

Cuomo wants schools in NYC to remain open

Dave Goldiner

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NEW YORK – Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Saturday that New York City should “seriously consider” keeping public schools open even if the coronavirus positivity rate hits 3% as expected in coming days or weeks.

The governor said the city should consider the lower positive rates within schools – compared to the community – before shutting down.

“If the school has a much lower rate, the school is not part of the problem,” Cuomo said. “You could argue that keeping kids in the schools is part of the solution.”

New York City authorities came up with the 3% figure in the summer to mandate school closures as a way of removing what the governor called the possibility of political interference with public health. The figure was at 2.47% on Saturday, Mayor Bill de Blasio said.

“But that could change,” the Democratic mayor tweeted, warning that the city was facing “a critical weekend” in combating the pandemic. “We MUST fight back a second wave to keep our schools open,” he said.

Cuomo set a statewide maximum of 5% but has not spoken out against the lower number in the city until now.

COVID-19 in a more precise way.

“I would add a second calculus. It’s safer and provides more intelligent data,” he said. “New York City should seriously consider that.”

De Blasio said city public schools would close if the city’s overall positivity rate hit 3%. Cuomo said he spoke to the mayor but did not reveal what his reaction was. Asked previously whether he would consider altering the criteria for a citywide school closure, de Blasio has said it’s important to stick to what the city said it would do.

“We set a standard, and we asked everyone to trust in it. And part of keeping trust is staying consistent,” he said Friday on WNYC radio.

New York City has the nation’s largest public school system. It became one of few big-city systems to reopen classrooms this fall after the pandemic forced schools online in the spring.

Families of New York’s more than 1 million students could choose to stick with all-remote learning for the fall, or try a new “hybrid” plan involving some days in school and others on-screen.

About 280,000 students have attended in person, far fewer than the city originally expected.

So far this fall, the city has responded to virus cases among students and staffers by closing specific classrooms and school buildings, rather than the entire system.

below what New York state endured in the early days of the pandemic.

Contributed: The Associated Press



New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo says New York City and the state have a more sophisticated and extensive testing program, which he says allows authorities to track the spread of COVID-19 more precisely. MIKE GROLL/ OFFICE OF GOV. ANDREW M. CUOMO

But Cuomo said the city and state now have a more sophisticated and extensive testing program, which he said allows authorities to track the spread of

Meanwhile, COVID-19 cases and positive test rates continue to rise across New York.

Cuomo announced 5,388 new COVID- 19 cases were recorded in the state Friday. More than 1,788 New Yorkers were hospitalized and 24 people died.

Those numbers remain much lower than other states and are still far