



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | March 24, 2025  
Press Contact: Malek Al-Shammary, [press@ibo.nyc.gov](mailto:press@ibo.nyc.gov), (917) 513-7488

## Taking Stock: Accessibility, Age, and Air Conditioning of NYC School Buildings

The New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO) is releasing a new report detailing the conditions of the City's public school buildings. Much of the recent discussion around school infrastructure has focused on the potential need to build new schools to comply with the New York State class size mandate (see IBO's recent [report](#) on class size). However, discussions should not overlook the state of existing aging infrastructure. As the City develops its approach to implementing State law, it must also prioritize maintaining and improving current buildings, not just constructing new ones.

This [report](#) provides a comprehensive look at the infrastructure challenges facing New York City's schools.

### Key Findings from the [Report](#):

- **Accessibility Gaps:** Only one-third of City school buildings are fully accessible, although the level of accessibility varies across Community School Districts 1-32.
- **Aging Infrastructure:** The average City school building is 75 years old, and most schools are over 30 years old.
- **Overcrowding and Space Constraints:** Schools experiencing overcrowding have less space per student, which may impact learning conditions and operational efficiency.
- **Climate Control Issues:** While all districts have air conditioning in at least 55% of their school building space, significant gaps remain in ensuring all classrooms provide a comfortable learning environment year-round.

The infrastructure challenges highlighted in this report align with broader issues facing the City's education system, as highlighted in IBO's recent reports on [class size](#), [teacher salaries](#), [enrollment trends](#), and potential changes to [Foundation Aid funding](#). Each of these factors underscore the growing need for strategic investment in public education infrastructure.

- **[Class Size Mandates](#):** IBO's analysis found that New York City must hire 17,000 additional teachers to comply with State-mandated class size reductions, requiring not only funding for salaries but also sufficient classroom space to accommodate smaller class sizes.
- **[Teacher Salaries and Retention](#):** A competitive labor market and high cost of living make it difficult for the City to attract and retain teachers. While median salaries for NYC teachers are higher than those in many other regions, adjustments for cost-of-living and local labor markets show that salaries are not as competitive as they might initially appear.
- **[Enrollment Trends and School Capacity](#):** Post-pandemic enrollment shifts show that traditional public school enrollment has declined since pre-pandemic, while charter schools saw modest increases. Some students have moved to private schools or left the City entirely.
- **[Potential Funding Challenges](#):** Changes to the Foundation Aid formula under consideration in Albany could significantly affect New York City's [education budget](#). The recently released one-house proposals put forth by the Senate and Assembly build upon recommended changes included in the Governor's Executive budget.

As budget negotiations continue, IBO's report and related research provides critical data for policymakers to assess the state of the City's school infrastructure and the broader challenges facing public education. As budget and policy decisions are made, these findings highlight the need for a long-term strategy that ensures schools receive the necessary investments to maintain safe, effective, and accessible learning environments for all students.

