Class size: where are we now citywide and in D6?

Presentation to CB12 Youth & Education Committee

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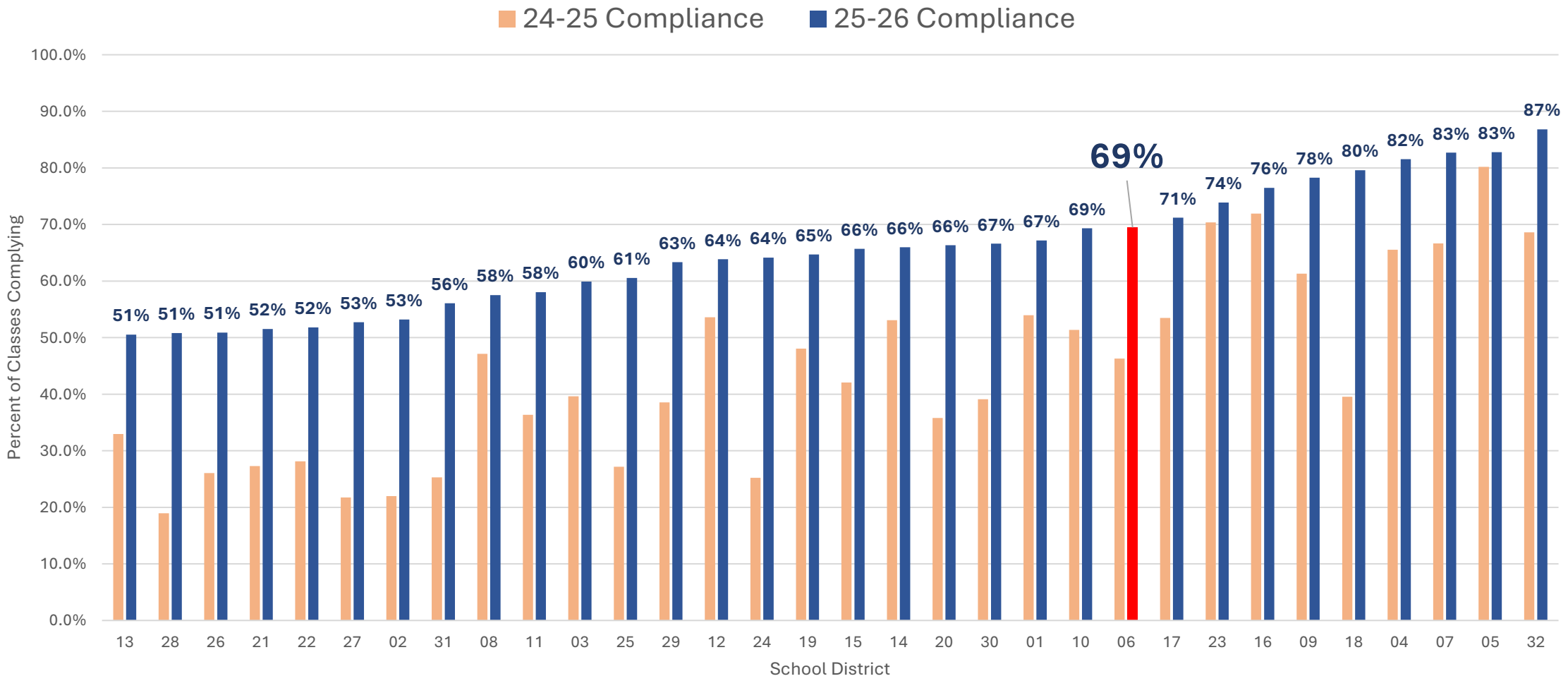
Class size bill passed June 2022 by NYS legislature

- Bill signed by Gov. in Sept 2022, who gave DOE an extra planning year to comply
- Law requires NYC to provide a 5-yr class size reduction plan to cap all class sizes at 20 students in grades K-3, 23 in grades 4^{th}-8^{th}, and 25 in HS classes
- Phys ed and performing art group classes limited to 40 students per class instead of 50.
- An additional 20% of all classes must achieve these caps each year, schools with highest levels of poverty to be prioritized for smaller classes first, with 100% of classes meeting caps by Sept. 2028. .
- Some exemptions allowed in the law but only with agreement of UFT and CSA.

