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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, good morning, everybody. I hope everyone had a joyous and safe Thanksgiving. And even though this Thanksgiving was definitely different, I hope you got to feel the warmth and the love of your family and friends. However, you did that, I hope you got to feel it, and I hope it will help sustain you in the weeks ahead. We're here today with a major announcement regarding our school system. And I want to start with just a moment of reflection on what we have been through up to now. You go back to the summer, Chancellor Carranza and I were adamant that we believed reopening our schools was the right thing to do, that our kids needed it. Parents had a lot of concerns. Educators and staff had a lot of concerns. A lot of people said it could not be done, but we believed it could be done and it could be done safely. And we became one of the few major cities in America to reopen our schools, in fact, by far, of course, the biggest school system in America. What we did a lot of people looked at with amazement and that's a credit to our educators and our staff, everyone at the Department of Education, our custodial services team, food services, school safety, everyone who was a part of that. They believed they could do it. And they did. And we kept our school safe and we did it in real-life conditions. We prove that schools could be extraordinarily safe because we put a tremendous number of health and safety measures in place, created that gold standard of combined health and safety actions that worked. What we didn't know back in July and August, we do know now that these steps work, and they keep kids safe and they keep the whole school community safe.

But we also said at the time that we would set a strict standard and we would live by it. And if we hit three percent, we'd have to reevaluate the whole situation. We did, of course, hit three percent. We did a temporary closure of our schools. And then we went about the work immediately of resetting the entire equation and trying to determine a path that would be sustainable. Regardless of the challenges we faced, we needed something sustainable that could link us up to the time when we would have the vaccine widely distributed. And so, we focused on increasing the health and safety measures, doubling down on the things that work, making them even more stringent and exacting. Had conversations with our stakeholders, conversations with the State. I've had a number of conversations with the Governor. We've been working through, how do we take all those good lessons of health and safety and amplify them with new measures? So, that is exactly what we now will put in place. We will have testing that is going to go from monthly in every school to weekly in every school. We will have a consent forms required for attendance. I want to emphasize this. Students will not be able to attend school unless they have a consent form on record period. This is something for everyone's health and safety. And as we open school in phases – and I'll go over to phases in a moment – wherever possible, we will, in schools that have the ability, go to five-day-a-week instruction. This is for the students who already were in blended learning or the ones who opted in recently. For any

school that does have the space and the ability to move to five-day-a-week in-person instruction, for those kids that will now be the preferred model. So, we'll have in-person instruction for those who are part of that approach, remote for all other kids.

The situation room will also, of course, continue to do its extraordinary work. And this has been one of the big X-factors. The situation room has allowed us to keep each individual school safe with very exacting follow-through on every reported case and quick action to address what the ramifications of the case would be. Whether it means in some cases, the classroom needs to be closed for a period of time or even a whole school. That approach has worked, that will stay strong. Obviously, all the social distancing rules, mask wearing everything that's worked before, but with these new measures. So, that is the basic approach. And now here's the important news. Beginning the week of Monday, December 7th, New York City public schools will begin to reopen. We will begin with elementary schools K-5 and our pre-K, 3-K public school centers. And then later that week on Thursday, December 10th, our District 75 special education programs. So, New York City public schools will be reopening in phases starting on Monday, December 7th.

Now, we are focusing on the younger grades – let's be clear – focusing on the younger grades on that Monday, all K-5 programs, whether they're standalone or part of a bigger school, those grades will come back. And those pre-K, 3-K centers. Why? Because we know, first of all, studies consistently show that younger kids are having less of a negative experience. And there's less concern about the spread when it comes to younger kids. Also, the demands that our parents are going through. And I feel for all our parents who are experiencing so many challenges right now, how important it is for them to have their younger kids in school, how important that is at that age, both educationally and socially, but also in terms of how parents juggle all the challenges in their life. And then District 75, they have a little bit of extra work to do to get District 75 programs back up and running. But as I said, Thursday, December 10th, District 75 schools, special needs programs. So crucial. We want to be there for those kids and their families that go through so much. We've heard from those families, they need this back. So, we will get that up and running. Now that's going to be the vast majority of the city, those levels. We're going to address in the future of middle school and high school, but we're not ready for those yet. That's just the plain truth. We will work to get to that day, but we're not there yet.

