

Note on school licensing:

School education in Kolkata is basically government sponsored. There are basically several types of schools in operation in Kolkata. There are fully government run schools, there are government sponsored schools, government aided schools, schools taking only DA from the government and the totally private unaided schools.

There are basically three government departments in charge of school education in the state. There are West Bengal Board of Primary Education, West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education; West Bengal Board Madrasah Education includes Both Secondary and High Madrasah Board.

The system is:

For private schools, government first looks at the necessity of the locality. If it is of the opinion that the locality needs a school, then it recommends so to the board under concern. Board considers the application from the private concern and government recommendation. The application is then forwarded to the District inspector's office.

The DI sends inspectors to the field or to the school to inspect whether all the informations given in the application are true. If all the informations are correct and there is found satisfactory environment for setting up a school, then the inspectors submit their report accordingly. On the basis of the report, the DI sends his recommendation back to the directorate of school education. He then reconsiders the whole case and submits reports to board authority. Board then acts on this recommendation and sends the report to managing committee for recognition of schools. The recognition subcommittee holds a meeting to reconsider about the matter. Then it forwards it to the Executive Committee for final consideration and it is this committee finally gives recognition to the school in concern.

In the application, the applicant has to mention the site-plan of the schools, clear declaration on how they are going to pay the teachers and the non-teaching staff and how they are going to support the whole schools et-up. There should be a mention of the already built managing committee, which will take decision on behalf of the school. Clear declaration about the managing committee should be given in the application. If the school is already being run, then in the application it has to be mentioned the running condition of the school and the result. "Though the inspectors from the DI office will inspect on field even when all the informations are categorically proved, it enriches the application", said one clerk in the department.

There are some proportional standards which are to be maintained by authorities before opening a school. Like, there should be a proportion of teachers. The schools have to have at least 12 teachers at the time of applying for recognition. Of these, there should be 4 language group teachers; 2 sc. Group teachers, two mathes teachers, two social sc. Group teachers and two physical education teachers. Of these teachers' division, the final division would be like this, 2 teachers each for two languages (4), one teacher each for biological and physical science, one each for geography and history, one each for physical education and physical training. This is minimum requirement for a secondary school operating with student no. as low as 100. If the no. of students increases, the no. of teachers will have to be increased.

The authorities are to see whether there are proper state for opening a school, like building, drainage, water, locality and noise, nearby schools, if already existing schools, what is the performance in examination (may not be board exam) etc.

In case of private unaided schools, board has hardly any function except the very formal part of giving recognition, which comes at the end. Board's responsibility even is not much more than that. It is the school education department, which takes care of the functioning of such schools. It sends inspectors on occasional basis and listens to if there is any problem.

This was the formal and legal part of the applying and getting recognition from the Board. But the reality is totally different. How abysmal is the condition of school education can be apprehended from the following facts.

To get the information, I thought the first place should be the Directorate of Education, at Bikash Bhawan. I first went to the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, where the directorate's main office is placed. As I reached there, I found to my surprise that the LDCs and UDCs are not in their table and they are relaxing as if they are in the drawing room of their apartments. Some started laughing as I approached the floor. I asked one 'concern-for-work' looking UDC where I can get information about application for opening a private school. He forwarded me to a senior level officer, Deputy Director, Primary Education. He told me that there is no information to him whether primary schools need any kind of recognition or license. He is not even of the information that the schools need to take a trade license from Kolkata Municipal Corporation. He however gave me a brief outline about what is the system of getting an NOC from the department before starting a secondary or higher secondary school not aided by government of West Bengal. He then told me to go to the deputy director, secondary education. He hardly had intension to listen to me and he said I am better to visit the department's DI office at Gariahat.

So, my next destination was District Inspectors' Office at Banik Bari at Gariahat. I first went to DI secondary, whom I could not meet in the first chance. I met DI, secondary . but he could not tell me anything about the process. He just told me that I may be benefited by one official in his office, who keeps the records of funded schools and DA getting schools too, but she was absent.

Next day I went and met a helping lady who actually took me to the senior UDC to the DI, Primary. He gave me informations regarding how to give school recognition. But he mentioned as the whole thing is departmentalized, it is better for me to go to Board Office at Park Street.