What has happened since?

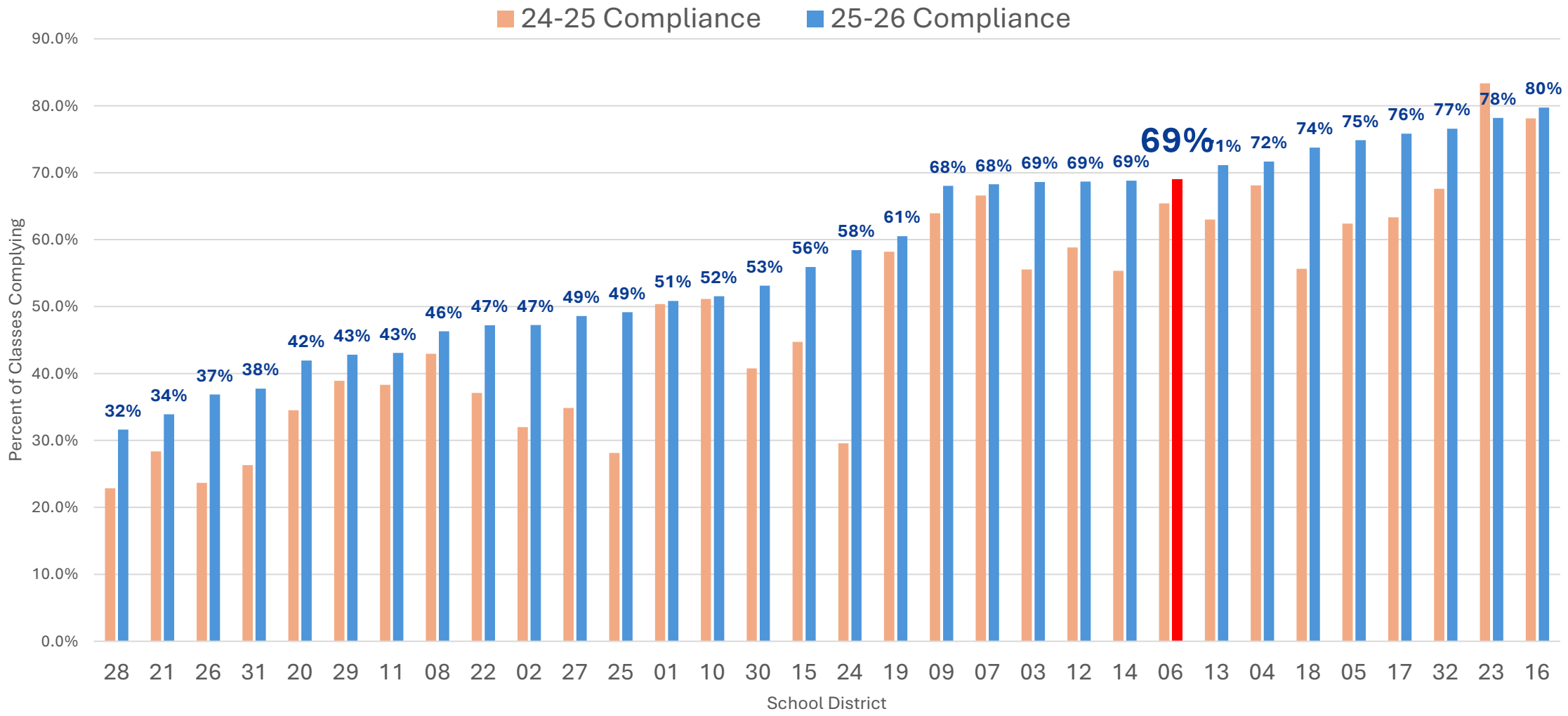
- Though law requires multi-year class size plan, DOE has STILL not developed or implemented such a plan
- DOE was already at more than 40% compliance when law was passed, due to enrollment decline – but then class sizes increased in 2023 due to budget cuts.
- Last year, DOE schools met benchmark at 46%– even as districts and schools widely ranged in compliance
- This year DOE met 64% benchmark this year, *but only by exempting 10,535 classes in 123 schools from their calculations.*
- More than 700 schools including 21 D6 schools, received funding for class size reduction this year, but could only apply if they had the space at their current enrollment.

