portrayal that the MAP is a waste of time and waste of resources. When you look at it in the context of the entire district where we have thousands of teachers, you have a small group that has been very vocal about that.

I think with the advent of the No Child Left Behind, it's very clear that assessments were going to be a key part of determining student achievement. And-- we need to have an instrument that gives us readings on where our students are.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE SEATTLE SCHOOL DISTRICT POINTED US TO TEACHERS LIKE ZACHARY STOWELL, WHO TEACHES A MIXED 4TH AND 5TH GRADE CLASS AT NORTHGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

ZACHARY STOWELL,
TEACHER, NORTHGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Not only do I have the MAP test, I have my unit test, I've got my teacher's college reading assessments, so it's another point to get data to support my students and teaching them.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WHEN STOWELL TALKS TO HIS YOUNG STUDENTS ABOUT SETTING GOALS, HE OFTEN USES THE MAP TEST SCORES AS GUIDELINES.

STOWELL (TO STUDENT)

So I want to show you one more time how you have been shooting up, and for me, I feel the sky's the limit...

STOWELL

You can see in a graph because sometimes kids don't really grasp the number concept. But if you can see where I'm at, where I'm supposed to be, you can set some goals along the way. I find that it works for me.

STOWELL (TO STUDENT)

You have already grown past those 8 points.

STOWELL

I let them know that school is about learning and this test is going to say what you know, and the test is going to say what you don't know, and it's my job to teach you what you don't know. It's just a gauge to see what I can do as a teacher to help you.

MARIO SHAUNETTE,
GARFIELD MATH TEACHER (TO STUDENTS)

So then my tangential acceleration is going to be in the direction velocity was going...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT BACK AT GARFIELD HIGH TEACHERS LIKE MARIO SHAUNETTE SAY WHILE THE MAP TEST MAY WORK AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL IT'S A DIFFERENT STORY FOR STUDENTS IN HIS HIGH SCHOOL MATH CLASSES.

SHAUNETTE

We get no useful information out of it, and it costs us things. It costs us time for the kids to prepare-- they have two high stakes test to pass in order to graduate, so it costs us time preparing for that. It tests on things that we don't include in our curriculum, so they end up feeling stupid when they take the test. We have to undo that damage when they come back. This, this place runs on trust, we lose trust when we know we're making them do something that they know doesn't make sense.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THAT'S WHY BOTH THE PARENT ASSOCIATION AND THE GARFIELD HIGH STUDENT BODY ASSOCIATION VOTED TO BACK THE TEACHERS BOYCOTT.

CAITLIN CHAMBERS, GARFIELD STUDENT

I think it's important to measure students, know where they're falling behind, know which students are ahead, and figure out how to help all of them across the board. But the MAP test doesn't effectively do that.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SENIOR CAITLIN CHAMBERS, IS COVERING THE STORY FOR THE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER.

CHAMBERS

It just wastes resources, it wastes money, it wastes student time. We pay like \$480,000 a year for this test. And I think my physics textbook is from the 70s.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT EVERYONE WONDERED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WHEN IT CAME TIME FOR THE NEXT MAP TEST? TEACHERS DIDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT REFUSING TO GIVE THE TEST...MOST OF THE STUDENTS REFUSED TO TAKE IT. OF THE APPROXIMATELY 400 STUDENTS SCHEDULED TO TAKE THE MAP....ABOUT 300 BOYCOTTED THE EXAM...

HAGOPIAN (AT A RALLY)

Garfield speaks with one voice today and that voice is being heard around the nation...Scrap the Map...alright...Scrap the Map!

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AT GARFIELD HIGH, THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ARE ON THE SAME PAGE - THEY SAY THIS IS A GREAT SCHOOL AND NO TEST IS GOING TO COME BETWEEN THEM AND THEIR EDUCATION.

HAGOPIAN

There's no chance we're going to back down in this struggle. We know this test is wrong for students. And so that means ethically and professionally, we will refuse to give it

ACT 3: TAMPA TEACHERS

DAN RATHER (VOICE OVER)

RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR--AT SCHOOL--FOR A CHILD'S SCHOLASTIC SUCCESS...IS THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHER IN THE CLASSROOM.

AND THERE'S ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT IS TRYING A NEW AND INTENSIVE EFFORT TO MAKE SURE TEACHERS ARE UP TO THE TASK.

ANNMARIE HOTIA,
TEACHER, HAMMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (TO STUDENTS)

If there's a word that we know that has more than one meaning and we're not sure of the meaning..

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IT'S AN IDEA THAT HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST TALKED ABOUT EXPERIMENTS IN AMERICAN EDUCATION.... WELCOME TO THE HILLSBOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT IN TAMPA, FLORIDA.

