

Assam Legislative Assembly
UnStarred Question No: 487
Date of Reply: 23-07-2026

Subject : Prevention of Closure merger of 30 elementary schools in Hailakandi.

Name of MLA: Shri ZUBAIR ANAM MAZUMDAR :

487. Will the Minister of School Education Department be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether the Government has initiated a process via the Director of Elementary Education's Order No.E-800096/583 dated 10-06-2026 to amalgamate and permanently close approximately 30 elementary schools in Hailakandi District due to student enrollment dropping below 30?
- (b) Whether the Government will consider suspending these merger proceedings to grant these 30 schools a one-year probationary grace period to allow local guardians and Panchayat Raj Institution (PRI) members to actively drive up student enrollment?
- (c) Whether the Government will consider constituting a district-level committee comprising local MLAs, PRI representatives, guardians, local influential educationists, and education department officials to review the specific terrain, distance, geographical conditions, and infrastructure issues of these proposed school mergers before taking a final decision?
- (d) What concrete guidelines exist under the current policy to ensure that a blanket amalgamation does not violate the Right to Education (RTE) framework by forcing primary school children to cross physical and unviable geographic barriers?

Answer:

Hon'ble Minister of Education, Assam Dr. Ranoj Pegu will reply:

- (a) The Director of Elementary Education, Assam vide letter No. E-800096/583 dated 10-06- 2026 had requested all concerned DEEOs, including DEEO, Hailakandi to examine schools identified by Samagra Shiksha, Assam with enrolment below 30 students; infrastructure; distance from nearby schools; the existence of any physical barriers; safety aspects; eligibility as per prescribed norms and if eligible, the schools to be proposed for merger/amalgamation. The direction was issued vide the letter is for factual verification. Upon receipt of the verification report, the same shall be scrutinized in the Directorate and further steps shall be taken thereafter.
- (b) The entire matter is in the reporting stage. After obtaining the report, the Department shall assess the matter considering all aspects. Further, the proposal of the Hon'ble MLA for a one-year probationary grace period shall be discussed in the Department while considering all other aspects.
- (c) The clause 17 (A) and (B) of the Govt. office Memorandum No. ASE.481/2016/164, dated 03/08/2021 state that-There shall be one committee at the Block level and another at District level to find out the schools which are eligible for amalgamation/merger in view of the provision of the RTE Act and norms laid down by SSA as follows:

a. The Block level Committee (Both for Secondary and Elementary sector):

i.	The District Elementary Education Officer:	Chairman
ii.	All Block Elementary Education Officer of the district:	Member
iii.	Two educationist preferably one retired Principal/HM:	Member
iv.	One working Principal/ Headmaster to be nominated by the Inspector of Schools:	Member

b. The District Level Committee:

i.	The Additional Deputy Commissioner in-charge Education:	Chairman
ii.	Inspector of Schools:	Member Secretary

iii.	The District Elementary Education Officer.	Member
iv.	One Retired Principal of Higher Secondary or Senior Secondary School:	Member
v.	One working Principal of Higher Secondary School or Senior Secondary School:	Member
vi.	One working Head Master of High School:	Member

Copy of the Govt. office Memorandum No. ASE.481/2016/164, dated 03/08/2021 is enclosed herewith as Annexure-A.

The district officials while submitting the reports shall definitely consider the constraints and barriers if any, while furnishing the reports to the Department.

- (d) For the process of Amalgamation/Merger, Govt. Office Memorandum issued vide No. ASE.481/2016/164, dtd. 03/08/2021 (Annexure-A) and amendment Notification vide eCF No. 625938/318 dated 13-03-2025 (Annexure-B) that has been issued by the Department, considerable care has been taken to ensure the safety and convenience of the primary school children.

(Answer of UnStarred Question No.487 along with Annexure is available in eVidhan (NeVA) portal)

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No. ASE 481/2016/164

Dated Dispur the 3rd August 2021

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Siksha Khetra- a scheme for amalgamation and merger of different schools.

