

#### NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL FINANCE DIVISION

Tanisha Edwards, Esq. Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Chief of Staff

> Richard Lee Director

Jonathan Rosenberg Managing Director

> Chima Obichere Deputy Director

> Eisha Wright Deputy Director

> Paul Scimone Deputy Director

**Elizabeth Hoffman** Assistant Director

> **Aliya Ali** Unit Head

Hon. Adrienne Adams Speaker of the Council

Hon. Rita Joseph Chair of the Committee on Education

Report on the Proposed Fiscal 2025-2029 Capital Plan, Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Capital Budget and the Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report for the

# **School Construction Authority**

March 18, 2024

Prepared by Andrew Lane-Lawless, Financial Legislative Analyst



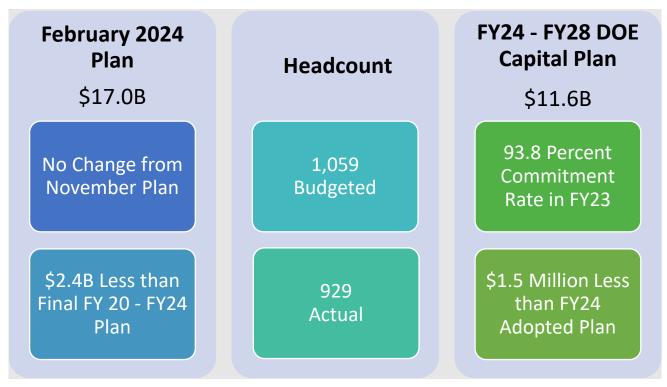
# **Table of Contents**

School Construction Authority Overview1
School Construction Authority Fiscal 2025-2029 Five-Year Capital Plan Snapshot1
February 2025 Proposed Amendment to the Fiscal 2025-2029 Five-Year Capital Plan1
Changes to the Five-Year Plan2
Capacity Program
Capital Investment4
Healthy Schools6
Mandated Programs7
Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report7
Demographics7
SCA Operating Budget and Headcount8
DOE Capital Budget and Commitment Plan8
Budget Issues and Concerns10
Appendices12
A. New Seat Capacity Added by School District from Fiscal 2020-2024 Capital Plan12
B. New Seat Capacity Sited by School District from Fiscal 2025-2029 Capital Plan13

#### **School Construction Authority Overview**

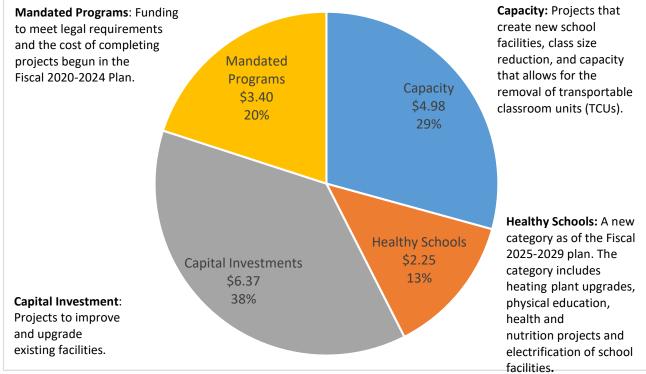
The School Construction Authority (SCA or the Authority), established in 1988 by New York State, is tasked with building new public schools and managing the design, renovations and construction projects in New York City's public school buildings. The Department of Education's (DOE) capital program is consolidated within SCA's portfolio and this report details SCA's Fiscal 2025-2029 Five-Year Capital Plan as well as DOE's Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Capital Budget and Capital Commitment Plan.

## School Construction Authority Fiscal 2025-2029 Five-Year Capital Plan Snapshot



#### February 2025 Proposed Amendment to the Fiscal 2025-2029 Five-Year Capital Plan

SCA released the February Amendment to the Fiscal 2025-2029 Five-Year Capital Plan (the Plan or Proposed February Amendment) on February 1<sup>st</sup>, as required by State law. SCA is tasked with developing and amending DOE's Five-Year Capital Plans with the first proposal for the new Fiscal 2025-2029 Five Year Capital Plan released in November (November Plan). The Proposed February Amendment, which is a revised version of the initial November Plan, will be voted on by the Panel for Education Policy (PEP) in March and will be adopted by the Council in June. The Proposed February Amendment totals \$17.0 billion. Chart 1 details the funding amounts in each of the four core categories within the Plan: Capacity Projects, Capital Investment, Healthy Schools, and Mandated Programs, which will each be discussed in this report.



