Why Is the East Boston EEC Closing?

What the demand data says — all East Boston schools, K0 / K1 / K2, 2024-25 to 2026-27
Source: Boston Public Schools School Demand Reports (the three most recent published reports)

The strong points

- **EEC is oversubscribed, not underused.** Its K0 program waitlisted families in all three years (107, then 128, then 38 children) and its K1 waitlisted in all three years as well (19, 9, 15). No other East Boston early-childhood program combines EEC's size with that level of unmet demand.
- **EEC is East Boston's K0 backbone.** It holds 24 of the neighborhood's 82 K0 seats (29%) in 2026-27 — and in 2024-25 it held 29 of 49 (59%). The remaining providers are tiny: Alighieri has 10 K0 seats, Bradley 10-12.
- **There is no slack capacity to absorb EEC's families.** Every other East Boston K0 provider also waitlists heavily: Alighieri 103 / 116 / 48, Bradley 69 / 72 / 35 across the three years. Combined East Boston K0 waitlists ran roughly 141 to 283 children per year.
- **The designated receiving school cannot take them yet.** McKay offered K0 for the first time in 2026-27: 12 seats, 45 applicants, and 10 children still waitlisted. That is the school EEC's youngest students are expected to land at.
- **Closure breaks a working pipeline.** Each year, 21-27 of EEC's K1 seats are filled by its own K0 children continuing up. Closing EEC breaks that K0-K1-K2 continuity for roughly 25 East Boston families a year.
- **The demand data does not support a demand-based closure.** If the reason is the building or facilities, BPS should say so plainly — and should publish the seat-replacement plan with the same specificity as the closure proposal.

Questions for BPS

1. EEC runs waitlists at K0 and K1 in every one of the last three years. What utilization or demand measure justifies closing a school whose early-childhood seats are oversubscribed every year?
2. If EEC closes, which schools add K0 seats, and exactly how many? East Boston has 82 K0 seats in total; EEC holds 24 of them (29%).
3. McKay — the receiving school — offered 12 K0 seats in 2026-27, drew 45 applicants, and waitlisted 10. How does McKay absorb EEC's K0 cohort on top of its own unmet demand?
4. Where do the roughly 25 children a year who currently continue from EEC's K0 into its K1 go, and is their continuity guaranteed in writing?
5. If Pre-K classrooms stay in the EEC building under McKay, does the guarantee of a McKay seat cover *incoming* K0 students, or only children already enrolled?
6. Will early-childhood (5th Quarter / summer) funding and seats for East Boston 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds follow those children to other sites, or lapse for East Boston families?
7. If the rationale is facilities rather than demand, publish it as such — with the building assessment — instead of presenting this as a demand decision.

The other half of BPS's own data

From BPS's Decision-Making Metrics for Long-Term Facilities Planning (updated November 2, 2026) and its School Demand Reports, 2024-25 to 2026-27.

Utilization: 90% by BPS's own measure

The closure recommendation cites 63% utilization. That is one year only — this year's 114 students against a building capacity of 180. BPS's own metrics file defines utilization as enrollment divided by capacity, **averaged over five years**. By that measure the EEC is at **90.3% — inside the district's target range of 84–114%**. On the same five-year measure, no East Boston elementary school falls below the target range, half are above 114%, and two (Kennedy, 149.8%; O'Donnell, 149.0%) run near 150%.

The enrollment decline follows BPS's own seat cuts

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Total seats offered at the EEC (K0–grade 1)	188	142	142
Students assigned	166	146	122
K0 seats offered	29	24	24
K0 waitlist	107	128	38

BPS cut 46 seats; assignments fell by 44. K0 seats were cut from 29 to 24 while more than a hundred families sat on the waitlist. And with only 142 seats offered in a building rated for 180, utilization could reach at most **79%** even if every seat were filled — below the district's own target floor. A waitlist and an "underfilled" building coexist because the bottleneck is how many classrooms BPS chooses to staff, not how many families apply.

The 12.5% "top three" figure, in context

BPS says only 12.5% of families ranked the EEC in their top three for K2, against a 22% average elsewhere in East Boston. From the same spreadsheet: Adams Elementary has the **identical 12.5%** and is not proposed for closure; the 22% is a simple mean pulled up by one school (Otis, 42.9%) — the median of the other schools is 18.6%. The metric does not measure K0 at all, the EEC's most-demanded grade, and it counts only families who submit a choice form — excluding the continuing students who hold 70% of the EEC's K1 seats. On the same sheet, the EEC's K1 top-three rate (15.1%) is higher than Adams, Guild, O'Donnell and Umana, and its three-year average K1 waitlist (18 students) is the third-highest in East Boston; the McKay's is 3.7.