ROBYN GAUDINEER,
TEACHER, MCKITRICK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

What do you think and adverb is? Lauren Grace?

DAN RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ON A RECENT MORNING AT THE MCKITRICK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SECOND GRADE TEACHER ROBYN GAUDINEER WAS JUGGLING A ROOM OF CHILDREN AND A LESSON ON ADVERBS.

GAUDINEER (TO CLASS)

Read the sentence with me. The car drove us around the mountain.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

A DIFFICULT TASK ON ITS OWN BUT MADE MORE STRESSFUL ON THIS DAY BECAUSE SHE'S BEING SHE'S BEING GRADED TOO.

GAUDINEER (TO CLASS)

Now we know that it's really easy if we find the verb...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MS. GAUDINEER IS IN THE MIDST OF A PEER EVALUATION. AND UNLIKE EVALUATORS AT OTHER SCHOOLS, WHICH IS OFTEN THE PRINCIPAL, THIS EVALUATOR'S ONLY JOB IS TO WATCH TEACHERS. IT'S A UNIQUE PROGRAM THAT HAS RAISED AWARENESS AND EYEBROWS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. MONICA STRAUCH IS ONE OF ABOUT 150 PEER EVALUATORS-- ALL FORMER TEACHERS.

MONICA STRAUCH,
PEER EVALUATOR

What I do is just, whatever lesson I see, I rate that lesson, and then-- come up with next steps for the teachers to work on, which in turn would hopefully lead to student achievement.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IT'S THE ONLY DISTRICT IN THE STATE THAT EMPLOYS A STAFF OF FULL TIME OBSERVERS.

AND THEN, AFTER THE LESSON, SHE DOES SOMETHING ALMOST UNHEARD OF. THE EVALUATOR IMMEDIATELY ASKS THE STUDENTS WHAT THEY LEARNED...JUST TO SEE IF THE TEACHER WAS EFFECTIVE.

STRAUCH (TO STUDENT)

How did you decide that “beautifully” is your adverb?

STUDENT

‘Cuz it has an “l” and a “y”.

STRACH (TO STUDENT)

Oh, so you used a clue?

STUDENT

Yeah

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IT'S ALL PART OF THE TEACHER REVIEW SYSTEM THE DISTRICT ROLLED OUT IN 2010.

MARYELLEN ELIA,
SUPERINTENDENT, HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

For many years-- teachers had an ev-- an evaluation process that really was based wholly on-- one person-- their principal's evaluation. And for the most part-- 99.5% of the teachers were all great.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MARYELLEN ELIA IS THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT. STAFF REVIEWS CONSISTENTLY TOLD HER THAT HER TEACHERS WERE EXCEPTIONAL BUT IF THAT WAS THE CASE, WHY WEREN'T THE STUDENTS ALSO EXCEPTIONAL?

ELIA

The teachers care and the parents certainly care for kids and what's going on in the classroom.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

SO SEVERAL YEARS AGO, ELIA GOT TOGETHER WITH THE TEACHERS UNION AND THE SCHOOL BOARD AND STARTED LOOKING AT HOW THE COUNTY COULD BOOST STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. THEIR FOCUS FELL NOT ON STANDARDIZED TESTS BUT ON THE MORE THAN 15 THOUSAND TEACHERS IN TAMPA.

ELIA

Teachers are the way to improve education. And the reform that really is going to be sustainable and last-able and make a difference in education in America is gonna be based on support and strengthening of the teacher corps that we have.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ELIA AND COUNTY EDUCATORS STARTED DRAWING UP A PLAN TO MAKE SURE THE TEACHERS WERE GETTING THROUGH TO THEIR STUDENTS.

PROBLEM IS...HOW TO PAY FOR IT? HIRING TEACHER EVALUATORS WOULD COST MILLIONS OF DOLLARS THE DISTRICT DIDN'T HAVE. BUT IN STEPPED THE BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION WITH A 7-YEAR GRANT FOR 100 MILLION DOLLARS. PROBLEM SOLVED. THE RESULT WAS A PROGRAM CALLED EMPOWERING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS OR EET.

WHEN THE PROGRAM STARTED IN THERE WERE PREDICTIONS OF MASS TEACHER FIRINGS FOR POOR PERFORMANCE. BUT ELIA SAYS THE EARLY DATA SHOWS OTHERWISE

ELIA

Based on research that had been done before we started this process, we thought the numbers might be a little bit higher in the unsatisfactory/needs improvement. It didn't work out that way... We're finding that a majority of the teachers-- close to 97% of our teachers are in a category of highly effective or effective, which is great.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MUCH TO THE RELIEF OF THE TEACHERS UNIONS WHO HAVE THROWN THEIR SUPPORT BEHIND THE PROGRAM ALONG WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SECRETARY ARNE DUNCAN.