#### Chart 1: Fiscal 2025-2029 Five-Year Capital Plan Proposed Amendment by Category (Dollars in Billions)

#### **Changes to the Five-Year Plan**

Overall, the Proposed February Amendment is funded at the same level as the November Plan, as well as at each category and subcategory level. There are no changes since the November Plan, except for the siting of two new schools. The new schools are a 676-seat high school at 425 Ovington in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn and a 696-seat elementary school located at 137-31 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Flushing, Queens.

Table 1 compares funding levels for the Fiscal 2025-2029 Five-Year Capital Plan to the Fiscal 2020-2024 Five-Year Capital Plan at each stage of the respective plans. As Table 1 illustrates, although the funding level for the current Fiscal 2025-2029 Plan is less than the final version of the Fiscal 2020-2024 Plan, the first two iterations of the Fiscal 2025-2029 Plan have the same overall funding levels as the first two iterations of the Fiscal 2020-2024 Plan. The biggest difference between the Proposed February Amendment and the final February 2023 Amendment of the Fiscal 2020-2024 Five-Year Capital Plan is about \$2.0 billion less in funding for new capacity projects.

Fiscal 2020-2024 Five-Year Plans	Amount	Fiscal 2025-2029 Five-Year Plans	Amount
November 2018 Proposed Amendment	\$17.0	November 2023 Proposed Amendment	\$17.0
February 2019 Proposed Amendment	\$17.0	February 2024 Proposed Amendment	\$17.0
November 2019 Proposed Amendment	\$18.7	November 2024 Proposed Amendment	TBD
February 2020 Proposed Amendment	\$18.8	February 2025 Proposed Amendment	TBD
November 2020 Proposed Amendment	\$19.0	November 2025 Plan Proposed Amendment	TBD
February 2021 Proposed Amendment	\$19.3	February 2026 Proposed Amendment	TBD
November 2021 Proposed Amendment	\$20.6	November 2026 Proposed Amendment	TBD
February 2022 Proposed Amendment	\$20.6	February 2027 Proposed Amendment	TBD
November 2022 Proposed Amendment	\$20.1	November 2027 Proposed Amendment	TBD
February 2023 Proposed Amendment	\$19.4	February 2028 Proposed Amendment	TBD

Table 1: Comparison of Fiscal 2020-2024 and Fiscal 2025-2029 Plans (Dollars in Billions)

Source: School Construction Authority

Source: School Construction Authority

#### **Capacity Program**

The Capacity program totals \$4.98 billion in the Proposed February Amendment. The capacity category encompasses the creation of new seats, removal of transportable classroom units and other new infrastructure. Table 2 breaks down the funding within the Capacity program by subcategory.

Table 2. capacity subcategories (Donars in Thousands)				
Subcategory	<u>Amount</u>			
New Capacity	\$4,125,000			
Capacity to Support Removal of Temporary Structures	\$200,000			
Temporary Structure Removal / Playground Redevelopment	\$50,000			
Facility Replacement	\$400,000			
Early Education	\$200,000			
Total	\$4,975,000			

 Table 2: Capacity Subcategories (Dollars in Thousands)

