

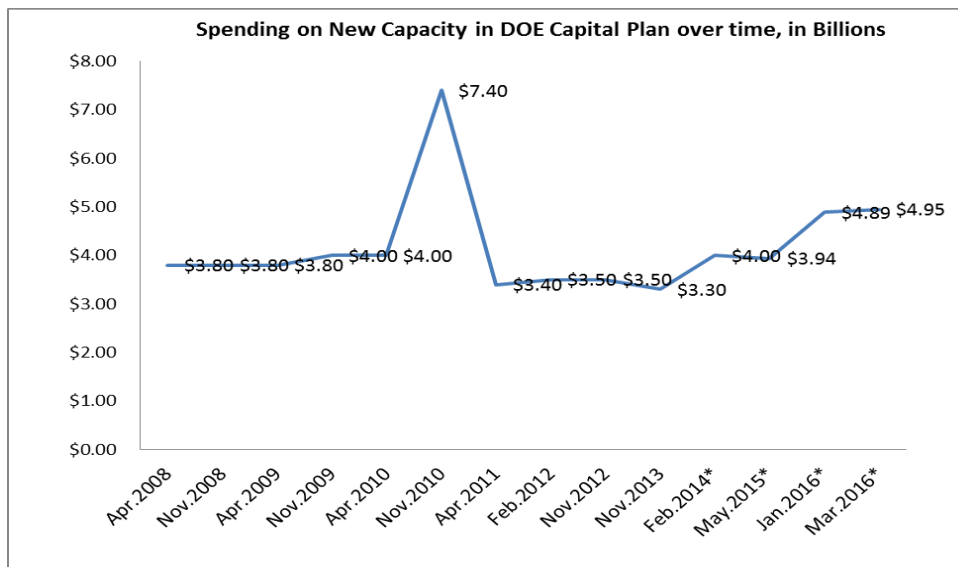
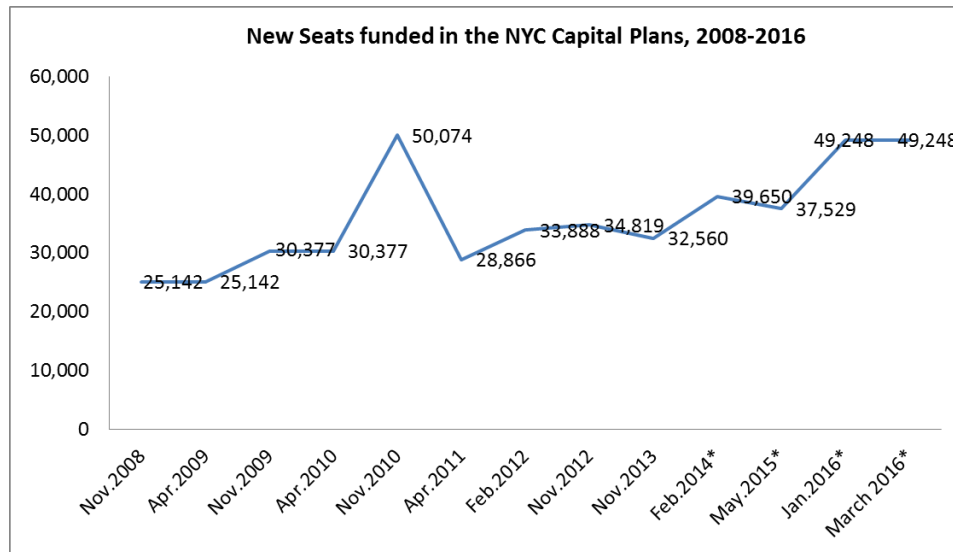


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Comments on the March 2016 five-year capital plan

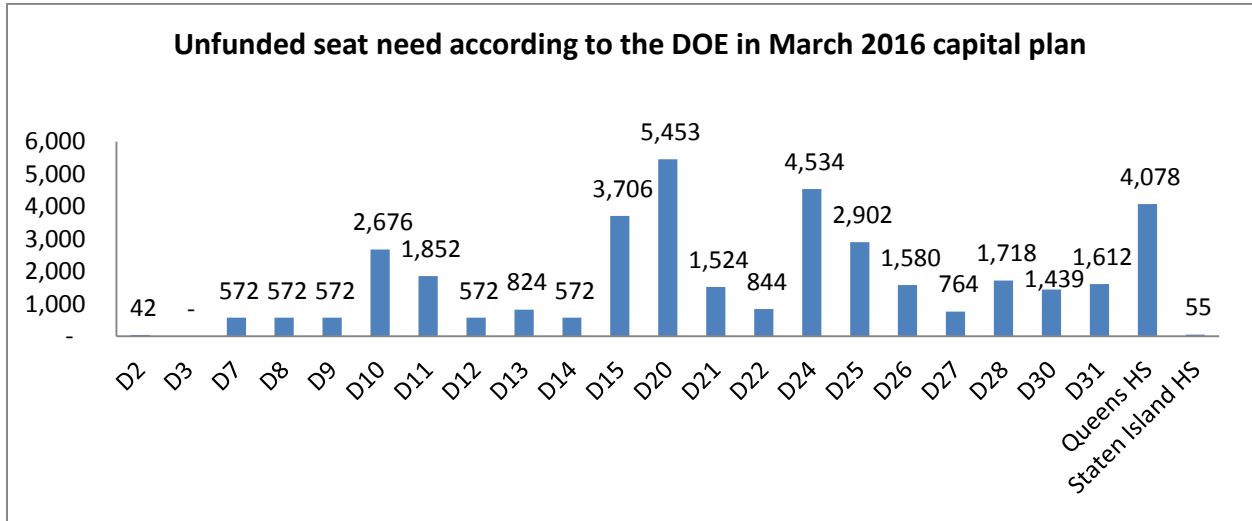
May 17, 2016

The number of new seats in the proposed March 2016 five-year capital plan has increased since last year's adopted five year capital plan to 49,248 new seats, and the spending on new capacity has also increased substantially since then.