ARNE DUNCAN,
U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

I think the country has a tremendous amount to learn from what's going on here and I just again appreciate what you've already done but more importantly what you are going to do over the next couple years. And I think this county can help to lead the country where we need to go.

ELIA

It's three parts-- the principal's observations, the peer observations, and student data that make up their evaluation. So it's very different.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

DIFFERENT AND STRESSFUL... SAYS SECOND GRADE TEACHER ROBYN GAUDINEER

GAUDINEER

Lotta tears shed. I'm a perfectionist. I-- I think we all wanna be good at the job that we do. I think it was hard for teachers to go from being evaluated once every three years to having a system where lots of different t-- people are coming in your room. It's difficult. Especially people that have been teaching a long time ... And sometimes it's hard to get an evaluation and it's not positive.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

NOW GAUDINEER AND EVERY OTHER TEACHER IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY IS EVALUATED AT LEAST THREE TIMES A YEAR - ONCE BY THEIR PRINCIPAL AND TWICE BY A PEER EVALUATOR --

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AFTER EACH CLASSROOM VISIT THE EVALUATOR AND TEACHER SIT DOWN FOR A ONE-ON-ONE CONFERENCE AND DISCUSS WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DIDN'T DURING THE LESSON.

ELIA

I watched you lesson and I'd like to know how you felt it went and reflect a little bit for me.

GAUDINEER

Ok, well let's start with my strengths first.

STRAUCH

OK

GAUDINEER

I thought I did a very good job of stating my objective.....

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE CONFERENCE ENDS WITH SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS OF HOW THE TEACHER CAN BE MORE EFFECTIVE.

STRAUCH

You had them come up with different adverbs for some of your sentences...

GAUDINEER

Right

STRAUCH

But then just kind of weave that into, "Look it we were just writing we just did a writing lesson, this is how this will help." And it will kind of blend in there

GAUDINEER

OK. Awesome.

ELIA

The key thing I think-- that's really powerful about it is that it gives feedback to teachers on areas that they can improve. So even if you're a highly effective teachers-- teacher in a classroom, there are ways that you can get better. And I think the big issue is that teachers are starting to get used to a process that's giving them feedback on improvement of what they do every day in a classroom with kids.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT THE EVALUATION SYSTEM DOES MORE THAN MONITOR THE CLASSROOMS. IT ALSO GIVES EXTRA COACHING TO ALL FIRST AND SECOND YEAR TEACHERS - WHO ARE MOSTLY LIKELY TO NEED MORE SUPPORT.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

COURTNEY DONHAISER HAS BEEN TEACHING HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES FOR JUST SEVEN MONTHS. WHEN SHE NEEDS HELP WITH LESSON PLANNING, HOW TO DESIGN A

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT, OR JUST HAS A BAD DAY SHE CALLS AIMEE BALLANS A VETERAN TEACHER.

AIMEE BALLANS, PEER MENTOR

So let me ask you this and backing up a little and thinking about before like that that “1B knowledge of kids.” What do you think they already know about justice at this point?

COURTNEY DONHAISER,
TEACHER, STRAWBERRY CREST HIGH SCHOOL

Um a lot of them today were talking about the legal system.

BALLANS

Okay.

DONHAISER

She's just, she's there, you know, when you feel down and you need someone to kinda pick you up. And she's been through everything before. And she has all this experience. So she knows what you're going through, and she knows how to help you.

BALLANS

I think you're in good shape!

DONHAISER

Thank you.

BALLANS

Ok, good, good, good!

ELIA

One of the big things that happens in education is-- you-- hire people. You work really hard to train them. And they leave after you put that initial-- training in them.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT... WITH MENTORING ...HILLSBOROUGH'S SUPERINTENDENT SAYS THE DISTRICT IS KEEPING...AND DEVELOPING GOOD TEACHERS.

ELIA

We have some great results. We went from 72% retention of our first-year teachers to 86% retention the second year, and then 92% retention the third year.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IT'S TOO EARLY TO KNOW IF THE TEACHER EVALUATIONS ARE TRANSLATING INTO HIGHER TEST SCORES FOR STUDENTS. AND WHAT STARTED OUT AS A GRAND EXPERIMENT IN HELPING EDUCATORS IS NOW LOOKED ON WITH A CLENCHED SMILE BY SOME WHO HAVE SPENT MANY YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM.

GAUDINEER

Would I be sad not to be evaluated four and five times a year? I probably would not be so sad about that. But would I incorporate some of the things from the rubric and things that I see my students doing? I absolutely would.