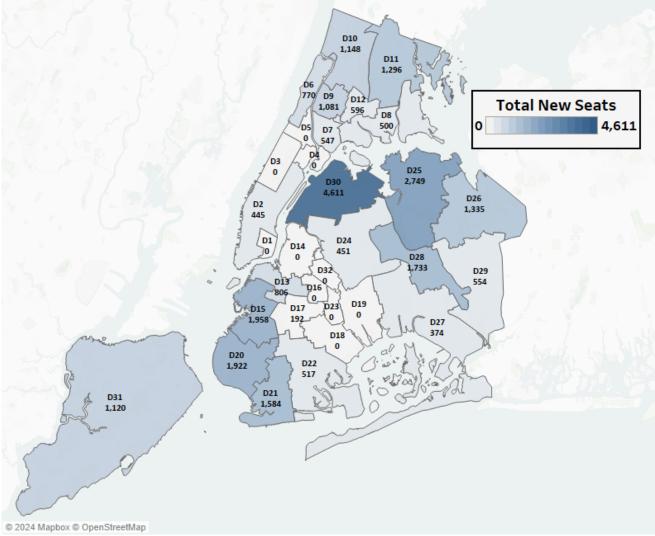
Source: School Construction Authority

As of the Fiscal 2025-2029 Five-Year Capital Plan, the previously titled Class Size subcategory has been merged into the New Capacity subcategory. The \$4.13 billion in the New Capacity subcategory in the Plan includes funding for new seats required due to enrollment demands and seats needed for class size reduction. In 2022 New York State passed a law mandating that New York City reduce class sizes over a five-year period, capping class sizes at 20 students for grades kindergarten through third, 23 students for grades fourth through eighth, and 25 students for high school. The \$4.13 billion in the Plan for class size reduction is significantly less than the combined \$8.03 billion included for new capacity and class size reduction in the February 2019 Amendment of the Fiscal 2020-2024 Capital Plan. More discussion of class size reduction can be found in the Budget Issues and Concerns section.

The Plan will add 23,035 new seats, of which 6,701 have been sited at the borough, district and subdistrict level and 16,334 have not been designated and are listed as "citywide". Of the 6,701 seats, 576 are District 75 seats. The 6,701 seats that have been sited will be added in districts 2, 20, 25, 27, 30 and 31. SCA has explained that the reason the large majority of seats in the new Plan are undesignated is because they want to retain flexibility to comply with the State's class size reduction law, and to avoid having to change siting decisions. This will provide the Authority flexibility as they work to comply with the class-size legislation. In addition to examining and determining demographic needs in complying with the legislation, SCA also had to consider existing school overcrowding and whether that overcrowding could be solved by building new schools or if there were other ways to create additional classrooms in school buildings. SCA is working with DOE on this analysis, including surveying each school, and modelling the changing demographics to determine where the new seats can best be utilized to address class size issues.

The Plan includes \$250.0 million for temporary structure removal. Thirty-eight of the 62 remaining Temporary Classroom Units (TCUs) are in the process of being removed and remaining 24 TCUs are in the planning and design stage, with SCA expecting to remove all of them by the end of the Plan period. Some of the budgeted funding for temporary structure removal is for capacity expansion necessary to accommodate overcrowded schools where TCUs are being removed. The Capacity category also includes \$200.0 million in funding for upgrades to former Early Learn centers that were transferred from the Administration for Children's Services' sites to DOE's portfolio.

#### Figure 1: Total New Seats Added to Each School District by 2027



Source: School Construction Authority

Figure 1 shows the new seats being added by 2027 that are funded in the Fiscal 2020-2024 Five-Year Capital Plan. District 30 in Queens, with an additional 4,611 seats, has the most new seats added, followed by District 25 in Queens with 2,749, District 15 in Brooklyn with 1,958 and District 20 in Brooklyn with 1,922. Eleven districts will have no new seats added during this timeframe: Districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, and 32.

#### **Capital Investment**

The Capital Investment category has \$6.37 billion in funding and includes projects related to capital improvement and school enhancements. There are two elements within the category – the Capital Improvement Program and School Enhancement Projects. The Capital Improvement Program includes two subcategories for exterior and interior work. The Exterior subcategory includes funding for projects such as roof repairs, flood prevention, exterior masonry replacements, and exterior repairs. The Interior subcategory includes projects such as ventilation, floor, and low voltage electrical system repairs. The School Enhancement category includes facility enhancements (projects related to accessibility as well as kitchen, auditorium, bathroom and library upgrades), technology enhancements (internet connectivity projects, telephone upgrades and data and software systems),

and Mayoral and Council Allocations. Table 3 shows the funding for the Capital Investment category by subcategories.

Funding for accessibility projects (\$800 million) makes up the largest portion of the Facility Enhancements subcategory. These funds will finance roughly 75 projects and bring 40 percent of schools citywide into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). SCA estimates that it will take 15-20 years under current funding levels to make all schools fully ADA compliant. It is estimated that between 10 to 15 percent of New York's school buildings cannot be made ADA compliant due to issues like space configuration within the school, age, location and historic design. In order for these schools to be made compliant, they would have to be demolished and then completely rebuilt.