Grades K-3 Class size compliance in 2025-2026, by school district



*Data Sources: (2025-2026 **Compliance without exemptions**): DOE Class Size Report, School Data [10/31/2025].*
(2024-2025 Compliance): Table C, Class Size Compliance by School (10/31/2024)
Note: Self-Contained classes and K-5 Bridge classes removed
Created by: Class Size Matters – December 9, 2025

Grades 4-8 Compliance in 2025-2026, by district



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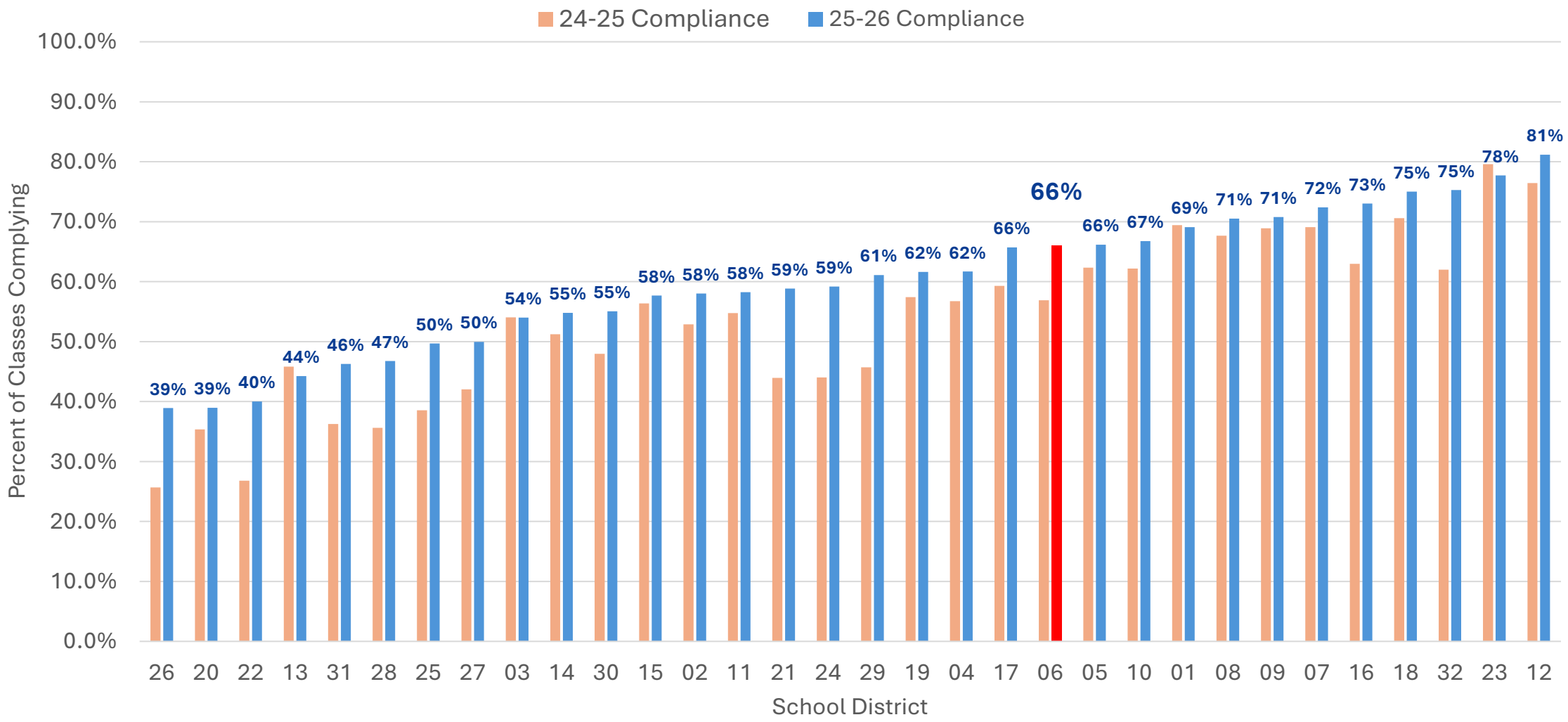
(2024-2025 Compliance): Table C, Class Size Compliance by School (10/31/2024)
Note: Self-Contained classes and K-5 Bridge classes removed
Created by: Class Size Matters – December 9, 2025

