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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO SPEEDS UP 3-K FOR ALL ROLLOUT AND
ANNOUNCES 4 NEW DISTRICTS**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Wardi, thank you so much. I really want to thank you for telling your story and Aaron's story and helping parents all over New York City to understand how important 3K is and what an impact it can make on children's lives. And I have to tell you Wardi – first of all when we were upstairs with the kids in the classroom, the teacher before the kids got together to sing us a song talking about stage – what was it stage presence?

Wardi Arroyo: Stage presence.

Mayor: Stage presence. And the kids would all get ready to sing their song. Well you have stage presence. Alright, you have it already, and we appreciate it. You have a bold, strong voice.

But I loved what you said about for so many families they could not afford early childhood education for their child because like you just said it was like paying another rent. Let's face it – in this town cost of early childhood education can easily be \$1,000 a month, \$1,500 a month, even more. And for so many working families and middle class families that's a burden they cannot reach, which means this has what's happened for years and years – the educational opportunity got missed sheerly because of economic realities. So think about what this did in this city, and what it said about our society – some kids got to really maximize, some kids really got to find their whole potential early because those families happened to have that money to pay for the programs. Other kids didn't get that opportunity just because the families didn't bring home as much money – no one's fault, but that's what happened.

Here's a chance to right that wrong, and we've really devoted ourselves in the next four years to creating a city that becomes more and more fair for everyone. This is one of the most basic ways we can do that – that every 3-year-old get the same strong start and that it is universal, and it is free. That's what 3-K for All is all about.

[Applause]

I've got to give a special shout out. When you see these wonderful people wearing the 3-K for All shirts – and they're all around the room here – these are unsung heroes of New York City.

Some of them also were involved originally in the pre-K effort, and they took an idea that had never been done before in this city, and they went out all over communities and helped parents figure out the right place for their kids, and now they're going to do it again as we expand 3-K. So these wonderful teams – let's give them a big round of applause.

[Applause]

And I want to remind you this is government with a human face here. This is – instead of you call about 3-K, and you get a recording or something, you actually get to talk to real people who help you figure out where's the best place for your child, which is something we all want to do a lot more of – help the people of this city get what they need and have these wonderful facilitators there for them. So thank you to all of you.

I want to thank some of the folks – you'll hear from some of them – and I want to also acknowledge others. So many people contributed to first the decision to go ahead with 3-K for All and then making it come to life. I want to give a special thank you to our Deputy Mayor Richard Buery who's been the heart and soul of this effort. Thank you so much.

[Applause]

I want to thank our commissioner who's doing a great job at Administration for Children's Services and great coordination we've had between ACS and DOE as we build out 3-K for All. Thank you, Commissioner David Hansell.

[Applause]

And I want to thank, you know, we've had great partnership with our labor colleagues as well. And I want to thank the executive vice president for the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators Henry Rubio – thank you very much.

[Applause]

And I want to thank the shy and retiring Dr. Una Clarke.

[Applause]

Not only for all of her public service to the city – it continues to this day on the CUNY board – but also long before early childhood education was getting attention in this city, long before it was a priority of any city government, Dr. Una Clarke was saying this was the shape of things to come and blazing the trail. Well, guess what Dr. Clarke your dream has come true. Thank you.

[Applause]

So I want to speak as a parent first. My children Chiara and Dante went to our public schools from pre-K all the way to 12th grade. I and my wife Chirlane, every step along the way, we were concerned to make sure that they got what they needed, that we were there for them, that we

were talking to their teachers. We were deeply, deeply involved. And what was clear from that experience is when kids get that opportunity to thrive, there's limitless potential. But again it was also clear from our experience that not every child had that opportunity for pre-K, let alone for 3K. And that made me very adamant that we had to find a way to right that wrong because I saw the difference it could make. Both my kids went to full day pre-K. It happened to be available at the school they went to. It was a game changer.

I want to say to all parents – please, recognize what this means for your kids. That opportunity to learn and grow in the early part of life – it is literally irreplaceable. That train doesn't come around again. You know, from zero to five – and what is so strange about our society is we kind of built our school system backward on one level because I was saying to Wardi, you know, when she was coming up, certainly when I was coming up, the assumption was you started at kindergarten and anything before kindergarten was like, well, whatever happens, happens. Right? There was no sense of strategy. There was no sense of how do we capture that moment in a child's development. What we've come to understand is that literally from birth kids start learning, and if they're exposed to vocabulary, they're exposed to music, if they're exposed to dialogue, it really affects their growth. So in every home we have a chance to help give a child that strong start, but now we're making it easier and better by making clear that those great early childhood education opportunities will be available universally and for free.