Typically, the cost for capital improvement and facility enhancement projects vary, depending on the size and type of project, the inclusion of more expensive elements such as HVAC systems, and the size of the space being renovated. Bathroom upgrades tend to be the least expensive, costing less than \$1 million on average, while other upgrades usually cost at least \$2 to \$3 million.

Subcategories	Amount
Exteriors Subcategory	\$2,721,000
Flood Elimination	\$850,000
Reinforcing Support Elements	\$20,000
Roofs	\$540,800
Parapets	\$381,700
Exterior Masonry	\$640,500
Windows	\$288,000
Interiors Subcategory	\$381,000
Low Voltage Electrical system	\$110,000
Interior Spaces	\$11,000
Floors	\$10,000
Ventilation	\$250,000
Other Subcategory	\$230,000
Facility Enhancements Subcategory	\$1,630,000
Accessibility	\$800,000
Facility Restructuring	\$250,000
Safety & Security	\$150,000
Innovative, Diverse, Equitable, Accessible Spaces (IDEAS)	\$100,000
Kitchen Upgrades	\$75,000
Career-Connected Learning Infrastructure	\$75,000
Bathroom Upgrades	\$60,000
Elevators	\$50,000
Science Lab Upgrades	\$40,000
Library Upgrades	\$15,000
Auditorium Upgrades	\$15,000
Technology Enhancements Subcategory	\$1,252,000
Classroom Connectivity Universal (CCU)	\$675,000
MDF Upgrades	\$25,000

Subcategories	Amount
Telephone Upgrades (voice over IP)	\$280,000
Data Security Tools	\$42,000
Advanced Network Routing	\$24,000
Fund 20K Devices per Year	\$58,000
Finance Systems	\$70,000
Human Resources and Payroll Systems	\$50,000
Other Enterprise Applications	\$28,000
Mayoral and Council Allocations	\$161,000
Total	\$6,374,000

Source: School Construction Authority

#### **Healthy Schools**

The Healthy Schools category is a new category added in the Fiscal 2025-2029 Capital Plan. The Category includes \$2.3 billion in funding for a range of projects that SCA says provides "students with school buildings that not only support learning, but also considers their well-being."<sup>1</sup> Such projects include upgrades and enhancements to athletic fields, gyms, playgrounds, and cafeterias. Table 4 includes all subcategories and funding amounts within the Healthy Schools category.

The largest subcategory within Healthy School is the \$1.4 billion budgeted for electrification projects related to Local Law 97 compliance. The law requires that city-owned buildings reduce emissions by 40 percent by 2025 and 50 percent by 2030. One of the ways SCA is pursuing this is by transitioning schools to operate on electric power, although some of the electrification projects funded in the Plan will not be complete until after 2030.

Like the Capital Investments category, projects within the Healthy Schools category can vary significantly in cost. On average, playground upgrades cost between \$1 and \$3 million per project, whereas athletic field upgrades tend to range from \$10 to \$12 million.

Subcategory	<u>Amount</u>
Electrification	\$1,400,000
Heating Plant Upgrades	\$350,000
Athletic Field Upgrades	\$150,000
Swimming Pool Upgrades	\$75,000
Gymnasium Upgrades	\$40,000
Playground Upgrades	\$60,000
Health and Nutrition	\$30,000
Cafeteria Enhancements	\$150,000
Total	\$2,255,000

Table 4: Healthy School subcategories (Dollars in Thousands)

Source: School Construction Authority

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> New York City School Construction Authority. "FY 2025-2029 Proposed Five-Year Capital Plan". February 2024. https://dnnhh5cc1.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/Capital\_Plan/Capital\_plans/02012024\_25\_29\_CapitalPlan.pdf?sv= 2017-04-

#### Mandated Programs

The Mandated Programs category includes \$3.4 billion for a group of legally required items and projects that range from asbestos remediation, insurance, and funding to complete projects from the prior plan. A total of \$100 million of the funding is for SCA's annual Building Assessment Survey that determines the conditions and level of need for repairs or upgrades of every school building in the City. Table 5 includes all subcategories and funding amounts within the Mandated Programs category.