HS classes in compliance in 2025-2026, by district



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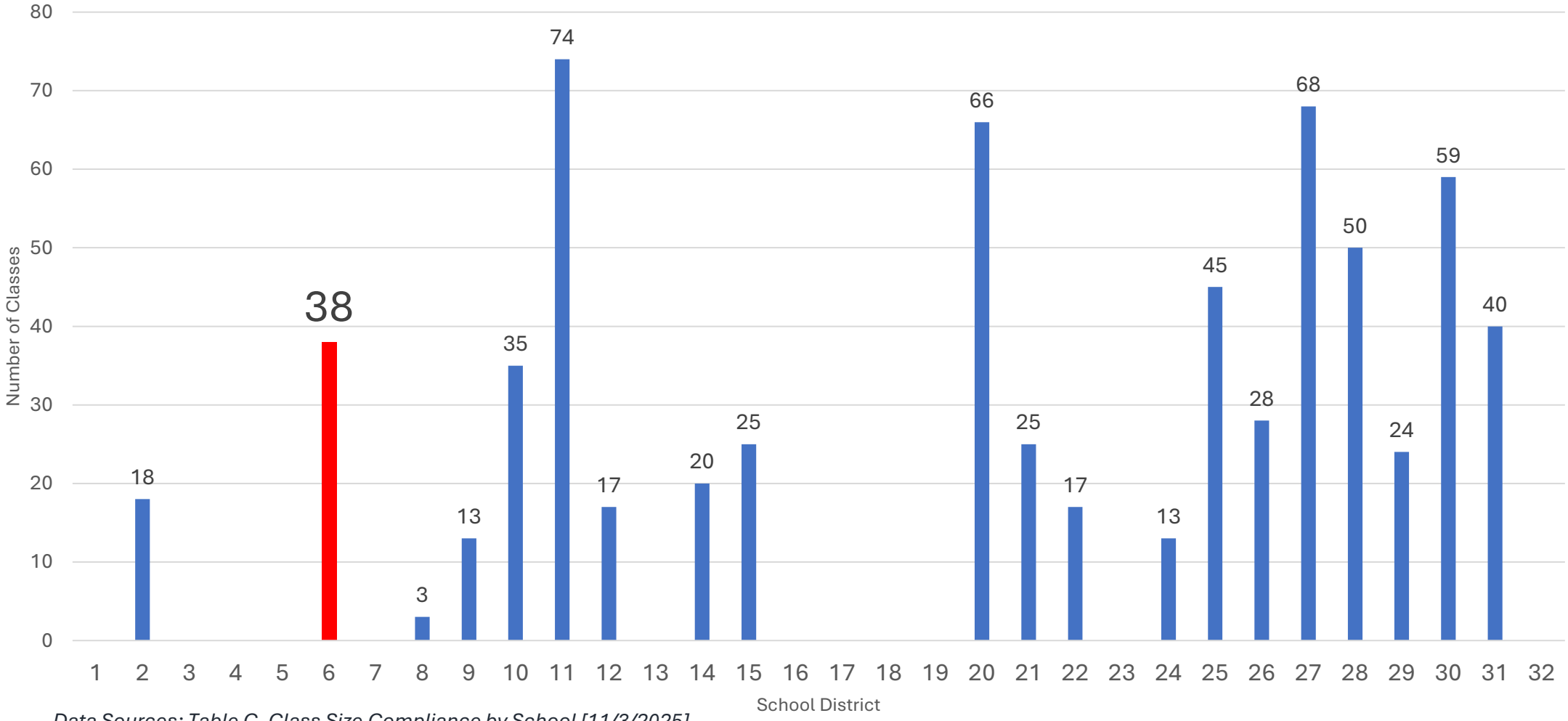
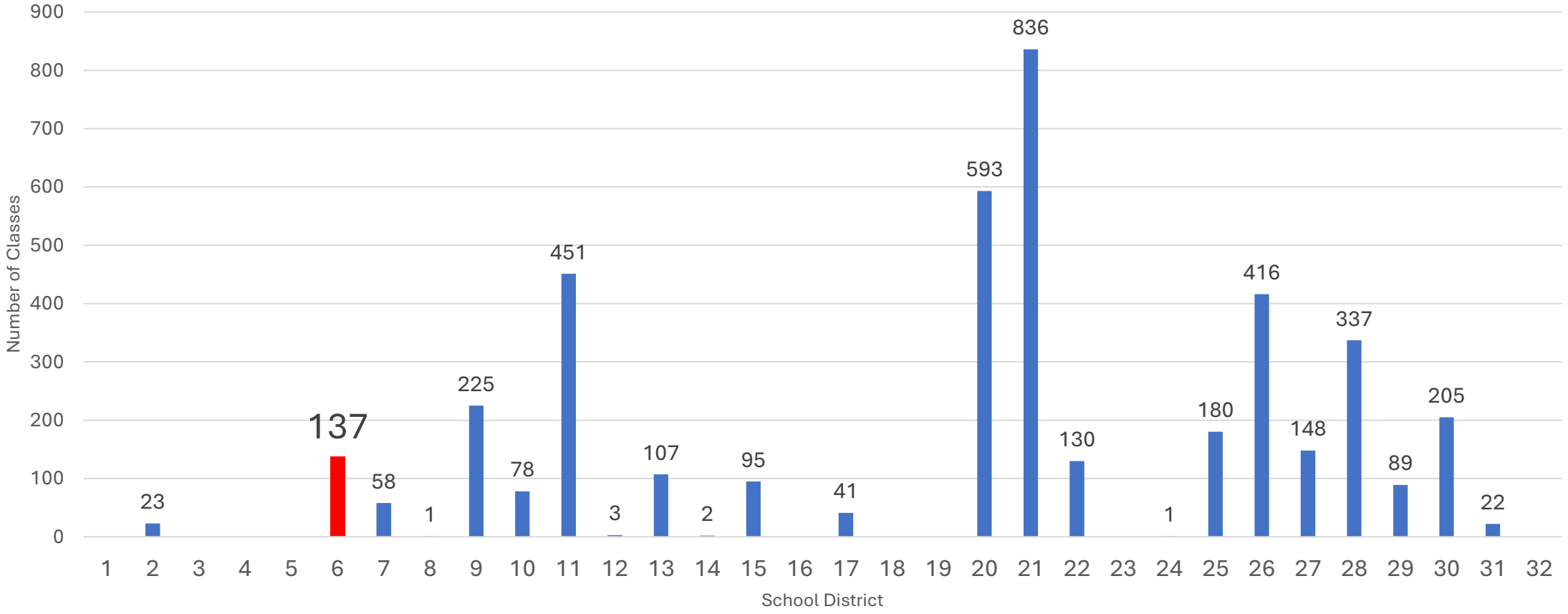
Number of Exempted Classes in Grades K-3, by District [2025-2026]