1. While the establishment of primary schools in every habitation across the country was driven by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), now subsumed under the Samagra Shiksha Scheme, and other state schemes have helped to ensure near-universal access to primary schools for all students, it has also led to the development of numerous small schools.
2. The small size of the school has made these schools economically sub-optimal and operationally complex to run in terms of deployment of teachers and provide critical physical resources. Teachers often teach multiple grades at a time, and teach multiple subjects, including subjects in which they may have no prior background. Key areas such as music, arts, and sports are too often simply not taught; and physical resources, such as lab and sports equipment and library books, are simply not available in most of these small schools.
3. The confinement of small schools has a negative effect on the entire teaching-learning process as teachers function best in communities and teams, and so do students. Small schools also present a systemic challenge for governance and management. The geographical dispersion, challenging access conditions, and the very large numbers of schools make it difficult to reach all the schools equally. Administrative structures have not been aligned with the increase in the number of schools or with the unified structure of the Samagra Shiksha Scheme.
4. The Department has been receiving various proposals for amalgamation of different categories of schools, which are still pending due to the absence of a clear policy in this regard. It has been found that there are many common campuses or close areas where different categories of schools viz., Higher Secondary School, High School, ME School and even LP school exist under different administrations. Despite the location of these institutions being in the same campus or nearby place, these schools are run individually with separate class routines and other individual academic functioning. In such a system, the services of teachers of one school are not shared for the student of another school even in need. The shortage of teachers of one school is not addressed by the teachers of another school. On the other hand, in the private sector, the schools are mostly composite schools having classes right from LKG/KG to XII standard which facilitates economy in administration with optimization of human resources and also provides a platform for linkage of education among different levels or standards.
5. Moreover, many schools provincialized under the Assam Venture Educational Institution (Provincialisation of Services) Act 2011 and The Assam Education (Provincialisation of Services of Teachers and Re-organisation of Educational Institution) Act 2017 as amended up to 2018, have low enrolment and require merger with another school for effective administration and academic improvement.
6. Further, it has been noticed that the teachers in Senior/Higher Secondary Schools are required to teach a maximum of two classes in a day, the duration of which is not more than three hours. On the other hand, there are large numbers of High Schools, which impart Education in Classes IX and X only and there is a shortage of qualified and trained teachers. Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development has stated that the services of the teachers of stand-alone Senior/Higher Secondary schools are not being utilized fully and there is a need to take policy to expand these Senior Secondary Schools with adjacent High schools to include Class IX & X to optimize the services of Post Graduate Teachers (PGT).
7. After careful consideration of all aspects and to derive optimum service of the employees and other logistic support to the schools, it has been decided that the schools situated in the same campus or any nearby area shall be amalgamated/merged and all such schools shall be brought into one single administrative and academic unit under Siksha Khetra Scheme. The following criteria shall be considered for such amalgamation/ merger:

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- i) All the schools situated in the same campus shall be merged with the highest-level school i.e., if there is a Higher Secondary School, a High School, an ME School and an LP School situated in the same campus, then the High, ME and LP school shall be amalgamated with the Higher Secondary School. Likewise, if the highest-level school is a High School, then all other schools subordinate to the High School shall be amalgamated with the High School. The SMC/SMDC of the highest-level school i.e., the Higher Secondary School or High School or ME(UP) School as the case may be, shall continue and SMC/SMDC of all other schools shall stand withdrawn. However, the SMC/SMDC shall be reconstituted with the inclusion of two representatives from Guardians and one from teachers of each school amalgamated.
- ii) Stand-alone High School with only class IX & X, if situated near a Senior/Higher Secondary School must be merged with the Senior/Higher Secondary School, irrespective of the number of enrolments.
- iii) The name of the highest-level school in which all other schools are amalgamated, shall stand. The highest-level school, hereinafter, shall be termed as Base School
- iv) The movable or immovable property of the schools shall be vested in the name of the amalgamated school i.e., the Base School. If a ME School is amalgamated with one High School, then the property of both the schools shall be vested in the name of the High School. Likewise, if an LP, ME and High School is amalgamated with a Higher/Senior Secondary School or a High School is merged with a Senior/Higher Secondary School, then the property of all the schools shall be vested in the name of Higher/Senior Secondary School, as the case may be.
- v) In case of an LP or ME school is amalgamated with a High School or Higher Secondary School, the Assistant teachers and other staff of the LP or ME School shall be the employee of the amalgamated School and their services shall be placed at the disposal of the Secondary Education Department. The staff pattern shall be fixed as per existing norms for a High School and Higher Secondary School and the excess teaching and non-teaching employees shall be posted elsewhere against any vacant post with the protection of their seniority of the earlier school. There shall not be any financial loss to any of the existing incumbent and whatever emolument they are getting shall continue to receive even after amalgamation.
- vi) In case one or more LP and one or more ME schools are amalgamated, the Assistant teachers of the LP School shall be the employee of the amalgamated School and the Headmaster of the ME school shall be the Headmaster of the amalgamated school. The staff pattern shall be fixed as per existing norms for a ME School and the excess teaching employees shall be posted elsewhere against any vacant post with their seniority of the earlier school. There shall not be any financial loss and whatever emolument they are getting shall continue. The Head Teacher of the LP School shall continue to draw charge allowance till his retirement or till his posting elsewhere.
- vii) In case a High School is amalgamated with a Senior/Higher Secondary School, the Assistant teachers and other staff of the High School shall be the employee of the amalgamated Senior/Higher Secondary School. The staff pattern shall be fixed as per existing norms for a composite Higher Secondary School and the excess teaching and non-teaching employees shall be posted elsewhere against any vacant post with their seniority of the earlier school. The excess employees shall be identified as per seniority.
- viii) In the event the highest-level school is a High School, the Headmaster of the High School shall continue after amalgamation. The post of Headmaster of ME School shall be re-designated as Assistant Headmaster with the same pay scale whatever they are drawing as Headmaster of ME School and the post shall be held by the existing Headmaster of the ME School even if he is not fulfilling the required qualification for the post of Assistant Headmaster.