I do feel I'm a better teacher. I do see wonderful things happening in my classroom. So I do think that overall it's a positive.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

CHANGES IN TEACHING IN TAMPA FLORIDA...SO WHAT IMPACT WILL EVALUATIONS HAVE ON THE COUNTY'S TEACHERS? THE NEW, IN -CLASSROOM REVIEWS COUNT FOR 60 PERCENT OF A TEACHERS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE SCORE. STUDENT LEARNING GAINS ONLY COUNT FOR 40 PERCENT. AND PERHAPS JUST AS IMPORTANT TO THE TEACHERS... THEIR SALARIES WILL SOON BE TIED TO THEIR PERFORMANCE.

UP NEXT ON OUR PROGRAM....CLIMATE CHANGE AND STORM-PROOFING CITIES...SO STAY HERE WITH US.

ACT 4: SEA GATES

DAN RATHER (ON CAMERA)

WELCOME BACK. 51 BILLION DOLLARS...THAT'S WHAT CONGRESS RECENTLY APPROVED FOR HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF. AND AS BIG AS THAT NUMBER IS, IT STILL WON'T COVER THE ESTIMATED 80 BILLION DOLLARS IN DAMAGE FROM THE STORM. SO MUCH WAS LOST - LIVES, HOMES AND A SENSE OF SECURITY. AND WITH SEA LEVELS OVER THE NEXT CENTURY PREDICTED TO BE UP TO 6 FEET HIGHER --- EVEN WEAKER

STORMS WILL CAUSE DEVASTATING FLOODING. THE QUESTION IS WHAT CAN WE DO TO PROTECT OURSELVES AND OUR CITIES?

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MANHATTAN. THIS WATERFRONT CITY IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT TREASURES... IT'S HARD TO OVERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS PLACE, ESPECIALLY LOWER MANHATTAN. IT'S THE WORLD'S BIGGEST FINANCIAL CENTER... HOME TO WALL STREET... THE NEW ONE WORLD TRADE CENTER... HISTORIC LANDMARKS... TO BUSINESSES LARGE AND SMALL... AND THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO CALL THIS HOME...

BUT AMERICA'S LARGEST CITY IS NOW AT THE CENTER OF AN INCREASINGLY URGENT DEBATE ABOUT HOW BEST TO PREPARE FOR THE EFFECTS OF GLOBAL WARMING.

WE'VE LEARNED THE HARD WAY IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS JUST HOW VULNERABLE THIS ISLAND CITY IS ...

BRIAN CONNERY,
LOWER MANHATTAN RESIDENT

That is supposed to be a tunnel...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WHAT YOU'RE SEEING IS VIDEO SHOT BY A RESIDENT OF LOWER MANHATTAN IN THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE SANDY -- ONE OF MANY NEW YORKERS WHO UNDERESTIMATED THE POWER OF THE SEA.

BRIAN CONNERY

The momentum of the day kinda changed very quickly. It went from excitement and it, you know, kinda snowballed into genuine fear.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

ALTHOUGH HIS BUILDING HAD BEEN UNDER A MANDATORY EVACUATION ORDER FROM NEW YORK MAYOR MICHAEL BLOOMBERG, BRIAN CONNERY DECIDED TO RIDE OUT THE STORM WITH HIS WIFE LINDY, THINKING IT WOULDN'T BE ANY BIG DEAL.

LINDY CONNERY,
LOWER MANHATTAN RESIDENT

I mean it definitely looks higher but you can't see water-- I mean it's not on the promenade -- God, someone's running...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THEY WATCHED IT ALL UNFOLD THE AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 29TH FROM HIGH UP ON THE 23RD FLOOR OF THEIR BATTERY PARK APARTMENT.

BRIAN, AN AMATEUR VIDEOGRAPHER, KEPT HIS CAMERA RUNNING.

BRIAN CONNERY

It wasn't raining very bad, you know, it was this impending storm. There was a lot of news and attention but it -- it certainly, you know, was a gloomy day but it wasn't problematic.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUT AS NIGHT FELL, BRIAN CONNERY BEGAN TO CHANGE HIS TUNE...

BRIAN CONNERY

We have a lot of water moving down near the tunnel. It's just starting to fill up - but what is most problematic is *that*. That is very unsettling. Looks like significant structural damage. It doesn't make me feel real excited to be in a building right above foundational issues.

And then all the sudden, you know, I'm checking on the window, checking outside occasionally and then it's like, "Uh oh, that's a lot of water coming in." It started flooding into the tunnel almost immediately. You started seeing cars getting flooded and it - that's when I started getting goose bumps, you know, that's when it started to get very serious, very fast and then I started to have second thoughts and I said, "Am I supposed to be in this building right now? Maybe Bloomberg was not joking when he said get out of here."

Power's going out somewhere.

LINDY CONNERY

How do you know?

BRIAN CONNERY

The streetlights just kicked out.

LINDY CONNERY

Shit. That means we're next.