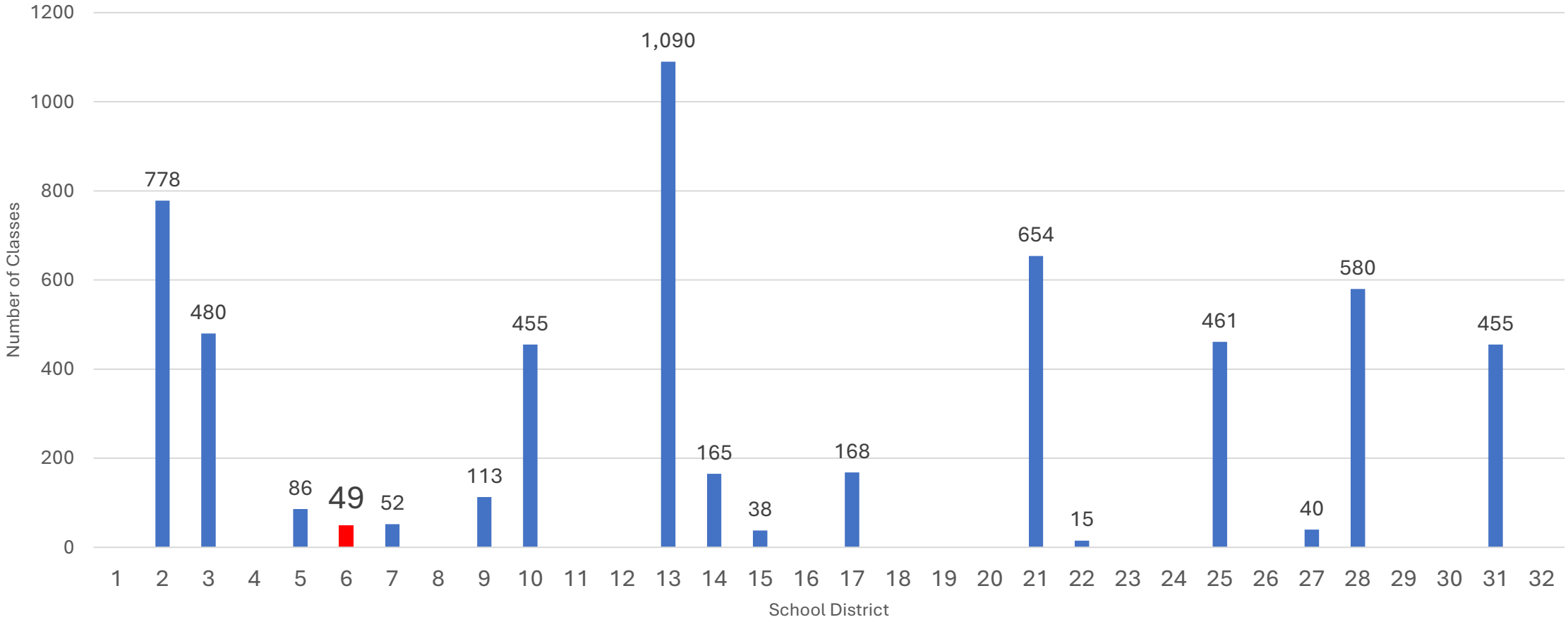
Data Sources: Table C, Class Size Compliance by School [11/3/2025]
Created by: Class Size Matters, December 9 2025

