



Issues with DOE's implementation of class size reduction

Presentation to CPAC

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Nov. 12, 2024

New class size law passed June 2022 by NYS legislature & signed by Gov. in Sept 2022, who gave DOE an extra year to comply

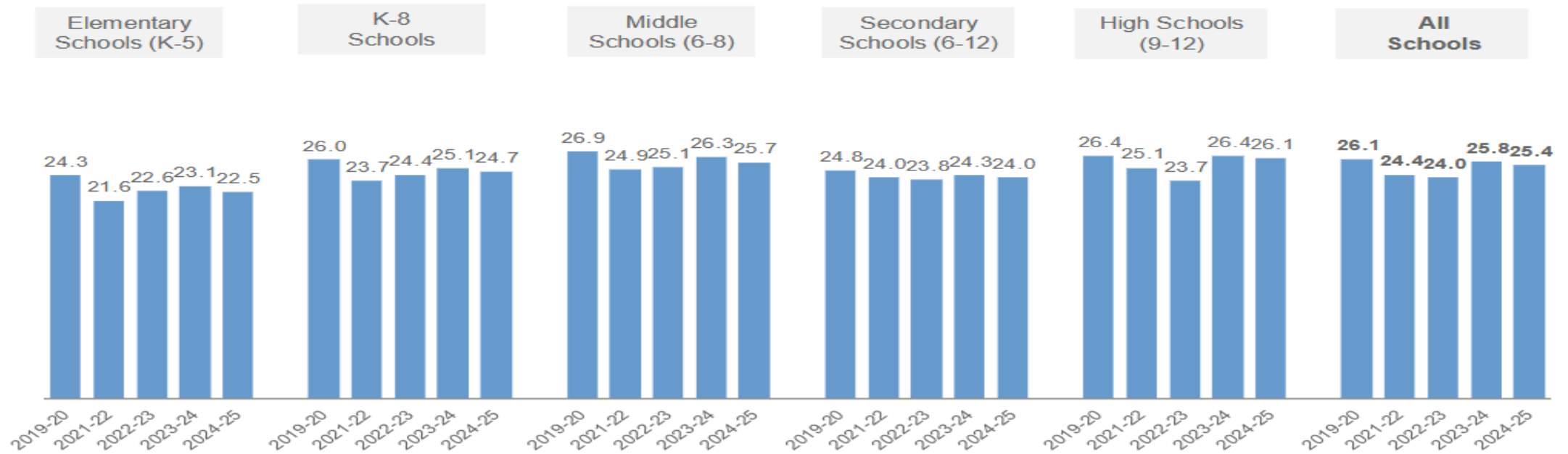
- Law requires NYC to provide a 5-yr class size reduction plan to cap class size at 20 students in grades K-3, 23 in grades 4th-8th, and 25 in HS classes by the end of the Sept. 2028.
- Phys education and performing art group classes to be limited to 40 students per class instead of 50.
- An additional 20% of all classes supposed to achieve these caps each year.
- Schools with highest levels of poverty to be prioritized for smaller classes first.
- Some exemptions allowed in the law but only with agreement of UFT and CSA.

Where are we now in 2024-2025 school year?

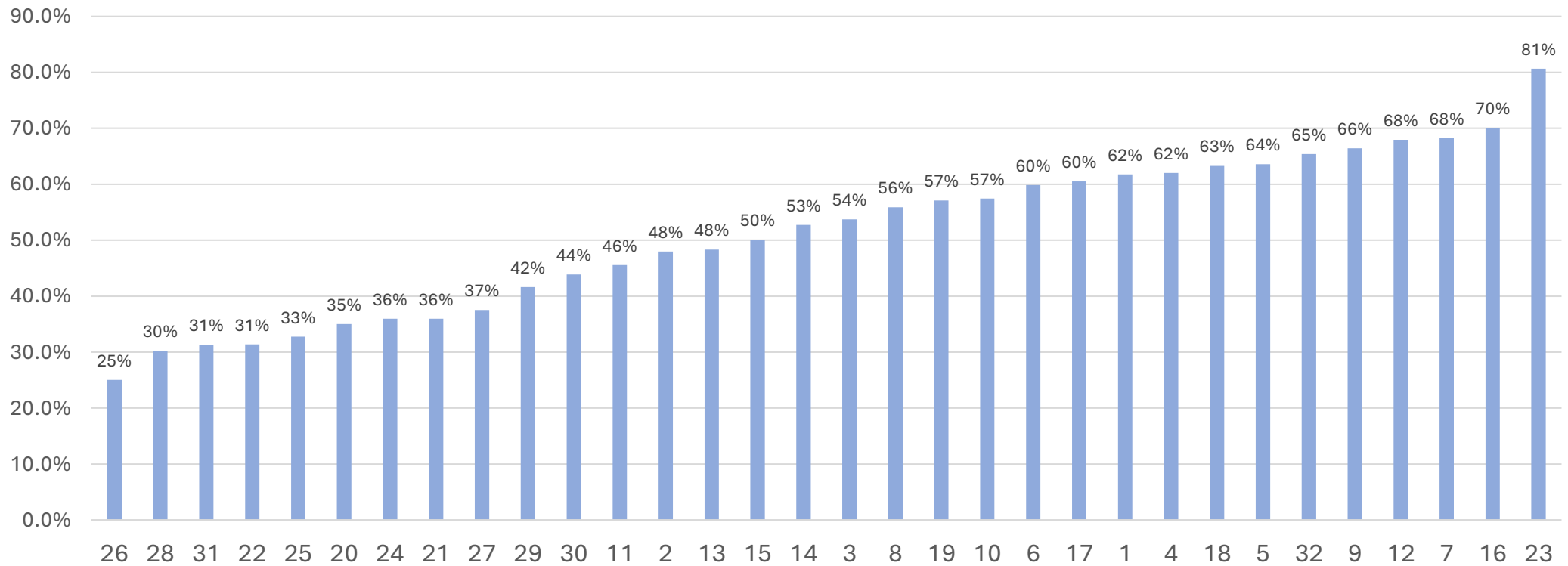
- We are now in the 2nd year of the five-year phase in.
- DOE was already at more than 40% compliance when law was passed, mostly due to enrollment decline & we did meet 40% benchmark this year
- But class sizes increased in most schools after the law passed because of ongoing school budget cuts and enrollment increase last year
- Meeting 60%-100% compliance in years three to five extremely unlikely without significant changes in DOE policies & practices
- Contrary to what the law requires, DOE has not developed nor implemented a real five-year plan, especially one that will provide the necessary space