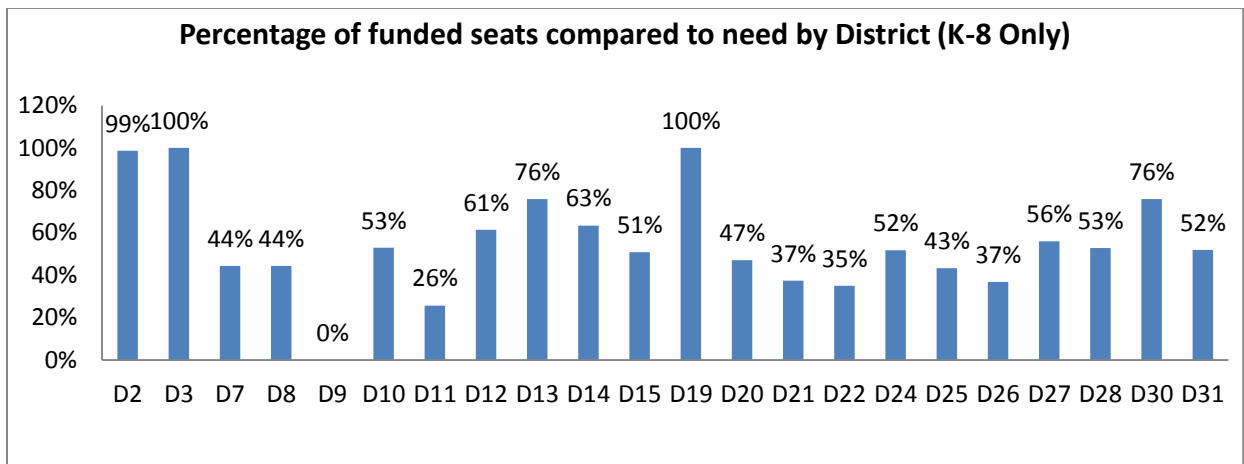


Yet according to DOE, the need for seats has increased even more, to 83,000.

Thus the new capacity funded by the plan will fulfill only 59% of the DOE’s estimate of the need for new school seats, based on existing overcrowding and future enrollment increases. Below is a chart showing the unmet need for seats in each district, according to the plan:



Here is the percent of K-8 seats funded compared to the need by district, according to the DOE’s estimates.



Queens and Staten Island will receive 41% and 86% of the need for new seats, respectively, according to the DOE. No other borough is due to receive any new high schools seats.

Problems with DOE's estimation of future need

The actual unmet need for new space is likely to be far greater than the 83,000 seats claimed by DOE. As you can see in the above chart, DOE claims that the Capital plan funds 99% of the need for new space in District 2, at 3,232 seats.

DOE uses housing starts along with the City Planning multiplier to help estimate future enrollment. At the same time, the housing starts data used to predict enrollment increases reveal more than 45,000 additional residential units to be built in District 2 by 2019.¹ This figure, along with the City Planning multiplier to help estimate future enrollment yields the estimate that 7,300 new elementary and middle school seats will be needed in D2 by 2019 – more than twice as many seats than funded in the plan.

The housing start data also suggests the need for an additional 3,420 high school seats in Manhattan, though no additional high schools are planned for the borough.

In addition, the multiplier is not adjusted by neighborhood or district, but is borough-wide, and is based upon census data more than twenty years old.

It is also unfortunate that there's been no attempt in the plan to account for the Mayor's rezoning plan to create 80,000 new units of affordable housing and 160,000 market-rate units in the years ahead – making it likely our school capacity will fall even further behind in the future.

Seats in the "Class Size Reduction" category still not identified

The figures for new seats funded in the plan cited above of 49,000 include the Class Size Reduction category, which is funded separately at \$490 million. Still, after 2 ½ years, this category has **only three projects** identified PS 19 in D11, ENY Family Academy and PS 131 in D29 in Queens.

No further information is provided as to how many seats these projects include or what they have to do with lowering class size. This lag of more than two years is unacceptable and will further delay progress to address overcrowding.

No replacement plan for seats loss through TCU removal

According to the capital plan, 73 TCUs have already been removed, and 113 are scheduled to be removed in the near future. These TCUs have a total capacity of more than 8,000 seats. Yet the capital plan allocates no funds and outlines no strategies for replacing their seats.

¹ <http://www.nycsca.org/Community/CapitalPlanManagementReportsData/Housing/2015-2024HousingWebChart.pdf.pdf> see also the multiplier here: <http://www.nycsca.org/Community/CapitalPlanManagementReportsData/Housing/NewHousingMultiplier.pdf>

PreK facility spending

PreK capacity costs increased substantially to \$670 million from \$520 million in the adopted 2015 plan. The cost of preK renovations in some cases is exceedingly high. One example is the Pre-K Center in Brooklyn at 8501 5th Avenue, listed at \$ 6.52 million, to renovate a former Dunkin Doughnuts shop I the ground floor of a parking garage – to create one classroom with 18 seats. The renovation for this classroom has costed of \$362,000 per seat, not including rent. Another preK facility in lower Manhattan at 2 Lafayette St. is costing over \$7 million for 36 seats – at a cost of \$196,000 per seat.

Recommendations

Because of the problems outlined above, we urge members of the Panel to reject the proposed capital plan, until and unless the DOE provides more accurate and transparent enrollment projections, identifies where all the seats in the Class Size Reduction category will be sited and where replacement seats for the TCUs will be found, and fully funds at least its own estimate of needed new seats of 83,000.