Number of Exempted Classes in Grades 4-8, by District [2025-2026]



Data Sources: Table C, Class Size Compliance by School [11/3/2025]
Created by: Class Size Matters, December 9 2025

Number of Exempted Classes in HS Classes, by District [2025-2026]



Data Sources: Table C, Class Size Compliance by School [11/3/2025]
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Overreliance on exemptions instead

- SCA testified in March 2025 that 70,000 more school seats are needed to comply with law – yet five-year capital plan has less than half that number at 31,000 seats

- SCA also refuses to divulge where nearly half of all seats funded will be located –

- ***Instead, DOE seems to be counting on permanent exemptions for overcrowded schools.***

- The word “exemption” is used 22 times in the DOE submission to the state in July 2024, vs 11 times in the version submitted May 2024, vs eight times in their initial submission in June 2023

What about the future?

- **Achieving 80%-100% of classes in compliance in years 4 & 5 will be impossible without thousands more exemptions, unless DOE changes its enrollment policies &/or capital plan**

  - About 500 schools do NOT have space to meet the caps at current enrollment, according to DOE; enrolling nearly half of non-D75 students.

  - These schools enroll 62,879 students with disabilities & 57,039 English Language Learners, and at LEAST 256,379 students in poverty

  - There are 13 of these schools in D6, and other than a possible annex for PS/IS *187,* DOE has no plan to provide them with more space through the capital plan.

