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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN'S THE SITUATION ROOM

Wolf Blitzer: Joining us now, the Mayor of New York City Bill de Blasio. Mayor de Blasio, thank you so much for joining us. I know you've got a lot going on. Let's talk, first of all, about New York City public schools. They closed last week after the City seven-day average reached a three percent positivity testing rate threshold. What other restrictions are you ready to put into place? And at what point will you do that?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Yeah. There are more restrictions coming, Wolf. I've been very clear about that. Now, the State of New York has to make the ultimate decision, but they've put out the guidelines, and it's quite clear, unfortunately, in the next week or two we should see some substantial restrictions. I think indoor dining will be closed. Gyms will be closed. I'm not happy about it. No one's happy about it, but that's what's coming. On schools, we're going to have to reset the entire equation, come back with additional testing and additional approaches to get the schools back up and running. So, we had two months where we were able to have in-person education for hundreds of thousands of kids. But now, we're going to have to add additional features. Even though schools were very, very safe, we're going to have to add additional precautions to get the schools back. And that's what we intend to do.

Blitzer: Like what?

Mayor: More testing. We had a standard where our kids were being tested monthly in all our schools. That's going to have to be more frequent. We're going to have to see if we can do testing ahead. For example, all students having a test consent form on file and even testing them before they come into the school and getting a negative result. Those are the kinds of things we're looking at. And we're going to do whatever it takes, particularly for our special education kids and our younger kids, Wolf. That's where our focus is going to be, to get those schools back first, but with, again, a lot of safety and health precautions. We know we can do it. We've got to keep our kids and our staff safe. But parents also really, really are saying from their hearts that their kids are missing being in school and we've got to get them reopened.

Blitzer: It's so sad when you think about it, you've got the largest school district in the country in New York City. You heard in Lucy's package that Dr. Nicholas Christakis, a respected professor at Yale University said, I'm quoting, once again, "there should be no community in this nation where the bars are open, but the elementary schools are closed." I understand that's the case in New York City right now. What do you say to that?

Mayor: Well, it's not going to be the case where much longer. It's going to be the other way around soon, because, as I said, it's quite clear – and the State rules govern here, but by the

State's own standards it's inevitable that very soon you will see those bars closing, those restaurants too – for indoor dining – not outdoor, for indoor.

Blitzer: But it's getting cold. It's getting cold right now. You're not going to have much outdoor dining, right?

Mayor: Well, you know, with heaters and with the right kind of ventilation and all you can. And it's certainly safer than indoor dining. But the bottom line here is, and I'm not happy to say it, but it's true, that professor's going to get his wish. We are going to have those closed and schools reopening. That's the bottom line in New York City.

Blitzer: So, will schools reopen if it's still more than three percent positivity rate?

Mayor: The State rules provide us a pathway to reopening with a lot more testing and some very rigorous measures. And we intend to find a way to do it. It's going to take an immense logistical effort, but, Wolf, opening the schools to begin with, in the biggest school system in the country was not a picnic. Most people said it couldn't be done. We did it. We proved for two months, it was really, really safe. We set a very tough standard on how long we would stay open. Now, we're reset in that equation. I know we can come back. It's going to take on a lot of testing, but we're going to come back.

Blitzer: I hope so. Before I let you go, Mayor, I wonder how you and your family are planning to celebrate Thanksgiving. I know so many of our viewers in New York City and beyond, they're facing really tough personal decisions about how to celebrate this holiday on Thursday as this coronavirus, this pandemic is exploding in the U.S. right now.

Mayor: Wolf, I'm saying to people – I'm going to talk about my family, but the first thing I'm saying to everyone is do not travel, stay local, keep it small. If you love people, if you love your extended family, help them stay alive so we can all celebrate together in person next year, because I really believe by next Thanksgiving we'll be in the kind of situation where we can all come back together. So, in my case, I would normally travel for Thanksgiving. I'm not going to. I'm going to be missing some of the people that are closest to me in the world that I would always see on Thanksgiving. I hate it, but I want to keep them safe. And there'll be a very, very small group at Gracie Mansion. It won't feel like a traditional Thanksgiving, but we just have to get through this once, Wolf. And that's what I'm saying to the people in New York City, fight your way through it, skip the travel, keep it small, get through it one time, protect each other, fight back this second wave, and next year we're going to be in much, much better shape.

Blitzer: And next year, God willing, we'll have a safe and effective vaccine that will protect all of us and we'll be able to get back to some semblance of normality. Have a happy and safe Thanksgiving, Mayor de Blasio. Appreciate very much your joining us.

Mayor: You too, Wolf. Take care, man.

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