The building BPS's own inspectors scored

Building Experience Score: **3 of 4** — around 20th of 108 schools district-wide. In East Boston only Umana scores higher (4); Adams and Bradley score 2, Guild 1, Otis 0. The EEC meets BPS's standard for a continuum of services. **95.6% of its students live in East Boston** (6th of 108 schools) and 82.5% live nearby (10th). Its administratively assigned share is 0.0 — every child is there because a family chose it. The designated receiving school, the McKay, already runs at 101.5% utilization on the five-year measure. The EEC building is also the newer, purpose-built space for ages 3–7 — gym, cafeteria, a safe playground with two new age-appropriate play structures, and a bathroom inside every classroom. If the schools combine, the EEC should be retained as the McKay's lower school, with all K0 classrooms located there.

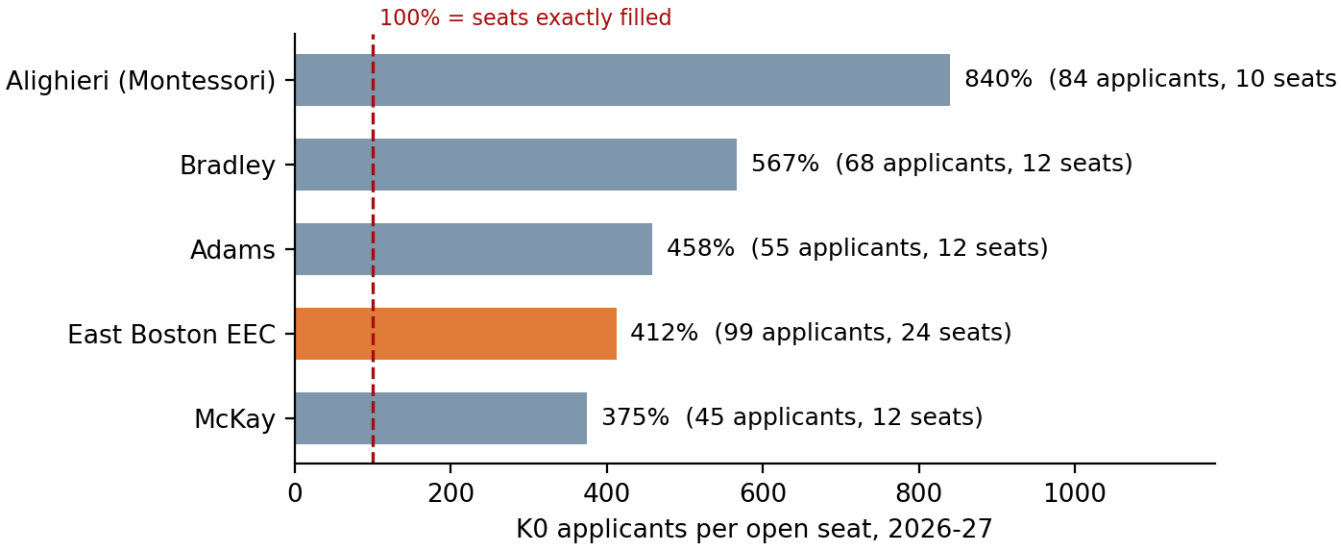
Sources: BPS Decision-Making Metrics for Long-Term Facilities Planning (Nov 2, 2026); BPS School Demand Reports 2024-25, 2025-26, 2026-27.

The picture: demand for every open seat, 2026-27

Each cell is the applied-per-open-seat percentage from the tables — how many families applied for every 100 open seats. 100% means exactly enough applicants to fill the seats; everything above it is oversubscription. EEC (top row, outlined) is at 412% in K0 and 700% in K1 — and it is also the neighborhood's largest K0 seat provider, so closing it removes the most-contested seats, not the least.