Subcategory	<u>Amount</u>
Asbestos Remediation	\$250,000
Lead Paint Removal	\$10,000
Code Compliance	\$332,000
Building Condition Surveys	\$100,000
Wrap-Up Insurance	\$900,000
Prior Plan Completion	\$1,076,600
Emergency, Unspecified &	
Miscellaneous	\$726,400
Total	\$3,395,000

Table 5: Mandated Programs subcategories (Dollars in Thousands)

Source: School Construction Authority

## Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report

- The number of new seats created each year has historically ranged between 4,000 and 9,000 but has not exceeded 10,000 in any of the previous eight fiscal years. Both the PMMR target and the Plan indicate that 11,010 new seats will be created in Fiscal 2024, which would be the most since Fiscal 2015. The Fiscal 2025 target, however, drops back down to 5,969 new seats. Hitting these targets will be crucial for meeting class size reduction.
- The construction bid price for school capacity projects was \$912 per square foot for Fiscal 2023, up slightly from the Fiscal 2022 per square foot price of \$905. Both were significantly higher than the \$710 price in Fiscal 2021. The PMMR per square foot price targets for both Fiscal 2024 and Fiscal 2025 are \$900, showing SCA's intention to level off costs that have risen in recent years.
- Both the "capital improvement projects constructed on time or early" and "capital improvement projects constructed within budget" indicators dropped in Fiscal 2021 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, to 23 percent and 62 percent respectively. The percentage of projects constructed within budget has rebounded, hitting 90 percent in Fiscal 2023 and 89 percent in the first four months of Fiscal 2024. However, the percentage of projects constructed on time or early was only 17 percent in Fiscal 2023 and during the first four months of Fiscal 2024, is only 14 percent. The low number of projects completed on time can impact the Plan, as it results in projects from the prior capital plan having to be carried over into the next capital plan.

#### **Demographics**

The most recent version of the <u>Blue Book</u>, published in the summer of 2023, details the enrollment, capacity and utilization rate of each school. The report used the class size caps that were formalized in the 2022 state law, in its assumptions. The most notable change to the recent version of the Blue Book is the reinstatement of the Program Efficiency Ratio, which is used to account for lower

classroom capacity in capacity calculations, for certain specialty instruction rooms. The next Blue Book will be published this summer.

The report on 2023-2032 enrollment projections, published in December 2023, forecasts that the demographic trends that have seen public school enrollments decline over the past decade will continue<sup>2</sup>. There were 890,591 public school students in Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2022-2023 school year, not including D75 enrollments. SCA projects that by 2032-2033, that number will be 661,881, a 26.0 percent decline.

## SCA Operating Budget and Headcount

The current operating budget for SCA is \$281.0 million, which is funded by Inter-Fund Agreement (IFA) funds through the capital budget. The current budgeted headcount is 1,059 and the actual headcount is 929. The budgeted headcount has remained steady since Fiscal 2022, but during that period, the actual headcount has grown from 835 to 929. Table 6 shows historic budgeted and actual headcounts as well as vacancy rates for SCA, since Fiscal 2020.

Fiscal Year	Budgeted Headcount	Actuals as of June 30th	Vacancy Rate
2024	1,059	929	12.3%
2023	1,059	883	16.6%
2022	1,059	835	21.2%
2021	950	860	9.5%
2020	969	859	11.4%

Table 6: Budgeted and Actual Headcount by Fiscal Year

Source: School Construction Authority

## **DOE Capital Budget and Commitment Plan**

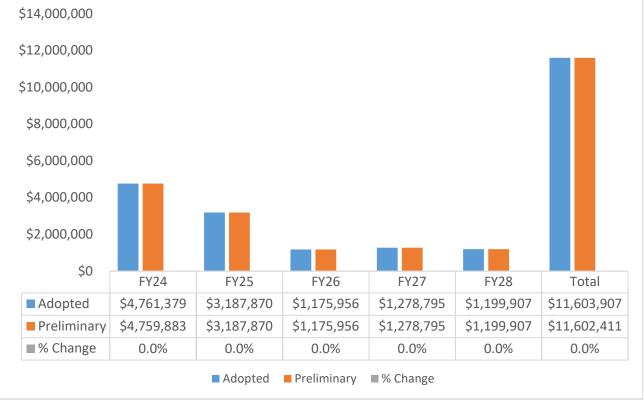
DOE's Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Capital Commitment Plan is \$11.6 billion, a \$1.5 million decrease from the Adopted Capital Commitment Plan. The \$11.6 billion Commitment Plan is 13.1 percent of the City's overall \$88.5 billion Fiscal 2025 Capital Commitment Plan. Fiscals 2025-2028 are unchanged between the Adopted and Preliminary capital plans, with the only difference coming in Fiscal 2024. This change is due to \$1.5 million decrease in SCA's 2020-2024 Five-Year Capital Plan.