Provided, that if the Head Master of the ME School possesses the requisite qualification of Assistant Head Master, he/she will get the emoluments available for the post of Assistant Head Master from the date of amalgamation/merger. In case of acquiring the required qualification at a later stage, the pay will be at par from the date of acquiring the qualification. However, after cessation of the services

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of such Assistant Headmaster, the vacancy shall be filled up from the candidates having requisite qualification as per procedure stipulated in the Service Rules in force.

- ix) In the event of the highest-level school is being a Senior Secondary School or a Higher Secondary School, the Principal of the Senior/Higher Secondary School shall continue after amalgamation. The post of Headmaster of High School shall be re-designated as Vice Principal with the same pay scale, whatever they are drawing as Head Master of High School and the post shall be held by the existing Headmaster of the High School even if he is not fulfilling the required qualification for the post of Vice-Principal.

Provided that if the Head Master of the High School possesses the requisite qualification of Vice Principal, he/she will get the emoluments available for the post of Vice-Principal from the date of amalgamation/merger. In case of acquiring the required qualification at a later stage, the pay will be at par from the date of qualifying. However, after cessation of the services of such Vice Principal, the vacancy shall be filled from the candidates having requisite qualification as per procedure stipulated in the Service Rules in force.

8. Each of the Senior Secondary schools, must have the facility to teach from class IX to XII, for proper implementation of the provisions contained in the National Education Policy 2020. In every Senior Secondary School, one of the nearest two-class High schools or a 5 class High School must be merged or amalgamated. In case of need for accommodation of students, there may be two campuses. Govt. will consider providing additional infrastructure on actual need basis.
9. If two or more High Schools having two classes only i.e., class IX and X, are located within a radius of 5 Km then these High Schools may be merged provided that the number of students does not exceed 100 in each class. However, in the case of hilly areas, difficult terrain and places having natural barriers, the distance norms shall have to be reduced, as per the suitability and need of that particular area.
10. If two or more composite High Schools having five classes or one High School having two classes only i.e., class IX and X, are located within the radius of 5 Km then these High Schools may be merged provided that the number of students does not exceed 40 in each class. However, in the case of Hilly areas, difficult terrain and places having natural barriers, the distance norms shall have to be reduced, as per suitability and need of that particular area.
11. To optimise the use of services of teachers of a two-class High School, one nearby ME School having poor enrolment i.e., less than 35 students in each class may be merged with the High School. However, in the case of Hilly areas, difficult terrain and places having natural barriers, the distance norms shall have to be reduced, as per suitability and need of that particular area.
12. If two or more UP (ME) Schools are located within a radius of 3 Kilometer then these ME schools may be merged provided that the number of students does not exceed 40 in each class. However, in the case of Hilly areas, difficult terrain and places having natural barriers, the distance norms shall have to be reduced, as per suitability and need of that particular area.
13. If two or more LP Schools are located within a radius of 1 Kilometer then these LP Schools may be merged provided that the number of students does not exceed 100 in each school. However, in the case of Hilly areas, difficult terrain and places having natural barriers, the distance norms shall have to be reduced, as per suitability and need of that particular area.
14. While taking into consideration of amalgamation or merger of schools, the newly converted Upper Primary Schools, High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools from the Madrasa Institutions, shall have to be taken with equal footing.
15. Further, the following shall be conditions including the service condition of the Employees shall apply after the merger:
- a. The school having good infrastructure facilities together with an amiable academic atmosphere and proper road connectivity in comparison to the other schools shall be the Base School and other schools shall be merged with that Base School. The senior-most Principal/Headmaster shall be the Principal/Headmaster of the School after the merger. If the date of joining happens to be the same, then the

Seniority in age shall be taken into consideration for determination of the seniority. The other Principal/Headmaster shall be the ex-officio Principal/Headmaster with the post personal to him and he/she shall continue to get his pay in the existing status till retirement or till posting elsewhere.