I do want to address schools that happen to be in the orange zone areas of the city, and that's just a small part of the city right now. But we will work to open those schools as well. Following the very clear State guidelines. The State guidelines require a lot. We will work to meet those goals and reopen those schools as early as the week of December 7th. Some particular work that has to be done there, but we're going to go to that work immediately and see what we can do to get as many of those open as possible. Look, whatever happens ahead, we want this to be the plan going forward, because we now believe we know what we didn't know back in the summer. We know what works through actual experience. And we know that if you put a heavy emphasis on testing and you continually reinforce those health and safety measures, you monitor carefully with the situation room, we know we can keep our schools safe for the duration and link up to that day when we have the vaccine that changes the whole reality for all of us.

Here to speak about why this is so important and how we are going to make it work, someone who believed from the beginning that we could reopen the nation's largest school system and has been a strong voice throughout for finding the way to keep it open and do it the right way, our Chancellor, Richard Carranza.

Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. When we made the painful decision to close schools temporarily, we did it with the health and safety of our students and staff at the forefront of our minds. We are seeing cases rise across our city, which is why we're increasing testing in tandem with continued rigorous interventions. And as you've mentioned, our situation room is performing heroically to act on positive cases when they do arise. Our schools have been remarkably safe and it's important that we're taking good care to keep them that way while New Yorkers do everything we can to stop the spread. Getting our children back in school buildings is one of the single most important things we can do for their wellbeing. And it's so important that we do it right. With these new measures in place, I and the entire team is confident that we're on track to safely and successfully keep our schools open for the duration of this pandemic. I, once again, will add my voice to yours, Mr. Mayor, and implore upon all New Yorkers, please follow the medical advice, please limit your interactions, please wear your mask. If you want schools to open and stay open, it's upon all of us to do our share, to keep them open. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you very much, Chancellor. And we're going to be talking about that a lot. A lot of people have been saying, rightfully – a lot of parents, we've heard your voices loud and clear, you wanted schools back open, but we're going to ask everyone to be a part of that, everyone to participate to make it work. And we'll be talking about that this week and beyond.

Okay, now, in that very same vein, what can you do? Every parent, we need you to get that consent form, for testing, in. I want to be very, very clear for any child to be in a classroom going forward they either will have to have a testing consent form on file or an appropriate medical exemption from a doctor. If folks have a concern, they need to talk to a doctor, we will facilitate that through Health + Hospitals. But literally every single student who will be in person will need that. We'll get you the exact number, but it's in the neighborhood of about 330,000 kids who will qualify to be in person, but it can only work if everyone has a consent form on file. So, parents, if you are one of the parents that really wants your kid back in school and you already were in blended learning, or you signed up during the opt-in period, here's what you need to do. You have to go online, please do it right away. Go to mystudent.nyc, fill out that testing consent form. The other acceptable option is for the child to bring it on their first day of school when we come back. But we need this to happen to keep everyone safe. This was a crucial part of resetting the entire equation that this would be a strict rule. And every parent who cares about getting their kid back in the classroom, help us by getting that form in.

Okay, let's go over today's indicators. One, the daily number of people admitted to New York City hospitals for a suspected COVID-19, threshold 200 patients. Today's report, 130 patients. Confirmed positivity level of 48.12 percent. Number two, new reported cases on a seven-day average, threshold 550 cases. Today's report, 1,636 cases. And number three, percent of people testing positive citywide for COVID-19, threshold five percent. Today's report, the daily is not yet ready because we've had an aberrantly low number of tests come in. Obviously, it's a holiday,

so we don't feel we have an accurate measure. We'll put that up as soon as we have something accurate, we do have a clear picture on a seven-day rolling average. That is 3.9 percent. Okay, let's have a few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that let's turn to our colleagues in the media and please let me know the name and outlet of each journalist.

Moderator: Hi, all. We'll now begin our Q-and-A. With us today is Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza, Health Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi, and Senior Advisor Dr. Jay Varma. With that, we'll go to Jillian from NY1.

Question: Hi Mayor. Thanks for taking my question today. I guess I'll start with – it seems like we're no longer using the three percent threshold as something to close schools. Will anything replace that? Is there a figure at which you'll want to close schools citywide again, or is this an entirely different approach?

Mayor: Jillian, it's a new approach because we have so much proof now of how safe schools can be, and this has come from real life experience in the biggest school system in America, right here in New York city, and so when you combine all the measures we've had before that – gold standard of health and safety measures, plus the situation room, plus the new testing and other standards we're putting in place, we feel confident that we can keep schools safe. We'll continue to work with the State on any other standards going forward. But, right now, we think this is the best way to move ahead because it's been proven. Go ahead.