DOE data shows average class sizes are larger now at all grade levels than in Nov. 2021- before class size law was passed

Citywide Class Size Averages by School Type *November*



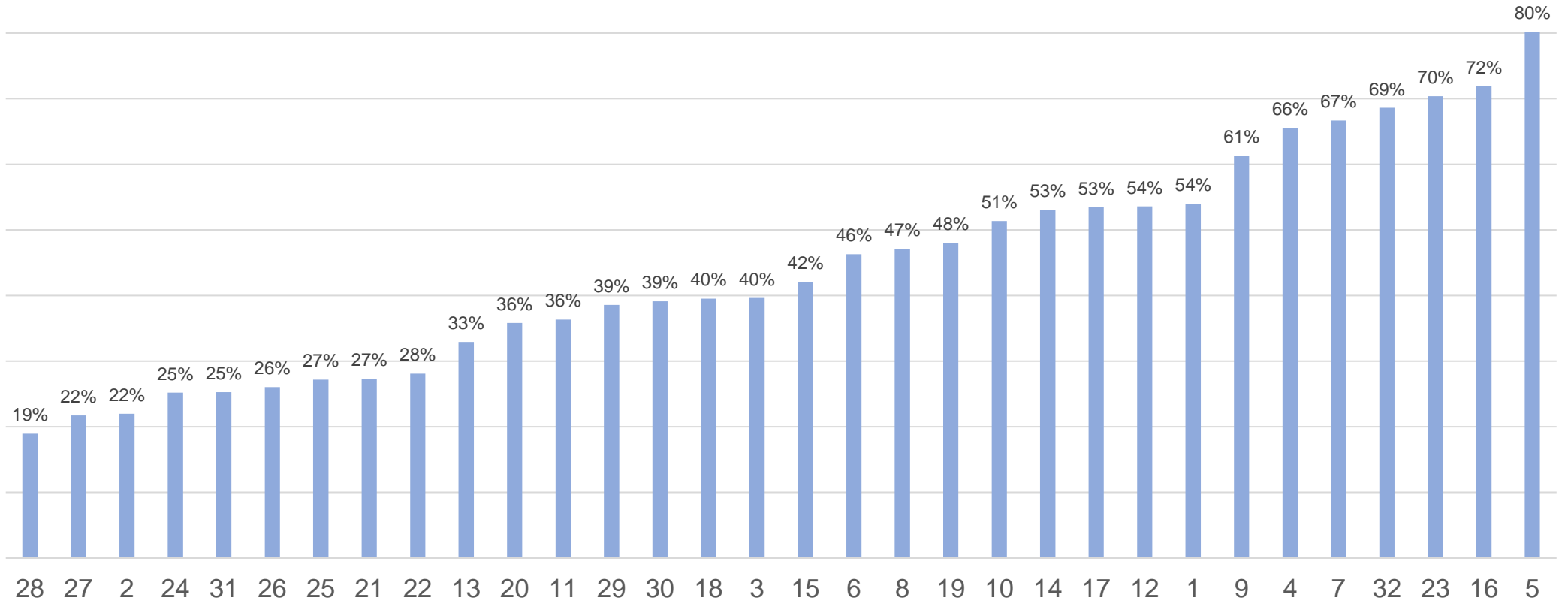
Class size compliance ranges widely from 25% in D26 to 81% in D23



Data Sources: DOE Table C Class Size Compliance, by School (10/31/2024)