- b. The name of the Base School to which other schools are merged, shall stand. However, the joint session of all the School Managing Committees shall decide the name with the approval of the District Level Committee.
 - c. The movable or immovable property of the schools shall be vested in the name of the Base School after merger.
 - d. The Assistant Teachers and other staff of the schools shall be the employee of the Base School. The excess teaching and non-teaching employees shall be posted elsewhere against vacant posts with their seniority of the earlier school.
 - e. After amalgamation the teacher of the amalgamated school shall take classes as stated below: -
 - i. Teachers of existing LP School in class I to V
 - ii. Teachers of existing ME School in class I to VIII
 - iii. Teachers of existing High School in class VI to X
 - iv. Teachers of existing HSS/ Senior Secondary Schools in VI to XII
16. Gradation List: Each of the teachers shall be the teacher of the higher school after amalgamation /merger and their status will be revised. After amalgamation/ merger the gradation list of School or District, as the case may be, has to be revised by incorporating the names of teachers against the higher school in accordance with his/her qualification and status. He/she will get the seniority as before, and his/her name has to be placed in the appropriate place, in such a way that he/she does not lose his/her seniority.
17. There shall be one committee at the Block level and another at District level to find out the schools which are eligible for amalgamation/merger in view of the provision of the RTE Act and norms laid down by SSA as follows:
- a. **The Block level Committee (Both for Secondary and Elementary sector):**
 - i. The District Elementary Education Officer: Chairman
 - ii. All Block Elementary Education Officer of the dist. : Member
 - iii. Two educationist preferably one retired Principal/HM: Member
 - iv. One working Principal/ Headmaster to be nominated
 - v. by the Inspector of Schools: Member
 - b. **The District Level Committee:**
 - i. The Additional Deputy Commissioner in-charge Education: Chairman
 - ii. Inspector of Schools: Member-Secretary
 - iii. The District Elementary Education Officer: Member
 - iv. One Retired Principal of Higher Secondary or Senior Secondary School: Member
 - v. One working Principal of Higher Secondary School or Senior Secondary School: Member
 - vi. One working Head Master of High School: Member
 - c. **The District Level Committee (for Six Scheduled Area):**
 - i. The Principal Secretary of Autonomous District Council or Deputy Commissioner of the District as authorized by the Autonomous Council: Chairman
 - ii. Inspector of Schools: Member-Secretary
 - iii. The District Elementary Education Officer: Member
 - iv. One Retired Principal of Higher Secondary or Senior Secondary School: Member
 - v. One working Principal of Higher Secondary School or Senior Secondary School: Member

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- vi. One working Head Master of High School: Member
18. For smooth implementation of the above scheme and for obtaining Government approval, the following procedures shall be adopted by the authority concerned:
- Block level Committee shall identify such schools which are eligible for merger or amalgamation and shall send the list of such schools with detailed particulars as per Annexure-I and shall forward to the District level Committee for examination.
 - The District Level Committee will examine the proposal as may be required and furnish their recommendation on proposed amalgamation/merger to the Director of Secondary Education, Assam if the highest-level school is under Secondary Education or the Director of Elementary Education, Assam if the highest-level school is under Elementary Education.
 - The Director of Secondary Education or the Director of Elementary Education, as the case may be, shall furnish a proposal to the Government in the respective Department with post details as per Annexure-II for approval.
 - The Secondary Education Department or the Elementary Education Department, as the case may be, shall issue approval.
 - The entire process for such amalgamation/merger shall be completed within 90 days and the proposal shall be retained in each stage, not beyond 15 days.
19. Director concern will issue necessary order for amalgamation. For any disputes arising out of the order, the aggrieved Institution/ public may appeal before the Government in the Secondary or Elementary Education Department as the case may be.
20. This notification supersedes the earlier notification No ASE 481/2016/17 Dated Dispur the 22nd September 2016

B. Kalyan

(B. Kalyan Chakravarty, IAS)
Principal Secretary to the Government of Assam
Secondary Education Department.