BRIAN CONNERY

There it goes...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BRIAN AND LINDY MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE LOBBY OF THEIR DARKENED BUILDING... THE STREET OUT FRONT LOOKED MORE LIKE A RAGING RIVER... AND THOSE WHO THOUGHT A FEW SANDBAGS MIGHT HELP... WERE SORELY MISTAKEN...

THESE IMAGES FROM THE NEW YORK'S METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY -- THE MTA -- SHOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING DOWN IN THE SUBWAYS. THE WORST HIT - ONE OF THE CITY'S MOST IMPORTANT SUBWAY STATIONS, SOUTH FERRY... COMPLETELY UNDERWATER.

FOR FIVE DAYS LOWER MANHATTAN WAS IN THE DARK...

PARTS OF ALL FIVE BOROUGHS IN THIS CITY OF 8 MILLION WERE FLOODED... IN NEW YORK CITY ALONE, MORE THAN 40 PEOPLE WERE KILLED.

THREE MONTHS LATER, THE CLEANUP CONTINUES -- EVEN IN MIGHTY LOWER MANHATTAN... A RELATIVELY UNTOLD STORY OF SUPERSTORM SANDY -- THE DAMAGE TO LOWER MANHATTAN THAT PERSISTS TODAY.

GENERATORS ARE STILL NEEDED TO POWER OFFICE TOWERS AND LUXURY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS SOME OF THEM WERE UNINHABITED FOR MONTHS.

AND THOUGH MOST SUBWAYS IN THE CITY WERE BACK UP AND RUNNING WITHIN DAYS... THE ONE HERE AT SOUTH FERRY... IS STILL CLOSED.

JOSEPH LEADER,
VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF MAINTENANCE OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF SUBWAYS

For our system, this was the worst hit, when you look at a station itself.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WE GOT A TOUR OF THIS RESTRICTED AREA FROM VICE PRESIDENT OF MAINTENANCE JOE LEADER.

LEADER

You realize this line up here was the original water level, where the water first came in, so this area was completely flooded.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

15 MILLION GALLONS OF CORRODING SEA WATER FLOODED THIS STATION TO A DEPTH OF ABOUT 50 FEET...

UNTIL SANDY CAME TO TOWN 30-THOUSAND PEOPLE A DAY WOULD TRAVEL THROUGH HERE... THE MTA SPENT \$530 MILLION TO RENOVATE THIS STATION IN 2009. AND IT MAY TAKE AS LONG AS 3 YEARS TO REPAIR AT A COST OF 600 MILLION MORE DOLLARS. THAT'S BECAUSE ALL THE ELECTRICAL CIRCUITS AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED TO RUN THE STATION WERE COMPLETELY DESTROYED. NOW THE CHALLENGE WILL BE TO PROTECT THE NEW EQUIPMENT WHEN THE NEXT STORM INVARIABLY HITS.

LEADER

Do we take the signaling system, do we take the component, the signal relay room and we put that above ground like some building owners are doing right now who had generators in the basement? Do you look to put that on a different floor? Those are concepts that you can look at but everything you do takes time, takes money.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THERE IS A LINGERING QUESTION HANGING OVER THIS RUINED SUBWAY STATION AND ALL OF LOWER MANHATTAN - WAS ALL THIS DAMAGE AND THE THIRTEEN PLUS FOOT STORM SURGE THAT CAUSED IT PREVENTABLE?

MALCOLM BOWMAN,
PROFESSOR OF PHYSICAL OCEANOGRAPHY, STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

Well, follow-- following Hurricane Katrina, I wrote an-- Op-Ed for *The New York Times*. It was called "A City At Sea," where I-- predicted that New York City would be flooded - was not a question of if, but when.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MALCOLM BOWMAN IS A PROFESSOR OF PHYSICAL OCEANOGRAPHY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT STONY BROOK. HE'S ALSO COORDINATOR OF THE STORM SURGE GROUP, WHICH TRIES TO MODEL HOW STORM SURGES MIGHT THREATEN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA. FOR YEARS BOWMAN HAS PREDICTED THE CITY WOULD SUFFER CATASTROPHIC FLOODING.

RATHER

I want to get back to your prediction. Review for me what your prediction was.

BOWMAN

My prediction was given the low elevation of New York City and the surrounding countryside that-- learning what -- about storm surges-- looking at the historical record, that with rising sea level-- and changing climate that-- it was inevitable.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

AND BOWMAN WAS EAGER TO SHARE HIS WARNINGS WITH ANYONE WHO WOULD LISTEN.

BOWMAN (CONNECTING DELTA CITIES, 2008)

We're walking towards a new subway station that's being built called South Ferry...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IN THIS DOCUMENTARY, SHOT THREE YEARS AFTER HIS OP-ED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES, BOWMAN VISITED THE SOUTH FERRY SUBWAY STATION WHILE IT WAS STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION...