Note: All classes, including PE/PG and Grade 6, included in analysis

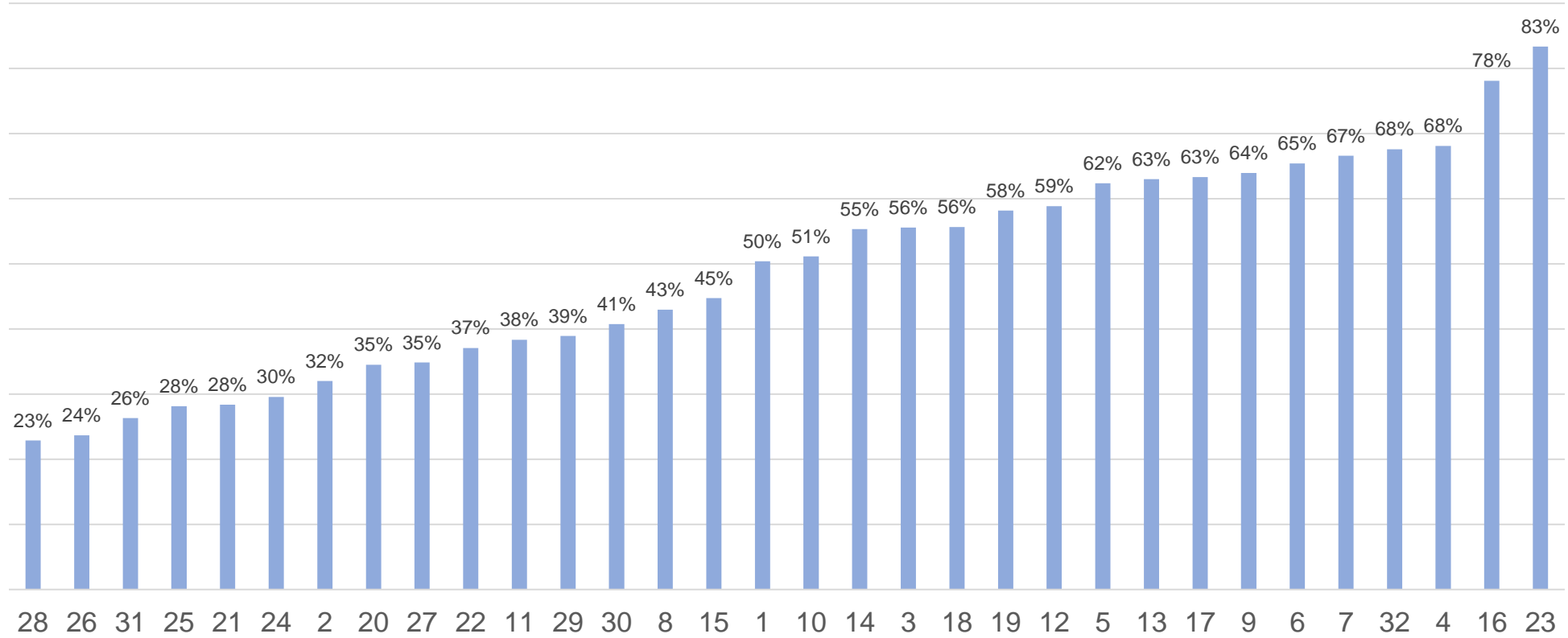
In grades K-3, compliance ranges from 19% to D28 to 80% in D5



Data Sources: DOE Table C Class Size Compliance, by School (10/31/2024)

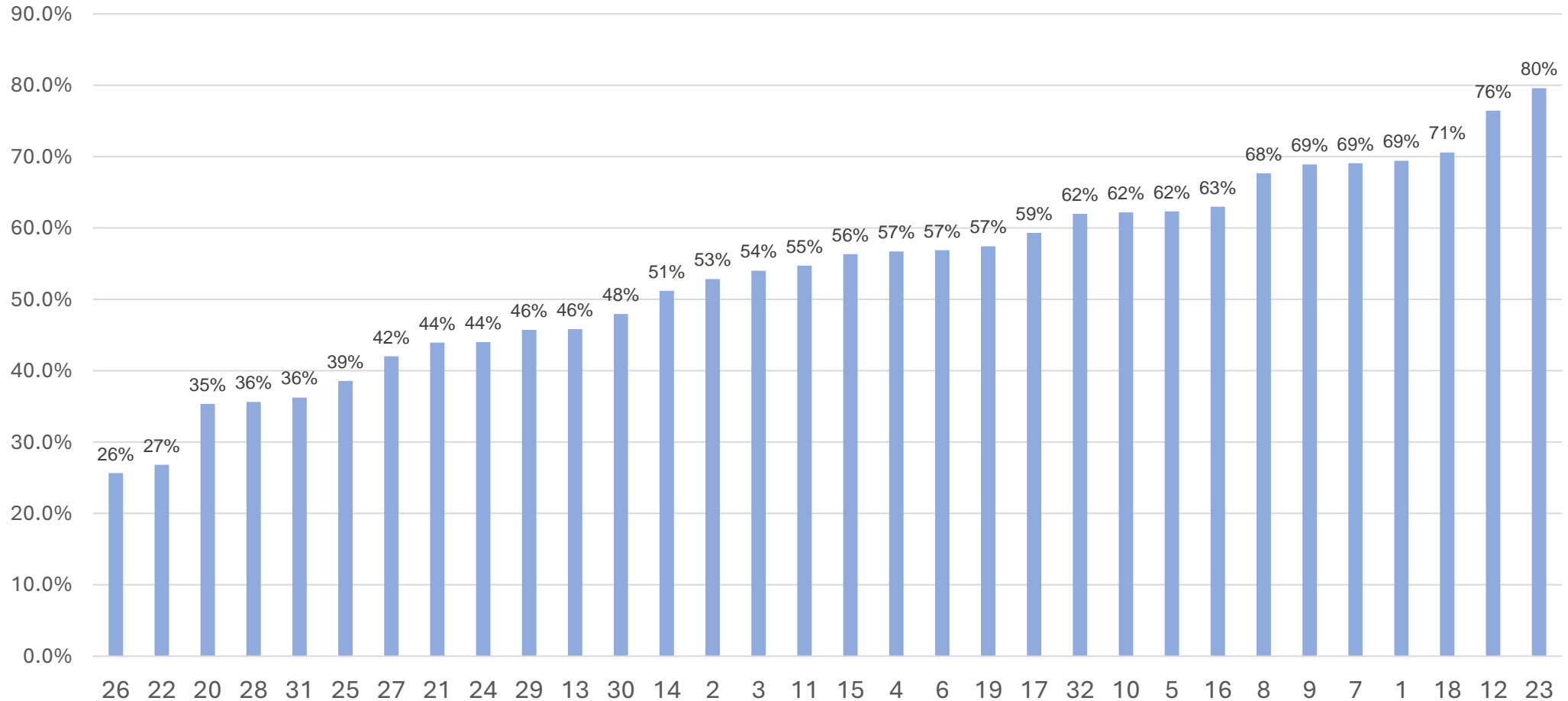
Note: All classes, including PE/PG and Grade 6, included in analysis. K-5 Bridge Classes omitted.