	K0	K1	K2
East Boston EEC	412%	700%	121%
Otis	no K0	210%	143%
Bradley	567%	700%	138%
Alighieri (Montessori)	840%	1183%	0 open seats
McKay	375%	205%	33%
Umana (dual language)	no K0	210%	33%
Adams	458%	315%	200%
Kennedy P.J.	no K0	260%	139%
O'Donnell	no K0	165%	67%
Guild	no K0	69%	70%

K0 in detail — applicants vs. seats, 2026-27



Seats taken: how full each school actually ended up, 2026-27

Same map, different question — not how many families wanted in, but how full each school finished. Each cell is seats taken as a percentage of capacity, with the raw counts. At the entry grades the map is uniformly dark: EEC filled K0 past capacity (28 children placed into 24 seats — BPS over-assigns expecting no-shows) and K1 exactly full, as did nearly every other school. The pale cells are all at K2 and all at other schools (McKay 35%, Guild 48%, Umana 55%) — the empty seats in East Boston are not at EEC, and not at the grades where children enter.

	K0	K1	K2
East Boston EEC	117% (28 of 24)	100% (30 of 30)	80% (35 of 44)
Otis	no K0	100% (40 of 40)	82% (54 of 66)
Bradley	108% (13 of 12)	100% (18 of 18)	98% (43 of 44)
Alighieri (Montessori)	100% (10 of 10)	100% (15 of 15)	113% (17 of 15)
McKay	100% (12 of 12)	100% (20 of 20)	35% (23 of 66)
Umana (dual language)	no K0	100% (20 of 20)	55% (36 of 66)
Adams	100% (12 of 12)	95% (19 of 20)	82% (18 of 22)
Kennedy P.J.	no K0	100% (20 of 20)	73% (32 of 44)
O'Donnell	no K0	100% (20 of 20)	70% (31 of 44)
Guild	no K0	100% (29 of 29)	48% (21 of 44)

How to read the tables

Capacity = total seats. **Guaranteed** = seats taken before the lottery by children continuing from the school's own lower grade (they never appear as applicants). **Open seats** = Capacity minus Guaranteed — the only seats new applicants compete for. At K0 there are no continuing students, so open seats equal capacity and the Guaranteed column is dropped; every table shows **applied per open seat** — applicants as a percentage of open seats — plus whether the school filled and how many children were left on its waitlist. **Applicants** = families who ranked the school in the January round (Total Ranks, Round 1). **Seats taken** = everyone assigned after the final round, continuing children included — which is why it can exceed the applicant count. **Waitlist** = applicants still unassigned at the report's snapshot. Schools with multiple program strands (e.g., Umana's English and Spanish dual-language strands) are combined into one row.

Grade K0 — all East Boston schools

School	Year	Open seats	Applicants	Applied per open seat	Seats taken	Full?	Waitlist
East Boston EEC	**2024-25**	**29**	**127**	**438%**	**28**	**—**	**107**
East Boston EEC	**2025-26**	**24**	**170**	**708%**	**25**	**Full**	**128**
East Boston EEC	**2026-27**	**24**	**99**	**412%**	**28**	**Full**	**38**
Bradley	2024-25	10	85	850%	10	Full	69
Bradley	2025-26	10	107	1070%	10	Full	72
Bradley	2026-27	12	68	567%	13	Full	35
Alighieri (Montessori)	2024-25	10	117	1170%	10	Full	103
Alighieri (Montessori)	2025-26	10	154	1540%	10	Full	116
Alighieri (Montessori)	2026-27	10	84	840%	10	Full	48
McKay	2026-27	12	45	375%	12	Full	10
Adams	2025-26	3	49	1633%	9	Full	39
Adams	2026-27	12	55	458%	12	Full	10