BOWMAN (CONNECTING DELTA CITIES, 2008)

I would have thought that in this discussion of climate change that we would have -- suggested that they built the sides higher.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HE KNEW THE ENTRANCE WAS TOO CLOSE TO SEA LEVEL AND WAS BOUND TO FLOOD....

BOWMAN (CONNECTING DELTA CITIES, 2008)

The city likes to keep the subway entrances at street level, so people come off the street and they go straight into the subway and people don't like having to climb up and down again to go down a hole in the ground. And so, it's a convenience factor, but it would seem to me it would be safer if they built the entrance up one or two meters and it would be easy to do and now's the time to do it.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WE BROUGHT BOWMAN BACK, POST SANDY, TO SURVEY THE DAMAGE...

BOWMAN

I was here in 2008 when this brand new sparkling station, the pride of the city's subway system was being built and I worried about the elevation here above sea level. It's only about 10 or 11 feet. And I worried at the time and I spoke to the people, "This is very dangerous. This is too low. It's going to flood one day," and I've been worrying ever since and it happened.

BOWMAN

It was obviously inadequate and it flooded. And it's-- it will happen again if they don't do something about it.

RATHER

Well, there's that old saying that "Prophets are rarely praised in their time." Has that been your--- experience?

BOWMAN

In their home country. Right. I'm beginning to feel my middle name's Noah. (LAUGH) And back in 2005, there's a great flood coming. You better start building the arc, but nobody would listen.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

NOW PROFESSOR BOWMAN IS HOPING SOMEONE WILL LISTEN TO WHAT HE SEES AS THE BEST LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO PROTECT NEW YORK CITY...IT'S CALLED A STORM SURGE BARRIER. WHAT IS A STORM SURGE BARRIER?

THIS ANIMATION PRODUCED BY THE DUTCH FIRM ARCADIS IS ONE DESIGN --- A SEA GATE THAT REMAINS OPEN TO SHIPPING AND THE TIDES, BUT CAN BE CLOSED TO FORM A PROTECTIVE WALL IF A STORM SURGE APPROACHES.

RATHER

This is New York City here.

BOWMAN

Right.

RATHER

This is the Bronx up here.

BOWMAN

This is the Bronx...

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

PROFESSOR BOWMAN SHOWED US HIS VISION OF WHAT A SEA GATE SYSTEM FOR NEW YORK HARBOR MIGHT LOOK LIKE.

RATHER

So the barriers would be built where?

BOWMAN

So-- one possibility is to put a barrier system where this red line is. It's not a dam; it's more like a bridge. But it has gates that will open to allow shipping through.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BOWMAN SAYS THE SEA GATE WOULD BE JUST ONE PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM.

BOWMAN

These green lines are augmenting the coastline on both sides with sand dunes-- maybe 20, 30 feet high. This would curl around Kennedy airport, which is there on the eastern side of-- Jamaica Bay.

RATHER

But the main barrier here would be at about what height?

BOWMAN

Probably 30 feet. This is a five mile-- gap across here. But the water is very shallow. It's only 20, 25 feet--

RATHER

So this would be-- what'd you say? 30 feet?

BOWMAN

Thirty f--thirty feet would give the ultimate protection against a thousand-year storm. Now, you'd need a second barrier system up-- the-- on the upper east river here. So this system of two barriers-- one here and one here-- would protect everything inside including northern New Jersey, the three major airports, all of this Port Elizabeth, the oil refineries in northern New Jersey. All would be protected.

RATHER

Now if-- if this had been in place at the time of Sandy, what would have been the effect?

BOWMAN

If a barrier system such as this -- had been built, properly located-- working-- correctly, there would have been no damage. No-- no flooding damage.

RATHER

No flooding damage.

BOWMAN

No.

RATHER

So, you are convinced it will work?

BOWMAN

Oh, it'll work. I mean this is not rocket science. I mean this-- this is good civil engineering.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BOWMAN IS CONFIDENT BARRIERS CAN WORK BECAUSE THEY DO ALREADY IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. THE NETHERLANDS --- A COUNTRY WITH ABOUT 25% OF ITS LAND BELOW SEA LEVEL - RESPONDED TO A DEADLY FLOOD IN THE 1950S BY BUILDING A SERIES OF SEA WALLS AND BARRIERS THAT EFFECTIVELY SHORTEN THE COASTLINE...MAKING IT EASIER TO PROTECT. THEY HAVE THEIR OWN SEA GATE SYSTEM LIKE THIS ONE NEAR THE CITY OF ROTTERDAM WHICH OPENS AND CLOSES TO LET SHIPPING THROUGH.