In grades 4-8, compliance ranges from 23% in D28 to 87% in D23



Data Sources: DOE Table C Class Size Compliance, by School (10/31/2024)
Note: All classes, including PE/PG and Grade 6, included in analysis. K-5 Bridge Classes omitted.

In HS classes, compliance ranges from 26% to D26 to 80% in D23



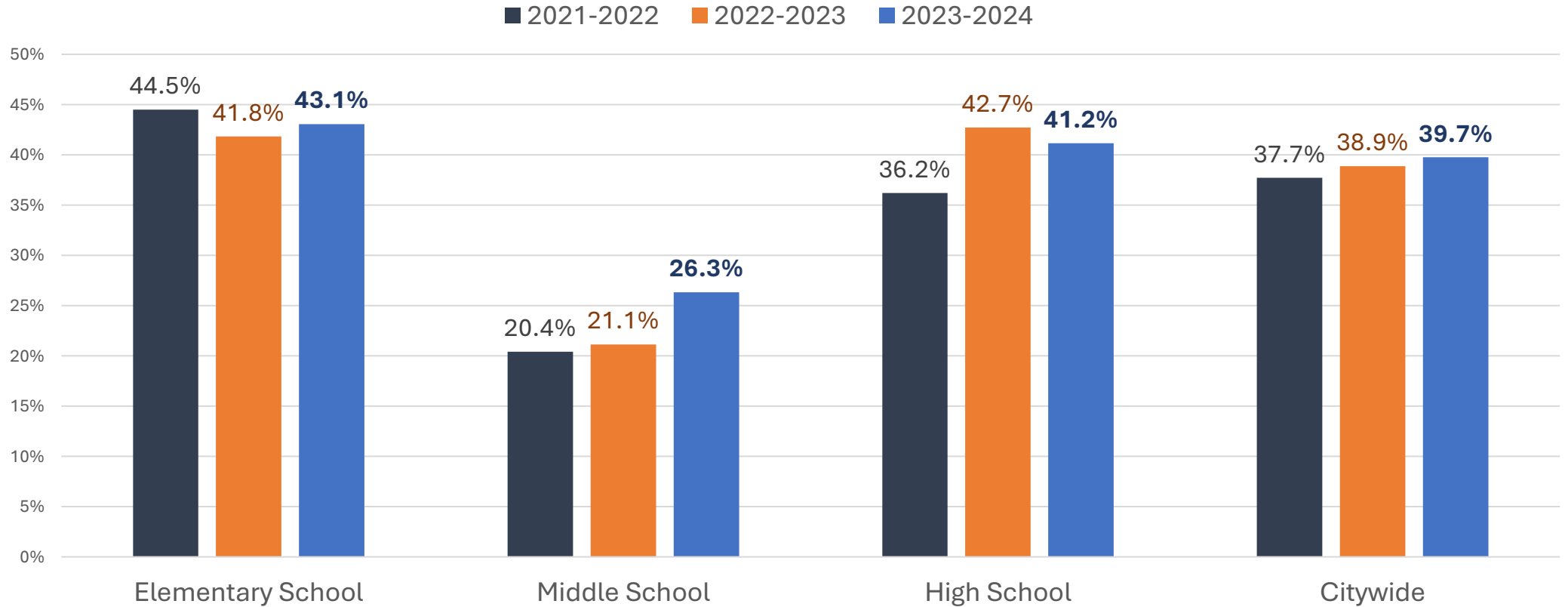
Data Sources: DOE Table C Class Size Compliance, by School (10/31/2024)

Note: All classes, including PE/PG and Grade 6, included in analysis. K-5 Bridge Classes omitted.