Grade K1 — all East Boston schools

School	Year	Capacity	Guaranteed	Open seats	Applicants	Applied per open seat	Seats taken	Full?	Waitlist
East Boston EEC	**2024-25**	**41**	**27**	**14**	**79**	**564%**	**41**	**Full**	**19**
East Boston EEC	**2025-26**	**30**	**22**	**8**	**56**	**700%**	**30**	**Full**	**9**
East Boston EEC	**2026-27**	**30**	**21**	**9**	**63**	**700%**	**30**	**Full**	**15**
Otis	2024-25	39	0	39	100	256%	39	Full	20
Otis	2025-26	40	0	40	76	190%	39	—	0
Otis	2026-27	40	0	40	84	210%	40	Full	0
Bradley	2024-25	18	6	12	50	417%	18	Full	10
Bradley	2025-26	18	10	8	48	600%	18	Full	20
Bradley	2026-27	18	10	8	56	700%	18	Full	26
Alighieri (Montessori)	2024-25	15	10	5	83	1660%	15	Full	21
Alighieri (Montessori)	2025-26	15	7	8	72	900%	16	Full	10
Alighieri (Montessori)	2026-27	15	9	6	71	1183%	15	Full	18
McKay	2024-25	19	0	19	57	300%	19	Full	7
McKay	2025-26	20	0	20	47	235%	13	—	0
McKay	2026-27	20	0	20	41	205%	20	Full	0
Umana (dual language)	2024-25	19	0	19	56	295%	19	Full	9
Umana (dual language)	2025-26	20	0	20	43	215%	19	—	0
Umana (dual language)	2026-27	20	0	20	42	210%	20	Full	1
Adams	2024-25	19	0	19	53	279%	21	Full	0
Adams	2025-26	28	0	28	37	132%	13	—	0
Adams	2026-27	20	7	13	41	315%	19	—	0
Kennedy P.J.	2024-25	19	0	19	77	405%	19	Full	11
Kennedy P.J.	2025-26	20	0	20	38	190%	14	—	0
Kennedy P.J.	2026-27	20	0	20	52	260%	20	Full	0
O'Donnell	2024-25	19	0	19	38	200%	20	Full	3
O'Donnell	2025-26	20	0	20	48	240%	20	Full	0
O'Donnell	2026-27	20	0	20	33	165%	20	Full	0
Guild	2024-25	29	0	29	18	62%	16	—	0
Guild	2025-26	29	1	28	27	96%	19	—	0
Guild	2026-27	29	0	29	20	69%	29	Full	0

Grade K2 — all East Boston schools

School	Year	Capacity	Guaranteed	Open seats	Applicants	Applied per open seat	Seats taken	Full?	Waitlist
East Boston EEC	**2024-25**	**61**	**37**	**24**	**36**	**150%**	**52**	**—**	**0**
East Boston EEC	**2025-26**	**44**	**45**	**0**	**46**	**— (0 open)**	**49**	**Full**	**9**
East Boston EEC	**2026-27**	**44**	**30**	**14**	**17**	**121%**	**35**	**—**	**0**
Otis	2024-25	65	38	27	47	174%	67	Full	2
Otis	2025-26	66	39	27	82	304%	66	Full	5
Otis	2026-27	66	38	28	40	143%	54	—	0
Bradley	2024-25	39	22	17	30	176%	39	Full	0
Bradley	2025-26	44	20	24	38	158%	42	—	0
Bradley	2026-27	44	20	24	33	138%	43	—	0
Alighieri (Montessori)	2024-25	15	15	0	27	— (0 open)	15	Full	6
Alighieri (Montessori)	2025-26	15	14	1	55	5500%	15	Full	15
Alighieri (Montessori)	2026-27	15	15	0	29	— (0 open)	17	Full	8
McKay	2024-25	65	19	46	32	70%	36	—	0
McKay	2025-26	66	18	48	53	110%	38	—	0
McKay	2026-27	66	18	48	16	33%	23	—	0
Umana (dual language)	2024-25	65	20	45	33	73%	40	—	2
Umana (dual language)	2025-26	66	19	47	37	79%	37	—	1
Umana (dual language)	2026-27	66	20	46	15	33%	36	—	0
Adams	2024-25	43	18	25	20	80%	21	—	0
Adams	2025-26	22	18	4	40	1000%	25	Full	1
Adams	2026-27	22	13	9	18	200%	18	—	0
Kennedy P.J.	2024-25	39	20	19	33	174%	35	—	0
Kennedy P.J.	2025-26	44	19	25	41	164%	38	—	0
Kennedy P.J.	2026-27	44	21	23	32	139%	32	—	0
O'Donnell	2024-25	43	19	24	27	112%	25	—	0
O'Donnell	2025-26	44	18	26	52	200%	39	—	0
O'Donnell	2026-27	44	20	24	16	67%	31	—	0
Guild	2024-25	39	25	14	12	86%	26	—	0
Guild	2025-26	44	26	18	27	150%	32	—	0
Guild	2026-27	44	21	23	16	70%	21	—	0

Notes: Figures are from the K0, K1 and K2 tabs of the BPS School Demand Reports for 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27. BPS does not publish a first-choice-only applicant count; "Applicants" counts every family that ranked the school at any position. The 2026-27 report snapshots capacity and waitlists after Round 2; the two earlier reports use Round 3, so 2026-27 waitlist figures are not perfectly comparable. BPS sometimes assigns more students than stated capacity in expectation of no-shows. Prepared November 12, 2026.