CH2M HILL VIDEO

The Thames barrier and its associated gates are designed to close in the event of a river flood.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IN ENGLAND THERE'S A STORM SURGE BARRIER ON THE THAMES THAT HAS BEEN EMPLOYED 119 TIMES THROUGH THE YEARS PROTECTING LONDON FROM FLOODING.

AND IN RUSSIA...THIS 15 MILE LONG BARRIER IN ST PETERSBURG...DOUBLES AS A HIGHWAY.....IT WAS COMPLETED IN 2010 AT A COST -- OF SIX POINT FOUR BILLION DOLLARS.

JONATHAN GOLDSTICK,
VICE PRESIDENT, CH2M HILL

The barrier has closed three times and it's worked so well that the people of St Petersburg didn't even realize they've been saved from a flood.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

JONATHAN GOLDSTICK IS A VICE PRESIDENT WITH CH2M HILL HERE IN NEW YORK. IT'S A GLOBAL ENGINEERING COMPANY ON THE FOREFRONT OF WATER MANAGEMENT. HIS COMPANY HELPED BUILD THE 15-MILE LONG STORM SURGE BARRIER IN ST PETERSBURG AND HE'S INTERESTED IN BUILDING A SIMILAR 5-MILE LONG ONE FOR NEW YORK.

GOLDSTICK

The storm surge barrier concept is very real. I know when people including myself first hear about it seems way too big to be possible and how could it possibly work but we are not even talking about something bigger that's been done elsewhere. We are talking about something smaller that has been done elsewhere that has worked very effectively.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

BUILDING A BARRIER SYSTEM FOR NEW YORK COULD TAKE ANYWHERE FROM FOUR TO 10 YEARS, WITH COST ESTIMATES RANGING FROM 15-25 BILLION DOLLARS.

THAT'S A LOT OF MONEY...BUT SO IS THE COST OF FLOOD-PROOFING THE AIRPORTS, TUNNELS, UTILITIES, HOMES AND BUILDINGS ALONG NEW YORK HARBOR'S 500 MILES OF COASTLINE.

ADVOCATES FOR A STORM SURGE BARRIER, LIKE MALCOLM BOWMAN, KNOW THERE NEEDS TO BE A LOT OF STUDY BEFORE ANYTHING COULD BE BUILT.

BOWMAN

The next step would be the U.S. Army Corps. Of Engineers would be asked to do a major study.

RATHER

As they did in New Orleans after Katrina--

BOWMAN

And I believe they will be asked to do this. And some of that money that's just been released-- signed into law by-- President Obama will be used for that. I'm convinced that will happen. That study may take up to five years.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

NO ONE IS SUGGESTING BARRIERS ALONE ARE THE ANSWER. AND THE IDEA OF BUILDING BARRIERS IS CONTROVERSIAL.

CRITICS SAY THEY WON'T PROTECT ENOUGH OF THE COASTLINE, COULD CAUSE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AND ARE WAY TOO EXPENSIVE. OF COURSE, ANY BIG PROJECT WILL NEED COOPERATION AMONG LOCAL, CITY AND STATE OFFICIALS. FOR NOW THEY ARE DIVIDED ON SURGE BARRIERS.

NEW YORK'S MAYOR MICHAEL BLOOMBERG FOR ONE IS SKEPTICAL.

MICHAEL BLOOMBERG,
MAYOR, NEW YORK CITY (PRESS CONFERENCE, NOVEMBER 1, 2012)

I don't know that I think there's any practical ways to build barriers in the oceans--that's not--when you have an enormous harbor like we do, and Long Island sound-- even if you spent a fortune, it's not clear to me that you'd get much value for it.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

NEW YORK GOVERNOR ANDREW CUOMO, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS CALLED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE ENGINEERING EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL BARRIER SYSTEMS FOR NEW YORK HARBOR. THE THREAT FROM THE SEA ...THAT GREAT.

ANDREW CUOMO,
GOVERNOR, NEW YORK (2013 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS)

This was lower Manhattan in 1609. This is lower Manhattan now, all man-made filled areas. This is lower Manhattan with the Sandy storm surge. You can see that the man-made areas are the vulnerable areas to the storm surge.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

WE HUMANS HAVE ALTERED OUR ENVIRONMENT, BUILDING GREAT CITIES BY THE SEA. NOW THE SEA IS ADVANCING. THE QUESTION ... WHAT DO WE DO TO PROTECT THEM?

BOWMAN

Well, I think we have to decide as a community that--hat this great city is at risk. And we-- we must protect it at all costs.

RATHER

Can we afford not to do it?

BOWMAN

We cannot afford not to do it because the danger is there and with rising sea level increasing, maybe not frequency, but increasing strength of hurricanes and winter Nor-Easters. These kind of storms are gonna come-- back to haunt us again and again. I—

RATHER

You have no doubt of that?