Chart 2 shows how the DOE's Capital Commitment Plan is front-loaded, with \$7.9 billion or 68.5 percent of the funding in Fiscal 2024 and Fiscal 2025 and only \$3.7 billion or 31.5 percent of the funding in Fiscal 2026 through Fiscal 2028.

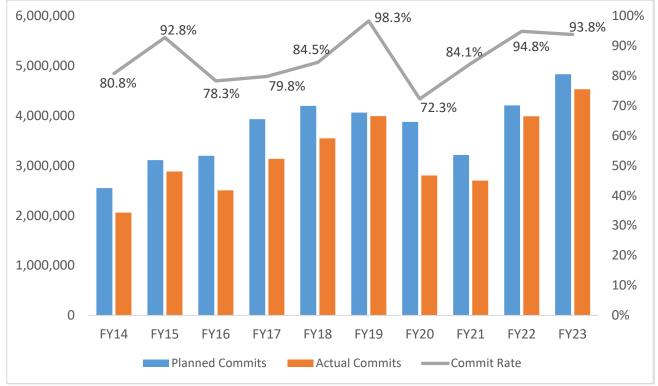
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> New York City School Construction Authority. "Enrollment Projections for the New York City Public Schools 2023-24 to 2032-33". December 2023.

https://dnnhh5cc1.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/Capital\_Plan/Demographic\_projection\_Reports/Volume%201-2024.pdf?sv=2017-04-17&sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=enpZ42jPxwSli0aPO3s2bFHI7zvvCb8pirzU6WTohPc%3D

#### Chart 2: DOE Capital Commitment Plan Fiscal 2024-2028 (Dollars in Thousands)



Source: New York City Mayor's Office of Management and Budget



#### Chart 3: DOE Commitment Rate for Fiscal 2014-2023 (Dollars in Thousands)

Source: New York City Mayor's Office of Management and Budget

Chart 3 displays the agency's Capital Commitment Plan as of adoption in each year from Fiscal 2014 through Fiscal 2023 and the actual commitments in the corresponding fiscal year. Historically, DOE has had a high commitment rate, only falling below 75.0 percent in Fiscal 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Fiscal 2023, the commitment rate was 93.8 percent, slightly down from 94.8 percent in Fiscal 2022.

#### **Budget Issues and Concerns**

• Class Size Law Compliance. Declines in enrollment and lower birth rates in the City have decreased the need for new capacity. However, although this might be true when assessing new capacity based strictly on demographic need, the necessary new capacity required by the class size law, as estimated by both SCA and DOE, would indicate that the overall new capacity need has actually grown significantly, since the law was passed.

SCA has indicated that based on the current enrollment numbers for the 2023-2024 school year, SCA would need to create 85,000 new seats to reach compliance with the class size law, which will take full effect in September 2028. The Plan assumes that 26,288 new seats will come online by 2027, with an additional 23,035 seats funded in this Plan. Combined, that would get 58 percent of the way towards compliance. However, the new seats funded in this Plan will most likely not be online by the 2028 deadline.

It is worth noting that enrollment is dynamic and the number of new seats that will be required to reach compliance is a moving target. Similarly, SCA's \$22 to \$27 billion estimate of the cost to reach full compliance has changed and may change again. Additionally, some of those seat requirements can be met with better utilization of space within schools. DOE identified schools by whether or not they can accommodate their existing overcrowded classes using existing space in their September Class Size Reduction Plan<sup>3</sup>. It is unclear from DOE's analysis how many overcrowded classes could be fixed using existing space, although they testified at the Class Size Law oversight hearing on February 29<sup>th</sup>, that roughly 1,000 schools have the space to meet the class size caps. It is clear that some combination of better use of existing space and new capacity construction will be necessary to reach compliance with the class size law.