What are DOE proposals to reach the caps next year?

- Principals in consultation with their SLTs can apply for additional funds to lower class size; deadline Dec. 20
- Process completely voluntary, & no total funding announced, nor how many teachers hired with these funds
- DOE says schools can only apply if they have available space for smaller classes, without affecting current programming
- Yet more than half of principals responding to DOE survey last year said they do not have enough space to lower class size to mandated levels (650 out of 1280 respondents);
- Last year's Blue Book reports that 428 schools were overutilized, enrolling 325,000 students; many believe BB underestimates overcrowding
- Last year, percent of students in overcrowded schools increased in two thirds of districts.

The Percentage of Students in Overutilized Schools increased from 37.7% in 2021-2022 to 39.7% last year



Data Sources: Enrollment, Capacity & Utilization Report 2021-2022 - 2023-2024 (June)

Note: DOE School Locations Data 2022-2023 used for '21-22 data, since 2021-2022 School Locations Data was unavailable.

Note: District 75 and Charter Schools not included in analysis.

Only strategies DOE offering for schools to expand their classroom space

- Fully use & repurpose existing space without affecting programming
- Go to multi-sessions
- Expand online learning (which should not be done w/out parent consent)
- At a recent a CEC meeting, DOE official said elementary schools could also request to move 3K or PreK classes into nearby CBOs, especially as they have 1000s of empty seats.

Many schools will still not have space to meet the 5-yr class size goals

- Yet Class Size Working Group recommended that schools should be able to cap enrollment at lower levels if there are underutilized schools nearby;
- They proposed guardrails that no student would be forced to attend school far from home: no more than half hour by walking for elementary students; ½ hour by public transport or school bus for MS students; 1 hour public transport or school bus for HS students.
- BY refusing to allow schools to cap their entering classes next year, it will be difficult for many to meet 4th and 5th year targets, without transferring students out of the school, causing unnecessary disruption;
- DOE proposes all “overenrolled” schools be forever exempted from lowering class size, especially if there are underutilized schools nearby, claiming this is the result of “high demand” rather than lack of space caused by their enrollment policies
- Yet DOE controls enrollment in a non-transparent manner that hurts both sets of schools

How do DOE enrollment policies undermine schools?

- Capping enrollment when there are underutilized schools nearby would benefit students at overcrowded schools, allowing them to have smaller classes and access to lunch, gym, and other facilities at more reasonable times
- Currently underenrolled schools would receive larger budgets & better able to provide art, music, advanced coursework and other programs and services necessary for a quality education.
- More evenly distributing enrollment over time could lead to more economic and racial diversity as well
- It would also save years of time and billions in school construction costs

DOE already allows enrollment caps in some schools for purpose of controlling class sizes

- DOE already caps enrollment if necessary to meet UFT contractual class size levels
- Principals at certain high-demand, elite schools are allowed to cap enrollment & offer smaller classes, so why shouldn't this happen at less privileged schools?
- Special Music school in District 3 receives about 400 applications per year, yet admits only 15 Kindergarten students, enabling class sizes of 15 in grades K-5
- Bard Early College HS in Manhattan and Queens receive more than 5,000 applications for 9th grade each year, and accept only about 150 students, allowing class sizes of 24 or less