Now parents need to know – and I ask everyone to spread this word – how much value it has. And the way I like to put it is that, you know, the mind's a sponge in those first years. It's amazing the growth potential of every child zero to five is stunning. What is true, sadly historically, is so many children when they were like flowers that weren't watered, they weren't given that chance to grow. But you start to expose young children at three years old to what a quality education looks like, they just take off like rockets. It's amazing how quickly they can move. And you're going to hear from a teacher in a moment, and she's going to tell you what she's seen just in the last few months. We came here in September. She's going to tell you what's happened between September and now with these three-year-olds because it's very, very inspiring.

So I ask all my fellow parents, spread the word. Some parents – I don't blame them – they're thinking well three years old is that too young to be in a classroom? No! Especially not in the modern age, three years old is a good time to be in a classroom. So we need to spread that word.

Now here's what we announced yesterday – I'm very excited about it – that we are going to double the number of districts that get 3-K in the next few years. We're going to expand it more quickly.

[Applause]

We originally said we're going to be able to do two a year on the way to the year 2021 when we want to go fully universal. We're now going to speed that up, and that means in the next few years we're going to add over 3,000 more 3-K seats. That means for the whole city over 14,000 almost 15,000 3-K seats and then another four or five thousand early learn seats. Altogether 19,000 three-year-olds will be served for free. That's going to make the difference.

[Applause]

Now, here is the news you can use.

[Laughter]

Okay – sign-ups for 3-K begin on Monday.

Okay, I want to make sure everyone knows this. Monday is a big day in New York City because that's when you can start signing up for 3-K for this coming September. Now, we already have 3-K here in district 23 in Brooklyn and district 7 in the Bronx – the south Bronx. In September, we will now add four additional districts. District 4 in East Harlem, district 5 in Harlem, district 16 in Bed-Stuy, district 27 in Southeast Queens, and – let me make sure I get them all right. Yep, I got them all right, right? That's two plus four equals six, right? I did that pretty well.

[Laughter]

So again, for the current districts and the new ones, I'm going to go over those numbers again. This is district all total. Districts 4, 5, 7, 16, 23, 27 for any parents in any of those school districts sign up begins Monday for September. So that's a big part of the city that is going to get coverage immediately. And we'll be adding more districts the following September, more the following September after that, and then go fully universal in 2021.

[Applause]

You may ask yourself, where do I get the information on how to sign up. Well, it's easy. You call 3-1-1 or you on the city website, nyc.gov/3k and you start; put in your name, put in your child's name and you start down the road. And if at any point you say hey I need to talk to a human being, they're right here and they get back to people within a few days and start working with you on finding the right place for your child. So it's really easy.

[Applause]

I want everyone to understand very quickly that we have to make this universal. We've already seen it with pre-K. A lot of people thought pre-K couldn't get done. It's now universal in New York City. Anyone who wants it gets it for free. And it has been amazing what it means to kids, what it means to parents and what it means to our schools too. I am hearing from so many teachers, the difference it makes to have kids having got that early start. It makes them better learners, it makes them more disciplined, they behave better. They know how to work in a group better. All sorts of amazing advantages. We will make this universal. And that comes in 2021. When we get there, we will serve over 60,000 three year olds every year, every single year.

[Applause]

Let me say a few words in Spanish before I turn to the Chancellor and I believe the Chancellor will also be introducing the wonderful 3-K teacher we were with earlier, Ms. Bruny. Give her a round of applause now.

[Applause]

You give her another round of applause when she comes up. Quick summary in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Call 3-1-1 its good in any language, call 3-1-1. With that I want to bring forward the Chancellor and she has done extraordinary work not only on early childhood, but all parts of education with us; pre-K, and 3-K, all the way up to Computer Science for All, Advanced Placement for All. She's doing amazing things. This is the last weeks of a sterling career. I want to make sure we thank her now and we keep thanking her for everything she has done for New York City, Chancellor Carmen Fariña.