Next day my destination was Park Street. The result of Secondary exam of west Bengal board of secondary education came just that day and I was prevented from entering even the premise of the office. Next day I went to office again. As I mentioned my purpose of visit, he forwarded me to one UDC. He gave me the relevant information, but he could not tell me anything very specifically about the process of giving recognition to a private unaided schools. I went to meet the secretary of WBBSE, but I was then sent to an officer-on-special-duty (OSD). As I met him, his condition was no better. He hardly knew many things about it. He said due to lack of staff, the Board is not being able to supervise even its own government schools. He gave me one important information that the supervising authority in case of unaided schools is totally vested on the directorate of education at Bikash Bhawan.

So, I was there where I started from. Back to Bikash Bhawan, I looked for a new channel as old channels will not entertain me. I met one section officer, he gave me one information that all information can be had from DI Primary, the one I met first. I then went to search a new link. As most of cabins of the higher officials were not in their cabin, I went to a UDC. He said, "There is no as such system of giving recognition to school, nowadays all systems are gone, only 'party' exists. If a new school is being opened, it can be so only because the 'party' wishes so. There is hardly any system of check whether there should be a school in the locality and all these theoretical staff. Now the condition is such that everything is being decided on political ground even about opening and running of a school".

Then I got to meet Joint Director of Education, the only one in 8 cabins. He tried to help me and showed his deepest regret that informations about the system are not at all clearly available. He gave me one book "Annual Report", 2002-2003 of the Department of School Education. But to my utter surprise, though many pages have been devoted to glorification of the school education department, there is not a single coverage as to how these unaided schools are opened and run.

Private unaided schools of other than WBBSE primarily require an NOC, No-Objection-Certificate to start or to get recognition from boards, ICSE and CBSE. This is managed by the Anglo-Indian section of School Education Directorate. In the proforma, it is mentioned that;

1. The school must be run by a registered or society and must have duly constituted managing committee for the school with two secondary teachers in the Managing Committee Memorandum of Association and Receipt for Registration (if not yet registered) of the society should be submitted.

Powers and function of the managing committee should be clearly incorporated in the memorandum of the society.

2. Suitable accommodation either owned by the school or leased with clear lease agreement duly registered with rent receipts in the name of the school for at least 20 years. School accommodation including laboratory, library and other rooms and the campus area of the school should be adequate.
3. suitable qualifications for the head of the school at least an honours degree (regular/P.G.) holder with B.T./B.Ed. and a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience in a recognized school or in a school seeking recognition for a secondary level. In the ICSE guidelines, it is graduate with B.Ed.for 10<sup>th</sup> standard schools and at least 80% of teachers must be trained.
4. Enrolment should not be less than 30 per class with a maximum of 100 for the school.
5. The school must have at least Rs. 60,000/- in reserve fund in fixed deposit in a nationalized bank or a post office.
6. In the pay-scales and allowances of teachers and non-teaching staff must be commensurate with the pay-scales and allowances prescribed by the State Government for the aided schools. There should be indicated in the appointment letters issued by the Secretary/Managing Committee of the school and duly received by the staff.
7. There should be accepted service rules (duly accepted by the staff) for teachers and non-teaching staff, as per provision in the Code of Regulations for Anglo-Indian and Other Listed Schools, 1993.
8. The school must have conducted regular audit of the school funds and submit Audited Statement of A/C for the last year ending on 31<sup>st</sup> March, prior to the date of application.
9. Mother tongue of at least 50% of the students should be other than Bengali if there is not adequate facility of schooling for the children of people whose mother tongue is not Bengali.
10. There must be adequate arrangement of library and laboratory.
11. Whether there is any and if so, how many Junior High/High/H.S. schools including ICSE/CBSE affiliated schools within a radius of 2 km. How good is the academic performance of these schools (in terms of percentage of candidates successful in public exams with reference to the number sent up)?

After fulfillment of these primary requisites, the school authority directed to deposit Rs.2000/- only through T.R.Challan no. 7 in favor of Government of west Bengal under the Head of A/C “0202-Education,Sports,Art and Culture-01-General Education-800-

Other receipt -002-other collections from General Education 27-other receipt “ in a nationalized having the deposit of the above noted amount the proforma application is issued to the school authority forward submission of the same to the Directorate for processing. On receipt of the filled in application this Dte. Processes the matter and sends the report to the school education department for further necessary order.

No. of schools received NOC in 2003: ----- 03

No. of schools received NOC in 2002: ----- 04

No. of schools receiving DA from the government. ----- 36

No. of I.C.S.E. Board schools operating without  
any kind of financial aid from the State Government ----- 53

No. of C.B.S.E. Board schools operating  
other than Kendriya Vidyalay (as on 31/12/1999)----- 13

No. of Kendriya Vidyalay (as on 31/12/1999) ----- 09