

To ensure quality education, Maharashtra schools, like colleges, to be soon graded and accredited in Maharashtra.

By Pallavi Smart and Sandhya Nair: March 18, 2024

Schools in Maharashtra will now be graded from A+ to C, indicating the quality of education imparted, just like in higher education institutions. These grades will have to be displayed by schools and the state will also develop a dedicated website of collated data on these gradings so that this information is easily accessible to parents.

Schools will have to undergo periodic evaluations to obtain an appropriate grade based on their performance under various parameters like basic infrastructural facility, teaching-learning standards, safety and security of children and inclusivity and gender equality on campuses. The school education department on Friday declared a School Quality Assurance & Accreditation Framework (SQAAF) which elaborates various parameters on which schools will be evaluated. Following the guidelines, the state school education department also set up the State School Standard Authority (SSSA), which will be responsible for assessing schools as per the SQAAF parameters.

“It will be a procedure based on self-declaration of information related to schools. Each school will have to submit its data on this website, in the standardised format designed as per the parameters defined under SQAAF. Every year, schools will do self-evaluations to obtain grades. But there will be an external or third-party evaluation every two years, which will ensure verification of the data submitted by the school. Based on these evaluations, schools will be graded. Schools will have to display these grades, whereas individuals will also have access to this information on the dedicated website prepared by the SSSA,” an SCERT official said.

Like colleges and universities, schools, including pre-primary, in the state will be evaluated by external assessors and graded on a score of 100 to below 50. Only Higher Educational Institutions are accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, an autonomous body under UGC. Its functioning has been under controversy in the recent past after a peer review team was accused of taking favours for higher grading.

Schools will have to do a self-evaluation on the SSSA website after it is ready. Schools will be assessed on various aspects including safety, security, basic infrastructure, number of teachers across subjects, and good governance among others. Third-party assessors will then visit the schools. The percentage difference in grading by schools and external assessors should not be more than 15% for the grading to be considered honest. The SSSA can also randomly pick up students and seek their feedback on schools' self-assessments. Based on the grade obtained, schools will have to submit a development plan for standards that need to be improved.

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