- Accessibility. SCA has indicated that at current funding levels, it will take an additional 15-20 years for all schools to be completely ADA compliant, and this does not include buildings that would only be compliant if they were fully rebuilt. SCA has highlighted additional funding for accessibility as one of their priorities for future capital plans.
- **Funding.** The overwhelming majority of the City's education capital costs are financed by Citybacked bonds. Construction is offset by state funded building aid, which supports debt service on the bonds that fund the capital plan. Reimbursement is disbursed on a 30-year amortization schedule. Because of a maximum cost allowance cap, reimbursement ends up being higher for upgrades and renovations than on new construction. Only approximately 29 percent of SCA's new seat construction costs are offset by building aid funding, whereas the percentage tends to be higher for smaller projects. The lower reimbursement rate for state building aid funding for new capacity projects will have a detrimental effect on SCA's pursuit of class size compliance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> New York City Public Schools. "NYC Department of Education Class Size Reduction Plan." September 2023. <u>NYCPS Class Size</u> <u>Reduction Plan\_final for sign off 092923 Final.pdf - Google Drive</u>

The size of the Capital Plan for education has also decreased in recent years, even as issues such as class size reduction, accessibility and electrification remain prominent. The Preliminary Fiscal 2023-2027 Capital Commitment Plan included \$15.6 billion for DOE, \$4.0 billion more than the current capital commitment plan. Chart 4 details the size of DOE's Capital Commitment Plan as of the Preliminary Plan each year, showing a consistent decrease since Fiscal 2020. The Preliminary Fiscal 2024-2028 Capital Commitment Plan does not fully incorporate SCA's proposed Fiscal 2025-2029 Capital Plan, as that has not officially been adopted. Even though the current commitment plan amounts for DOE are a placeholder, and we expect them to increase significantly by next fiscal year, they are still lower than DOE's capital commitment plan has been in many years, as Chart 4 indicates.

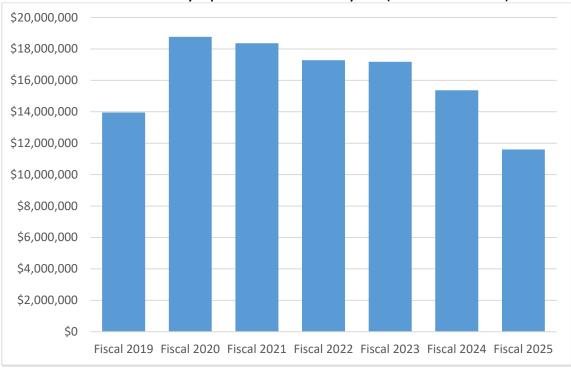


Chart 4: DOE Five-Year Preliminary Capital Commitment Plan by Year (Dollars in Thousands)

Source: New York City Mayor's Office of Management and Budget

## **Appendices**

# A. New Seat Capacity Added by School District from Fiscal 2020-2024 Capital Plan

School District	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
2	0	0	275	170	445
6	770	0	0	0	770
7	547	0	0	0	547
8	500	0	0	0	500
9	1,081	0	0	0	1,081
10	451	0	0	696	1,147
11	952	344	0	0	1,296
12	596	0	0	0	596
13	806	0	0	0	806
15	818	0	583	557	1,958
17	192	0	0	0	192
20	1,461	0	0	461	1,922
21	391	640	553	0	1,584
22	0	0	517	0	517
24	0	0	451	0	451
25	973	0	547	1,229	2,749
26	473	399	463	0	1,335
27	145	229	0	0	374
28	403	454	876	0	1,733
29	0	0	554	0	554
30	451	3,066	547	547	4,611
31	0	837	0	283	1,120
Total	11,010	5,969	5,366	3,943	26,288

#### B. New Seat Capacity Sited by School District from Fiscal 2025-2029 Capital Plan

School District	Sub-District	February 2024 Total Funded (Non-District 75)	February 2024 Total Funded (District 75)	February 2024 Total Funded
2	Chelsea / Midtown West	686	0	686
2	Tribeca / Village	433	0	433
25	Flushing / Murray Hill / Willets Point	600	96	696
27	Ozone Park / South Ozone Park / Richmond Hill / Woodhaven	600	96	696
30	Long Island City / Ravenswood	599	0	599
31	New Dorp	640	96	736
31	North Slope	234	96	330
Brooklyn High School		1,175	96	1,271
Staten Island High School		1,158	96	1,254
Citywide		16,334	0	16,334
Total		22,459	576	23,035