[Applause]

Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña: Thank you, thank you. It particularly rewarding to be here today because some of you may have been in the audience about four years ago when I came to District 23. And all I heard is everyone's forgotten about us. No one ever comes here. We get no services, [inaudible] you were loud and clear on this one. What we need may not be what everybody else needs. But we can use is good for the rest of the city as well. And I think today is really the fruition of the promises we made. And when you look at equity and excellence. This is equity and excellence in action. If you need to give students an extra hand, the younger we start with them, the better. If you need parents to be raised to a different economic status, this is the way we do it, by giving them not day care, not child care, but educational opportunities, younger and younger, and younger. And for those of you who are not able –

[Applause]

To observe what I observed in the classroom today and thank you Ms. Bruny. And I know you're nervous, but don't be. You've done a great job. And enjoy your moment in the sun. I think what I saw today is the following. I saw three year olds that might have been in front of a TV or might have been working with an iPad, or might have been beating up no their little brother or sister or whatever it is, you know. Doing something quite different. I saw two little girls that were talking about transportation. And we're trying to figure out how to get his bus onto a trailer and not having too much success. But that's called inquiry based learning. That's called solving problems. That's very different than filling up ditto sheets, and just learning things by memorization. Why shouldn't the kids here have the opportunity to be thinkers and problems solvers?

And that's what really, really important. I went to another group of students that were playing with fruit – they were cooking, I mean cooking sausages, I know I saw a lot of fruit in there, right. But the reality is they were making decisions for themselves which means they're moving

towards independence. And for those parents who really think that keeping your kids home because you love them to death, you can't go to college with them. And letting them go younger, so they will learn how to do certain things when they really want to is really, really important. But the most amazing thing I have to say is how you got the kids from all the centers on the rug.

Now any parent who tries to get the kids to the kitchen table. How many times do you have to say it? Over, and over again. I think you did it once; you did it twice just to be sure. And they all converged on the rug. This is part of learning how to follow directions, how to work with others, how to also be able to wait your turn and also how to be called to attention. If you're not doing what everybody else is doing, and without any hassle, no one cried, no one said I don't want to do it. Some of them took a little longer than others.

But it also is when we find was one of the biggest lacks in kindergarten and first grade for kids who did not have stamina, and did not know how to focus. Many of you may have heard from your older children [inaudible] he can't or she can focus. Well they can't if they don't learn how too. So this is the kind of program that encourages kids to focus. And then they perform for us. That was fabulous. And by the way, when they sang I want to be clear. Singing is not a frivolous activity. For them to sing, they had to have learned music. They have to learn to remember the songs, which is what you need for reading as well. In order to get up there you had to feel good about yourself and there were or two I am thinking right now bit of show offs, would you say? And that's okay, because that's self-confidence. Self-confidence doesn't come from staying home and watching TV. Self-confidence means from getting up – and by the way one of the kids wanted to make sure we applauded two or three times and we [inaudible].

So to me if I could say anything at all is. Understand that this is a very golden opportunity. I like the Mayor sent my children starting school at two and a half. I was a working mom. But I have to tell you I've researched four different early childhood centers before I picked one. And I also picked one that would be so much easier for me to pick them up because there was nothing in schools those days. And then very carefully saw them grow from two girls who you know, they were pretty good kids. But they learned to play with others. They learned to be risk takers; they learned to wait their turn. Guys this is a very important one. They learned to wait their turn. And then they also did something that I can talk enough about. They came home to the dining room table to talk about things that I hadn't seen and I knew nothing about. So you keep your kids home with you all day. What is the new stuff that you're bringing to the table that no one is going to know about?

So when they came in, they were the owners of knowledge, they were teaching us. And I still remember one thing. They made pancakes in class, it was a disaster. But the fact that they were talking about it meant that they were sharing something, and they were learning how to be verbal. So for the parents who are listening in Spanish all I can say is.

[Chancellor Fariña speaks in Spanish.]

[Applause]

I want to introduce the teacher Mrs. Bruny. And you know to work with three olds, for those of you who have three year olds at home, it's not easy. The one thing I was taken aback is her patience. And the more she needed the kids to do something the lower her voice went. That's a real teacher tool. You need to lower you voice when you want kids to listen, you don't raise it. Mothers you know this, right? The louder you speak, the less they listen. So it's my pleasure to introduce Mrs. Bruny to all of you.

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