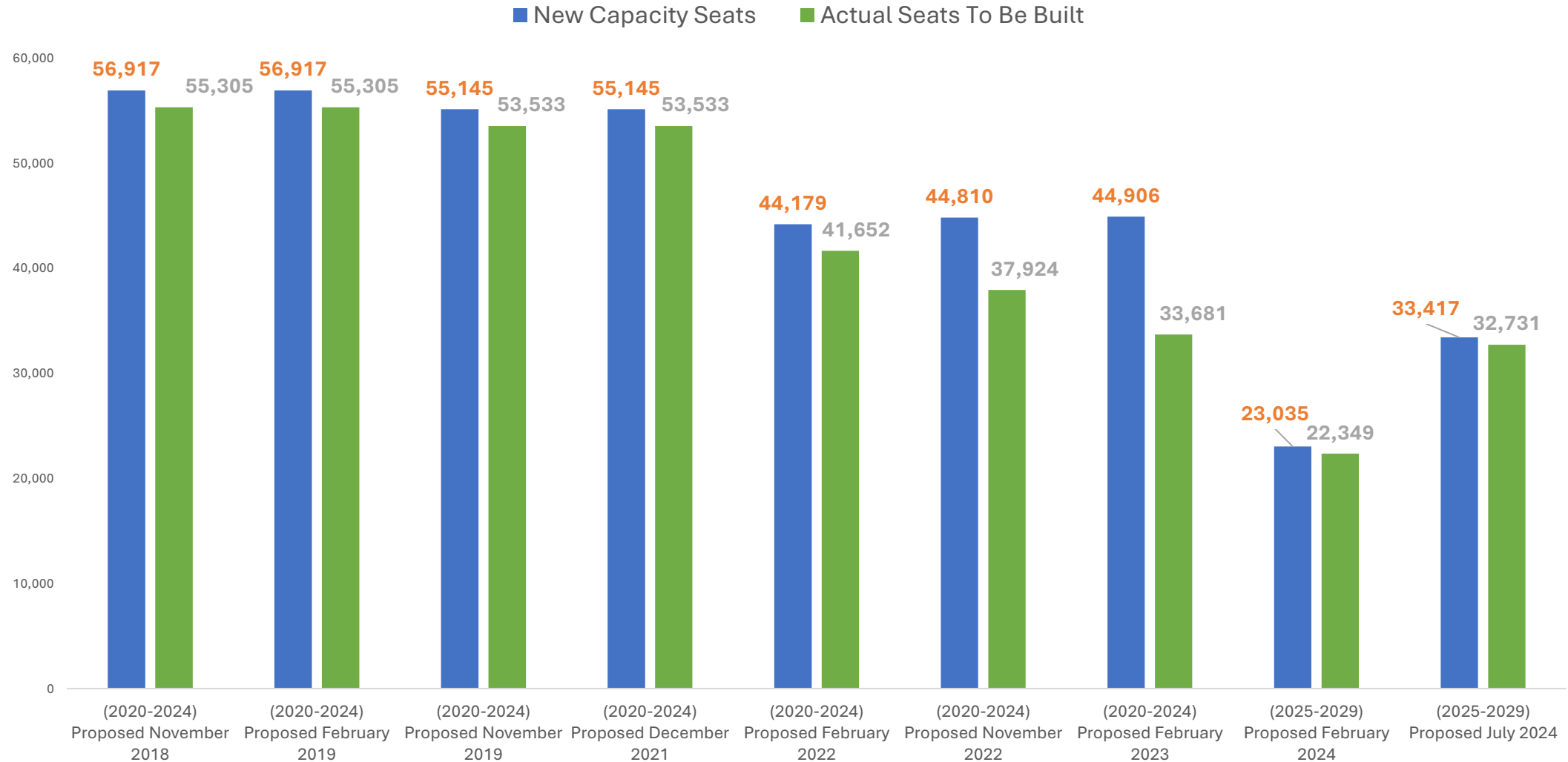
What about districts where nearly all schools are overcrowded?

- **In any case, an accelerated plan for school expansion and construction will also be necessary in the most overcrowded districts**
- Yet DOE has made little effort to build enough new schools even in these areas & instead cut funding for new capacity in the capital plan by \$2.5 billion after the class size law was passed;
- Though \$2B recently added because of a provision in the state budget, there will be a declining number of seats completed over the next 3 years & SCA has refused to say where 70% of seats funded will be located according to district/subdistrict or grade level.