Question: And as far as middle and high school goes, I know you're saying that there's no timeline for that. What's the reason for that delay? Is it to scale up the testing capacity or is it, are you going to use that space potentially for other grade level students? I know that's been suggested – what's the reason for the phasing in?

Mayor: Jillian, you're right. The amount of testing is a crucial piece of the equation. So, since we're moving to weekly testing, that's going to take a lot of capacity. We wanted to make sure we can do that consistently and well, and that's why it's important to go by phases. Also, again, the need levels for District 75, for younger kids, the need is even more intense to be there in school, and we know that the health realities for the youngest kids have been the most favorable. So, all of those reasons are why we're doing it. Now we look forward to the day when we can move to middle and high school, but we're just not able to do that yet.

Moderator: Next is Eliza from the New York Times.

Question: Hi, can you hear me?

Mayor: Yeah. Eliza, how you doing?

Question: Hi, I'm okay. How are you?

Mayor: Good, thank you.

Question: First I have a math question that I have a broader question. How many kids are actually eligible to go back the week of the 7th? Because I know we're, you know, it's not the whole universe of 300,000 because middle and high schools won't be open.

Mayor: Yes. The 330,000 or so is everyone – you're right for elementary, K-to-5, for Pre-K, 3-K, for D-75, we're going to confirm that number to you. I believe it's around 190,000, and anyone from that universe will be able to come back, again with the consent form on file.

Question: Great, and so I just wanted to ask, I mean, we're going to have maybe, you know, 200,000 to 300,000 kids who have five days a week, which is fantastic for those families. Are you concerned that we have a third of the system now with semi-regular school and you know, many, many more kids, hundreds of thousands of kids that have all remote indefinitely? Do you have concerns about the sort of disparities there between the two parts of the system?

Mayor: I'll start now turn to the Chancellor. Of course, we want the data to come soon where everyone could be back in the classroom together. That would be the optimal. But we really tried to emphasize the rights of parents and families to make a choice from the very beginning of the first thing the chancellor did, was did a survey of parents to find out what they wanted going way back to the summer, and we have adjusted as we've gone along, according to the needs of parents, to the maximum extent possible while putting a health and safety first, obviously. Let's be clear. Some schools will be able to go to five days a week, right away. They've already some have already done it. Some have been planning for this moment. We'll be able to do it right away. Some will need more time to get ready, so it's not all going to happen on the first day. I want to be very, very clear, but the model now for Pre-K, 3-K, for K-to-5, for D-75, for any school that can do it, that has the right space and staffing to move to five days a week as quickly as possible – for some that will be as early as Monday, December 7th.

To your disparity point, Eliza. Yes, I'm very concerned about that, but I also know that if we do this right, we'll be able to serve the families who want to be in person better, and for the families that are remote, the day will come when the health situation changes substantially, particularly with the vaccine, and then we're going to rework the equation again, that will be another time when we reset the equation and offer people new opportunities. Go ahead, Chancellor.

Chancellor Carranza: Yes, Mr. Mayor, I'll only add that our goal Eliza always is to serve as many students in person on as many days as possible. That's our goal. Understanding some of the physical constraints with some of our school buildings, understanding that not everyone will have the space – we obviously are very concerned about any kind of disparity and are working very hard to make sure that we're really solving for those disparate circumstances. That being said, this is another reason why it was so important for families to indicate whether they wanted in-person learning, and we set a hard deadline because that has actually given principals now the opportunity to look at how many students are actually coming and because they have solid numbers, they're able to, in many cases, reprogram and get more days of in-person instruction in

place. So again, we will always have as a goal to serve as many students on as many days as possible, given the parameters, given the geography of the buildings, et cetera.

Mayor: Thank you. Go ahead.

Moderator: Next is Reema from Chalkbeat.

Question: Hi everyone. Good morning. Good afternoon, I guess almost. I just wanted to make sure I understood just now that there's going to be weekly testing. At what point would the schools close again or what would you know? I know that that that's obviously not your hope at all, but what would be the trigger that would cause the system to close down again? Or would it be a completely different approach this time?

