

Gujarat: Grading of primary schools after Diwali

AHMEDABAD: After successfully completing a pilot project involving 1,200 schools, the state education department will now start a drive for grading government-run primary schools across the state.

The accreditation process covering as many as 32,500 schools will begin soon after Diwali festive holidays, said sources in the state government.

Gujarat's secretary for education (primary and secondary) Vinod Rao recently conveyed this in a video message to teachers across the state through a mobile app. Earlier this year, the government revived its school accreditation council to grade schools by gauging their education quality. With this, parents, students and other stakeholders will have a credible body to rank schools of preference.

The council has set benchmarks based on teaching-learning process, evaluation, training of faculty, learning resources, organisation, governance, financial well-being and student services, among others.

As many as 400 teachers have been trained for inspection of schools and using tablets for real-time support. They will evaluate 32,500 primary schools, using the new standards for ranking and grading schools, sources added.

The state government has also inked a pact with a UK-based NGO called Reach to Teach. This agreement will help Gujarat link with UK government's statutory Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) for helping in grading of schools and to focus on improving learning outcomes of students and improving teaching across more primary schools in the state.

For the second-term academic session to start post Diwali holidays, the government has firmed up plans to introduce a '100 days long reading' programme called Vanchan Abhiyaan. The state department's internal surveys have shown that 80-85% school students face issues in reading and the new initiative is aimed at honing their skills during this duration.

In a major step towards creating a paperless workspace, the government plans to put all administrative work online post Diwali.

A large number of students face difficulties in learning Gujarati, maths and science subjects.