- DOE now proposes that even in areas where all schools are overcrowded, they should not have to lower class size, if there is an “intention” to build more schools at some indeterminate time in the future;
- This clearly violates the class size law that says, ***“any exemption based on available space shall include a reference to the capital budget to demonstrate that the budget is aligned with resolving the exemption status.”***

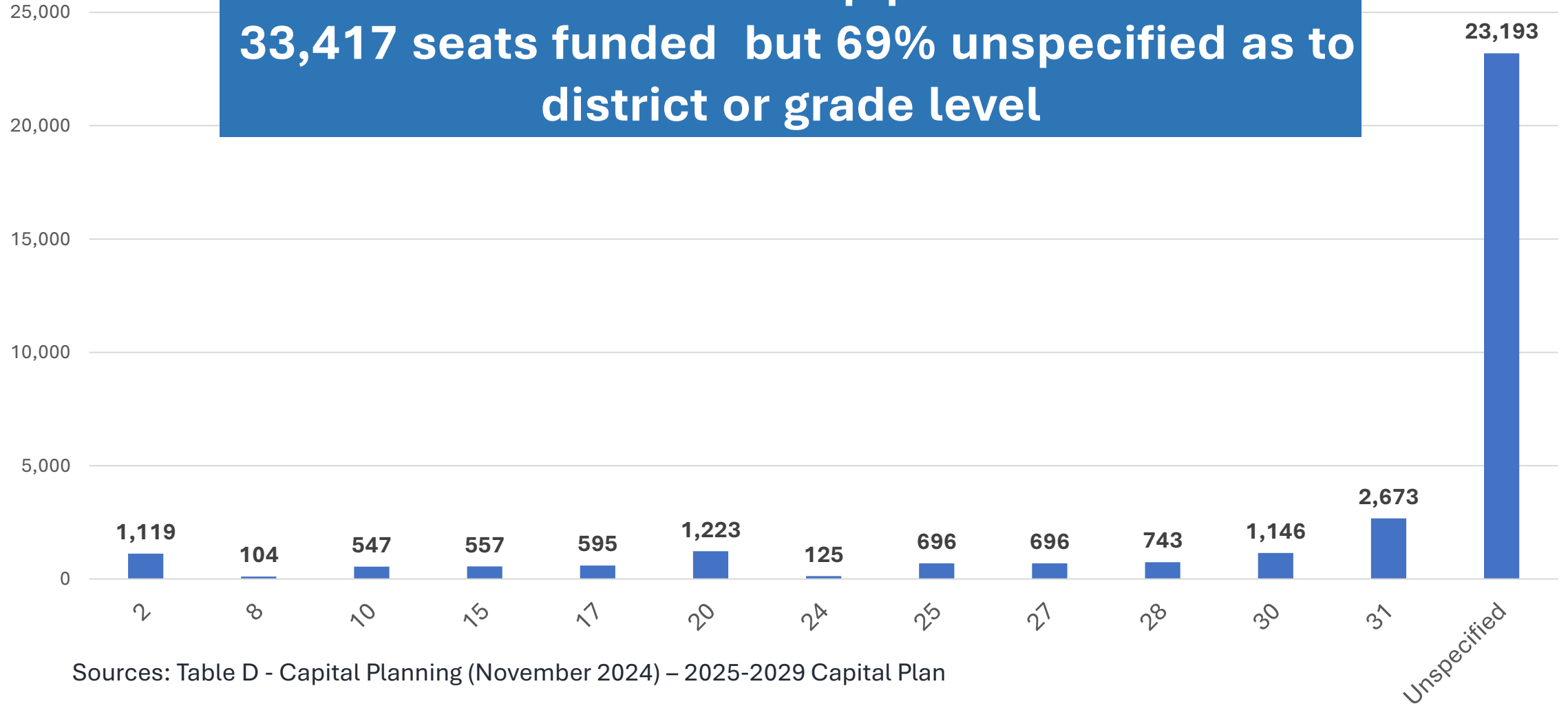
DOE has put forward at least two other potential exemptions, nowhere mentioned in the law