Mayor: Yeah, Reema. Very good question, and the answer is completely different. We – to get the school system open, we set a particularly stringent standard and the Chancellor and I, and the health team talked about this a lot. There was a lot of concern. There was a lot of doubt. We certainly understood why people were so concerned. It was something we had never done before, but throughout September, October, into November, we proved that our schools could be safe. The previous approach doesn't apply anymore. It's a new approach now, where we're doing much more testing, we're requiring the consent forms, and we now know also the situation room, which was only an idea when we started, that that's been an extraordinarily powerful tool. So with all those pieces coming together we're convinced we can keep schools safe and do it in a sustainable manner. So this is a whole new approach now. Go ahead, Reema.

Question: Yeah, I guess just to follow up on that. So, to be clear, will it work in the way that it's been working with the school by school closure? So, if, for example, in your weekly testing, if you have a number of people who test positive, then would that trigger like a closure or a building closure? Like how would that work at this point?

Mayor: The way the situation room has been working up to now, that will continue, and there'll always be an investigation. If they find something that requires a temporary closure, there's always an investigation to determine the larger ramifications and then acting accordingly on what the situation room and our Test and Trace team finds. That's been tremendously effective. We're going to stick with that. Go ahead.

Moderator: Next is Sydney from Gothamist.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. Thanks for taking my question. I want to ask about the testing mandates, the weekly testing mandates. Could you detail how much more testing that would actually be compared to what you all are doing now, and does this have enough locations and supplies to carry out that testing and how will those locations and supplies be added to meet the new mandate?

Mayor: This is part of what we have really had to focus on in the last week or so is perfecting this approach. A lot of conversations over the last few days over this weekend to make sure that everything was lined up. The answer is yes, part of what we found is because we've been

expanding testing capacity constantly in New York City that we now had a lot more, we could utilize in schools. Again, we're going from a monthly requirement to a weekly requirement, but we're also going to do it to begin in many fewer schools because we are not yet ready to move forward middle or high school. So, the answer is yes, we have the capacity and the logistical reach to do weekly testing in every one of the schools that will be open, and we think that's going to make a huge difference in terms of helping us assure everyone that we can keep them safe and keep the school community moving forward. Go ahead.

Question: Okay, and then my other question is also on testing will all the students who return the week of December 7th be tested before returning, and then will the weekly testing be all the students or a certain percentage. Could you detail that as well?

The weekly testing will be modeled on the approach that has been used on the monthly basis up to now. So it'll be 20 percent of the kids in the school. That will be done on a weekly basis. There will not be pretesting. It will be done every week that school is in session. For a school in the orange zone, we'll follow state rules and whatever additional measures we have to follow as a result, we will.

Moderator: Next is Steve from WCBS Radio.

Mayor: You say Steve, Steve. Steve, are you there?

Moderator: Steve, are you there, Steve?

Mayor: I don't hear Steve.

Moderator: Steve, we'll come back to you.

Mayor: Let's get back to Steve.

Moderator: Let's go to Jen from WNBC next.

Question: Hey, Mr. Mayor I'm speaking with you from here at 30 Rock where the Christmas tree is up and it's going to be lit this week. So, I'm hoping you could give us some information about how—

Mayor: Wait a minute. We lost you Jen. Jen, are you there? We're going to come back to Jen. Okay. At least we know our topic. Okay. One of those days.

Moderator: We're going to try Steve again. This is Steve from WCBS Radio.

Question: Hey, is this working now.

Mayor: There you go, Steve, how you doing?

Question: Good. I hope you had an alright. Thanksgiving given the circumstances.

Mayor: Definitely, how about you, Steve?

Question: Yeah, it was all right. A lot of video calls, a lot of phone calls. Did the best we could. First, I wanted to ask about any more chances for parents to opt in. Obviously, the last opt-in period was in the context of numbers rising. We were getting close to three percent. So, it seemed like the overarching kind of feeling was what's the point right now, schools are just around the corner from closing. So, for parents who see this new plan and see some amount of confidence in this new plan, would there be any opportunity for them to get back in on this?

Mayor: It's a great question, Steve. First, it's important to note that even with the backdrop you've talked about over 30,000 parents decided they did want to opt in during that period. And we're going to honor that, of course, I think the simple answer is, let's get this new approach going, let's work our way up through it and get the health situation addressed, particularly through the vaccine, which could be coming as early as December. And, obviously, it will take some months to play out, but we need to see what's going to be happening with the vaccine. When the health situation clearly improves, that is obviously the right time to do another opt-in, because then we're going to be having a whole different set of circumstances where we'll be able to accommodate more kids. But a lot has to be worked out between now and then. Go ahead, Steve.