BOWMAN

I have no doubt. I cannot tell you when the next big one will be. But it will come. It's inevitable in the long term. And the sooner we-- we come to that realization, the better. Because the longer you put it off, the more damage and destruction and heartache we're going to face.

RATHER (ON CAMERA)

PROFESSOR MALCOLM BOWMAN...WHEN WE RETURN, A PERSONAL TOUR OF A STILL DEVASTATED LOWER MANHATTAN, YOU'LL SEE THAT NEXT.

ACT 5: CITY ON THE EDGE

DAN RATHER (VOICE OVER)

IN THE SHADOW OF THE MAGNIFICENT BROOKLYN BRIDGE, THAT GREAT MONUMENT TO 19TH CENTURY ENGINEERING, AN HISTORIC NEW YORK NEIGHBORHOOD IS FACING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE. THESE COBBLESTONE STREETS ---- WITNESSES TO SO MUCH HISTORY ---- NOW FIND THEMSELVES ON THE FRONTLINES OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

MARCO PASANELLA,
PASANELLA & SON VINTNERS

This is oldest neighborhood in New York or at least in Manhattan. You really feel like you're part of the original New York City down here.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

MARCO PASANELLA HAS BUILT A LIFE AND LIVELIHOOD JUST STEPS AWAY FROM THIS SCENIC VISTA.

PASANELLA

We're standing in front of our store, our building, and it doesn't look like it was hit by Sandy but everything here was really destroyed. This whole window was pushed in.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HIS WINESHOP, PASANELLA AND SON, WAS ONE OF THE FIRST BUSINESSES IN THIS HISTORIC DISTRICT TO REOPEN AFTER THE STORM.

PASANELLA

The water came up to this white mark, so this white mark comes from the water and so it was this height all the way through the store -- which means everything below that line has been rebuilt - really everything below 8 feet.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

PASANELLA WAS ABLE TO SAVE HIS MOST EXPENSIVE WINES BY BRINGING THEM UP TO HIS APARTMENT ABOVE THE STORE. BUT MOST OF HIS INVENTORY WAS HEAVILY DAMAGED.

PASANELLA

This was the store the day after looking out towards the river -- just a bunch of muck.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

HE ESTIMATES SANDY COST HIM MORE THAN 100,000 DOLLARS - A LOT OF IT IN LOST BUSINESS. BECAUSE ALTHOUGH HIS DOORS ARE OPEN, MOST OF HIS NEIGHBORS' ARE NOT.

PASANELLA

This is my next-door neighbor, the Paris Café, it's been here since the 19th century -- you know, a really storied place. It was one of Thomas Edison's favorite hang-outs. In some way we were lucky compared to the Paris because we don't have a basement and -- all of our mechanical systems are upstairs so we neither had water underneath us nor a boiler to be submerged. These guys have had all of their mechanical systems flooded and that's why it's taking them so long to get up and running.

All of these buildings are empty -- all of the stores and all of the apartments above. This is a restaurant Barbarini, a restaurant Bin 220, a restaurant Nelson Blue -- all closed. It's pretty weird to be three blocks from Wall Street, you know, just in the backyard of City Hall and be so empty. I mean it's creepy. New York City?

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

PASANELLA SAYS IT MAY BE LATE SPRING, OR EVEN SUMMER, BEFORE THIS NEIGHBORHOOD COMES TO LIFE AGAIN.

PASANELLA

It usually just has, literally, tens of thousands of people are walking up and down this street going out towards the pier to take a look at the Brooklyn Bridge and maybe to do some shopping. None of those people are here. I mean, a few tourists who haven't gotten the memo.

RATHER (VOICE OVER)

THE STORY OF NEW YORK AND THE SEA WILL ALWAYS BE INTERTWINED. THIS CITY MADE ITS WEALTH BY TRADE, ITS SHORELINE ONCE CROWDED WITH SHIPS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE - AS SEEN IN THIS 1903 FILM BY THOMAS EDISON - ONE OF THE FIRST MOVIES EVER TAKEN OF NEW YORK. BUT AS OCEANS RISE, THIS PLACE, AND ALL COASTAL COMMUNITIES ARE GOING TO HAVE TO RETHINK THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE WATER. THAT MUCH IS CERTAIN. THE OPTIONS FOR WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT ARE NOT.

ACT 6: TEACHING TO THE TEST

DAN RATHER (ON CAMERA)

AND THAT'S OUR PROGRAM FOR TONIGHT...WE ALWAYS LIKE HEARING WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY. SO PLEASE JOIN IN THE DISCUSSION ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE, OR SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO VIEWER@AXS.TV

FROM NEW YORK, FOR AXS TV, DAN RATHER REPORTING. GOOD NIGHT.