Memo No. ASE.481/2016/ 164 -A

Dated Dispur the 3rd August, 2021

Copy forwarded for information and necessary action:-

- The Accountant General (A & E), Assam Guwahati-29
- The Mission Director, RMSA/SSA, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19
- The Director of Secondary/Elementary Education, Assam Kahilipara, Guwahati-19
- All Deputy Commissioners.
- The Principal Secretary of DHA District Council/KAA District Council/BTC.
- The Director Printing and Stationeries, Assam, Bamunimaidam, Guwahati-21-He is requested to publish the next Extra -Ordinary issue of the Assam Gazette.
- Finance (EC-III)/Finance (SIU) Department, Dispur, Guwahati-06.
- The Director of Education, BTC, Kokrajhar/Addl. Director of Education, Hills Haflong.
- The Secretary, AHSEC/ SEBA, Bamunimaidan, Guwahati-21
- The Inspector of Schools(All)/District Elementary Education Officer(All).
- P.S. to the Hon'ble Minister of Education, Dispur, Guwahati-06.
- P.S. to the Chief Secretary, Assam Dispur.
- P.S. to the Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Assam, Dispur.
- P.S. to the Special Commissioner, Secondary/Elementary Education Department, Assam Dispur, Ghy-06.
- Guard File.

By order etc.,

63/08/2021

Additional Secretary to the Govt. of Assam.
Secondary Education Department



GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION
DISPUR :: GUWAHATI

Annexure - B

ORDERS BY THE GOVERNOR
NOTIFICATION

eCF No. 625938/318 : In exercise powers conferred by the provision to the Article 309 of the Constitution of India, the Governor of Assam is hereby pleased to amend the Office Memorandum on **Siksha Khetra- a scheme for amalgamation and merger of different schools** issued vide No. ASE 481/2016/164 dated 03.08.2021 in the following manner, namely:-

Short title and commencement	1. (1) The Office Memorandum may be called the Siksha Khetra- a scheme for amalgamation and merger of different schools (Amendment), 2025 (2) They shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.
Amendment of Point No 11	The three (03) points may be cumulated in a single point as follows: - One or more ME School, located within a radius of 3 Kilometer, with low enrolment i.e., less than 30 students may be amalgamated with the nearby High School/Higher Secondary School. - Two or more UP (ME) Schools, located within a radius of 3 Kilometer with low enrolment i.e., less than 30 students may be merged with the UP (ME) school having better infrastructure to accommodate the students as Base School. - One or more nearby LP School, located within a radius of 1 Kilometer, with low enrolment i.e., less than 30 students may be amalgamated with the nearby UP (ME) School/ High School/ Higher Secondary School. - Two or more LP Schools, located within a radius of 1 Kilometer, with low enrolment i.e., less than 30 students may be merged with the LP school having better infrastructure to accommodate the students as Base School. - In the case of Hilly areas, difficult terrain and places having natural barriers, the distance norms shall have to be reduced, as per suitability and need of that particular area. - In case the distance between the schools is 0 km or within the same campus, the enrolment norms may be ignored and both the school buildings may be used for classroom transaction upon merger/amalgamation.
Amendment of Rule 16	Gradation List: - In case of two or more LP Schools or two or more UP (ME) Schools, after merger, the gradation list of School or District, as the case may be, has to be revised by incorporating the names of teachers against schools in accordance with the status of seniority of teachers of both schools. He/she will get the seniority as before, and his/her name has to be placed in the appropriate place, in such a way that he/she does not lose his/her seniority. - In case one or more LP and one or more ME schools are amalgamated, the Assistant teachers of the LP School shall be the employee of the amalgamated School. - The Headmaster of the ME school shall be the Headmaster of the amalgamated school. - The gradation list of UP (ME) teachers shall be fixed as per existing norms for a UP (ME) School. - The seniority of the amalgamated LP school teachers will be counted as per their seniority of the earlier LP school only for posting of excess teaching employees (if any) elsewhere against any vacant post. - The Head Teacher (i/c) of the LP School shall continue to draw charge allowance till his retirement or till his posting elsewhere.

Amendment of Rule 19	Director concerned will issue necessary order for amalgamation. For any disputes arising out of the order, the aggrieved Institution/ public may appeal before the Government in the School Education Department within 45 days from the issue of the order.
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Signed by
(Narayan Konwar, IAS)
Narayan Konwar
Secretary to the Government of Assam
Department of School Education
Date: 19-03-2025 14:07:51

Memo eCF No. 625938/318 -A

Copy to :

1. The Director, Printing & Stationery, Assam, Bamunimaidam, Guwahati-21 for publication of the Notification in the next Gazette.
2. The Director, Elementary Education, Assam, Kahilipara, Ghy-19.
3. The Director, Secondary Education, Assam, Kahilipara, Ghy-19.
4. PS to Minister, Education, Assam for kind appraisal of HME.
5. Guard file.

(Digitally signed)
Secretary to the Government of Assam
Department of School Education