13 D6 schools without the space to lower class size to mandated levels

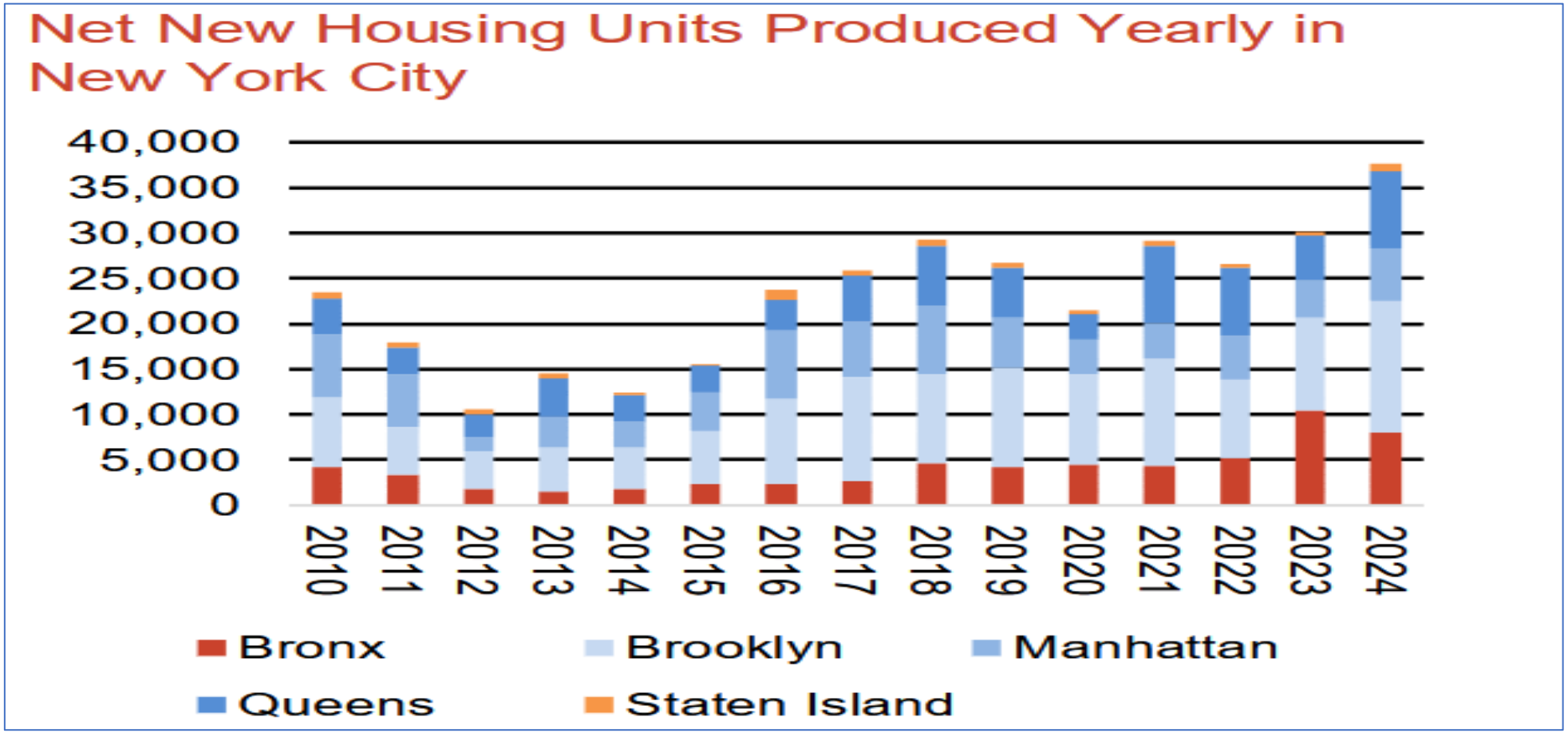
06M103	Dos Puentes Elementary School
06M178	Professor Juan Bosch Public School
06M187	P.S./I.S. 187 Hudson Cliffs
06M210	P.S./I.S. 210 - Twenty-first Century Academy f
06M311	Amistad Dual Language School
06M314	Muscota
06M346	Community Health Academy of the Heights
06M366	Washington Heights Academy
06M463	High School for Media and Communications
06M513	Castle Bridge School
06M528	I.S. 528 Bea Fuller Rodgers School
06M540	A. Philip Randolph Campus High School
06M552	Gregorio Luperon High School for Science an d Mathematics

DOE Class Size Working Group proposed many strategies to produce more space more quickly for class size reduction

- Our Dec. 2023 report called for expanding capital plan and accelerating school siting and construction
- Re-starting School Siting Task force with more community involvement
- Building more schools as part of new housing construction – as schools can be “anchor tenants” to help with financing
- In overcrowded elementary schools, move some PreKs and 3Ks classes into nearby CBOs, which have thousands of empty seats
- None of these recommendations have been adopted so far by DOE

NYC is experiencing rapid growth in housing – with no clear plan to build enough public schools in these communities

2024 saw the highest rate of increase of units since 1965



Data source: NYS Comptroller, Housing Production in New York City, March 2025