Question: Sure. So, another question kind of related to that old three percent threshold. I know back when previous plans were announced, you had organized labor partners sitting next to you there from UFT, CSA. I wanted to know how big of a role they played in this new plan. And, you know, obviously, they may not be as satisfied as they were before, because there's not that hard threshold that they had liked.

Mayor: Look, we've worked very closely with both those unions and DC 37 and the Teamsters who represent school safety, the custodial unions, everyone throughout. And I think one of the things that's been very clear is, folks wanted school to keep moving forward and be open so long as it can be done safely. There's been a lot of consultation. One of the crucial things we heard from our union partners was more testing and required consent forms or medical exemptions. That's been crucial to this plan. So, look, I think as per usual people are going to be watching carefully and raising whatever concerns they have, but there's been a lot of good dialogue about what it would take to make this work. And a lot of focus on the situation room – I think that the success of a situation room – and I want to do a shout out here to Commissioner Melanie La Rocca, the Buildings Department, who's led the way with a great team at the situation room. One of the things our labor partners have really focused on is that that has been a big, really good X-factor in this equation and one of the things that gives them faith that we can keep things safe.

Moderator: We're going to go back to Jen again – Jen, from WNBC.

Question: Thank you. Apologies for the audio issues here. In any case, what I was saying, Mr. Mayor, was if you could please give us a sense of how the City is going to control crowds around the tree and will that include any street closures here around 30 Rock? Thanks.

Mayor: Thank you, Jen. Important question. First, we've been working with the State on the right way to approach this and we have agreed on a ticketing plan. Details will be announced later on today or tomorrow. And the idea is we're going to really limit the number of people by using a ticketing approach. Obviously, we'll have substantial presence out there from NYPD and other agencies to keep people safe. We expect some efforts to make sure there's ample space like we did in previous years where we closed off some lanes of traffic. But, again, remember, we want to make really clear to people not to come out in large numbers and to be really smart about distancing. So, we're going to adjust those plans to achieve that goal.

Moderator: We have time for two more –

Mayor: Wait. Do you have a follow-up, Jen?

Moderator: Sorry –

Question: Yeah, just one quick follow-up. So, there will be street closures, but it sounds like you're encouraging people not to come out and see the tree in large numbers at end to wear masks, obviously, and distance from others if they're here?

Mayor: Jen, 100 percent. Look, let's take a parallel of the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade, which, you know, came off very successfully. The message I put out, Macy's put out is this is not a spectator event like it's been in the past and we all need to stay safe and we need to avoid crowds. And people really honored that. I'd say the same thing here. If you get a ticket, great, go see it. There will obviously be distancing. People will be wearing masks. If you're, you know, walking by the area, great, you'll see it. But what we do not want and can't have is large crowds of people trying to get close. It's just not safe. It's not like – I don't need to tell anyone, but I'm going to say it again, it's just not like holidays we've gone through before. Let's get through 2020, let's turn the page. In 2021, we can all get back there to celebrate the tree the right way. But this year is, less is more.

Moderator: We do have time for two more now. First, we're going to go to Katie from the Wall Street Journal.

Question: Hey, happy Sunday, Mayor de Blasio and everybody. My first question is about the capacity of teachers for more in-person education. I know there were so many teachers who got remote accommodations through the calendar year. So, if you and the Chancellor want to discuss the teaching, staffing, and then what you will plan if you need to make changes.

Mayor: Thank you, Katie. I think the important point here is, as we move to five-day a week construction, it actually will simplify things in the schools and I think teachers and, certainly, both of the unions, UFT and CSA, have been excited by this prospect. It's going to allow things to be simpler and more manageable at the school level. I'll have the Chancellor speak to it, because he's been the teacher, he's been a principal, he's been everything in the school system. So, go ahead, and talk about that.

Chancellor Carranza: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Katie, it's a really good question. And part of the timeline that the Mayor had talked about in terms of some will be ready to go right on December 7th, some schools will need a little bit more time – that's part of the calculus involved with reprogramming schools. So, in some cases where you've had one teacher and three students, now there's an opportunity for that school to reprogram and maybe have seven or eight students, which is still medically advisable in that classroom. And then, it frees up another teacher to perhaps take more students and create another classroom based on how many parents and students have chosen in-person learning. That's the kind of school by school, classroom by classroom analysis that our principals will be doing – some have already done. And then, that will determine how we reallocate, if you will, what teachers are doing not only in-person, but in a remote setting as well. So, I would also agree with what the Mayor has said in that in some cases, this is going to simplify – instead of having three different modalities – in-person, blended and then fully remote – in some cases you'll have just two modalities, which then is less complicated to program as well. It's not going to be completely easy. It's still a Herculean task for our principals and our school communities. But this is an exciting opportunity for those families that have chosen in-person to have more days of in-person learning.