- DOE proposes that any school should be exempted if there are five or less students per grade over the cap
- Also, any school should be exempted if they are sent more students mid-year
- Neither of these exemptions are even mentioned in the law as a possibility, even if the unions agree
- Instead, DOE should be required to provide more funding to hire teachers if either of these events occur, as they are required to do when class sizes violate UFT limits

Total 'New Capacity' Seats in Five Year Plans



19 schools or annexes in 11 districts planned in current Cap plan
33,417 seats funded but 69% unspecified as to district or grade level

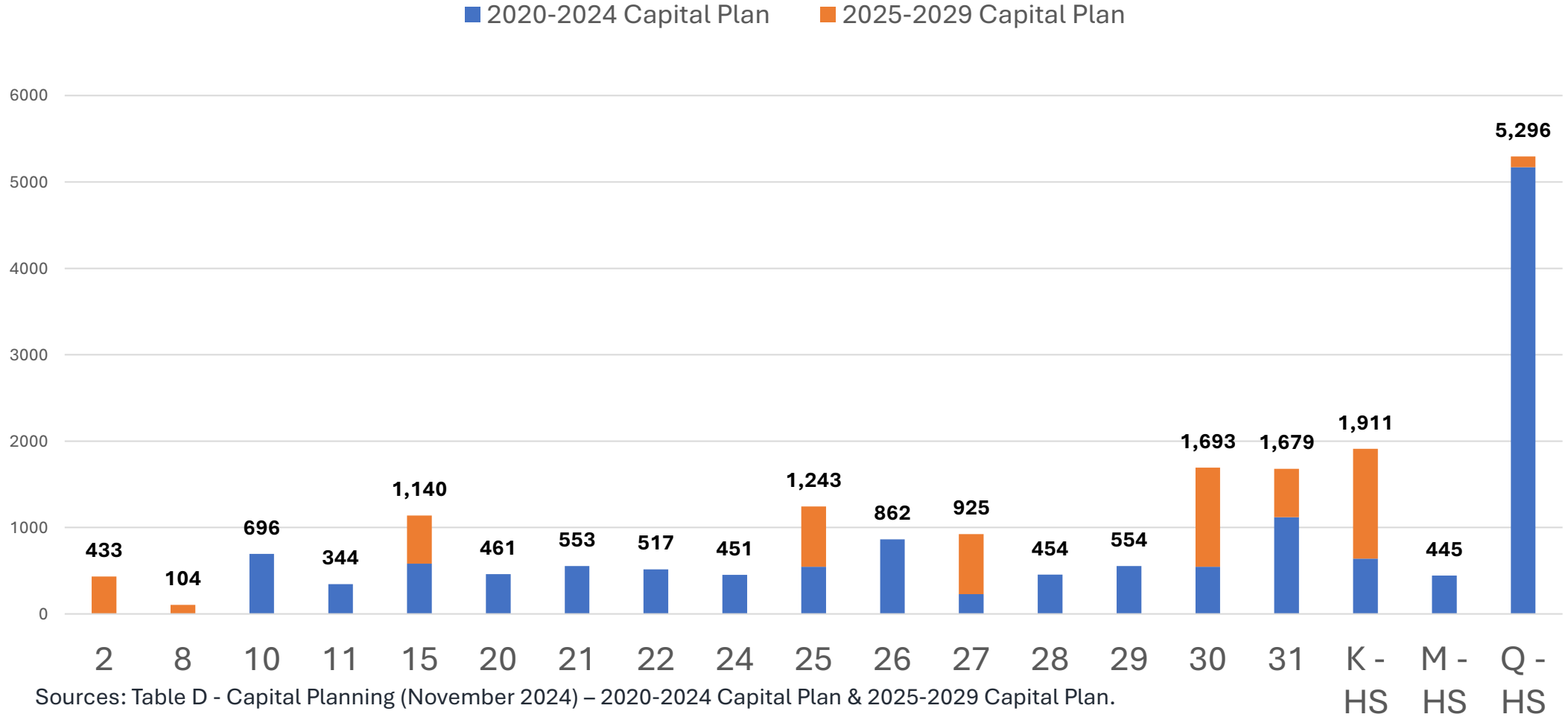


Sources: Table D - Capital Planning (November 2024) – 2025-2029 Capital Plan

19,761 seats to be ready by Sept 2028 by district

16 districts & HS in 3 boroughs

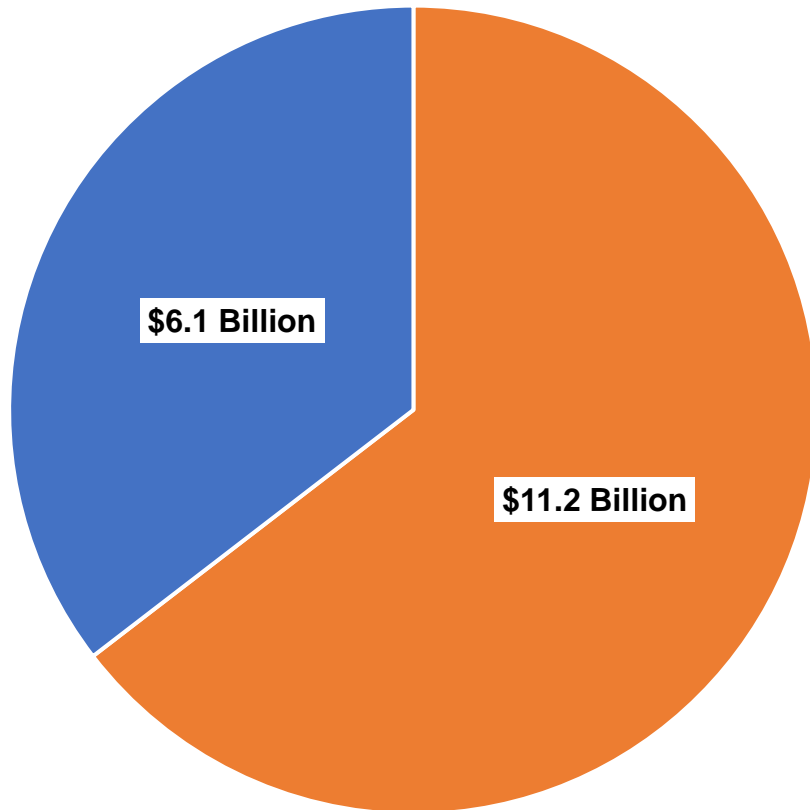
14,174 carried over from previous capital plan, 5,587 in new plan



Sources: Table D - Capital Planning (November 2024) – 2020-2024 Capital Plan & 2025-2029 Capital Plan.

Note: unspecified seats are not included, since they don't include a projected date of completion.

Spending for new borough jails nearly twice as much as for new schools (2025-2029)



- Construction of Borough-Based Jails
- New School Capacity in 2025-2029 Capital Plan

Data Sources: DoED July 2024 Five-Year Capital Plan, IBO Summary of DOC Capital Projects 8.14.2024

To make things worse...

- District planning has presenting proposals for school utilization changes through the 2025-2026 year, including school closures, co-locations, grade expansions and other changes w/o any mention of how these could affect class size or hamper efforts to lower class size in future.
- In previous years, these presentations did include class size data, but District Planning stopped doing this after class size law was passed.
- When asked why, district planning staff responds that DOE has told them to ignore class size in making their proposals.

What should schools do?

- SLTs & principals should apply for as much class size funds for staffing as they need to reach the caps – remember deadline Dec. 20!
- For elementary schools, consider asking to move 3K and PreK classes to nearby CBOs with empty seats.
- If your school is in an area where nearby schools are overcrowded, demand that DOE build more schools in your community!
- If your school does not have sufficient classroom space with other underutilized schools nearby, you should ask your enrollment to be immediately capped at lower level while pointing out if you cannot, it will be difficult if not impossible to attain the caps in years 4 or 5.

What should parents do?

- We have a resolution for CPAC, PAs, SLTs, CECs to consider with these provisions at <https://tinyurl.com/classsizereso2024>
- Please also sign and share our petition at <https://tinyurl.com/classsizepetition2024>
- If you're willing to meet with your elected reps email us at info@classsizematters.org
- Sign up for our newsletter to be kept updated at <https://classsizematters.org/subscribe/>
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Questions?