Mayor: Go ahead, Katie.

Question: Thank you. And my second one, I think it was sort of already asked, but we were collectively confused by the answer and it's about the – you know, the two-case building closure policy and other policies that had been in place for closure. How will that change? Will it change? And, if so, what will it change to when – you know, if there are inevitable cases of COVID in buildings?

Mayor: Yeah. Katie, I'm confused by the confusion you're expressing. So, let's try again. Maybe you can just outline to me – what I said was the situation room will continue to operate the way it has. So, tell me what the issue is – you need clarification is.

Question: Oh, I mean, will it still be – you know, I think it's two cases will close the building for an amount of time. Will that remain the same?

Mayor: There's more to it than that and there always has been. There's a bunch of different scenarios, Katie, throughout. And the most important point is, when there's a case, there's an investigation, and the investigation leads to different outcomes, depending on if cases are linked or not, or where they find the origin of the cases to be. So, it's not just one size fits all. It's based on the specifics of the investigation. We're going to take that same approach and continue to apply it, because it's worked.

Moderator: Last is Shant from the Daily News.

Question: Yeah. Good morning, Mr. Mayor. You know, I know that you're saying it's – you're going to rely on the situation room to evaluate potential school closers, but I'm still trying to just kind of grasp the shift away from, you know, tying school opening to, you know, a specific COVID threshold citywide. I mean, is it – is this now more of an art than a science? Just any thoughts in that vein?

Mayor: Shant, it's a fair question. But what I'd say is the biggest X-factor here is that we learned through experience what it would take to keep schools safe and we proved it over and over. The combination of all the safety measures in the schools, plus the situation room, and then the determination that with additional testing, that would be such a careful conservative model that this would now be the sustainable model. The idea of the hard number made a lot of sense back in the summer when we had not yet experienced all this. Now that we've experienced it, we think this approach using all these measures to make it work is the sounder approach. I've had this conversation with the Governor, our teams have talked, we all agreed that we have a different reality than what we had in the summer and that this is now the way forward and the best way to protect everyone. Go ahead, Shant.

Question: Yeah. Thanks for that. So, I mean, you know, in light of everything that's happened the past few weeks and you and your team coming up with this new approach, do you at all regret shutting down schools on November 19th?

Mayor: Shant, let me just say, I know parents really were concerned and were very frustrated and I felt bad about it, for sure, and I didn't want to do it, but I felt we had to keep the commitment we made and we had to come up with something new and it took a lot of work to figure out what would really be sustainable, because, again, now the goal, Shant – this is to your previous question as well – is that this will be the model for the duration, that this is what is going to take us through to when we have a vaccine and when we can start to then open up a lot more in our schools. We do not want a situation where there were constant changes. We're trying to get to something as consistent as possible based on real experience, which really has opened up the possibilities for us, because we learned so much. No, I felt very bad about it. And I felt, you know, pained. I didn't want to do that to kids or parents, but I felt we had to keep our commitment and we had to come up with something stronger and more stringent and more sustainable. And I really believe this plan will be the way that we can move forward from this point on.

Okay, everyone. Look, I'll finish with this point. It all comes down to you in the end. This is what we've learned over and over from the coronavirus, is that government has such an important role to play setting the standards and giving people constant updates and guidance and leaning on the data and the science constantly, but nothing works without the people. So, we need you to make this new approach work. This is the approach could take us all the way through to when we have the vaccine widely distributed, it's still possible to bring back our schools for a huge number of kids five days a week in the spring, if all goes well with the vaccine. But to get to that point, we had to keep people safe in the meantime. So, we need everyone – please focus on the social distancing and the mass gathering – mask wearing, excuse me – limit gatherings, do all those things. But also, parents, if you're in that group of parents that is signed up for in-person learning, we need you fill out that test consent form. If you have any questions or concerns, our school team and our Health + Hospitals team will always be available to talk to you in multiple languages. But we need parental involvement to make this work, to bring back the schools, starting on Monday, December 7th, and then keep them open for the duration as part of bringing this whole city back and serving our parents and families. Thank you, everyone.

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