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AMC set to open five new English-medium schools

Aiming at providing "affordable" options of English-medium schools to middle class and lower middle class sections, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) school board has planned to add five more English-medium public schools - Ahmedabad Public Schools (APS) - to the existing one at city's Shahpur area, that was inaugurated in May this year.

The areas, where these schools would come up in the coming academic session (that will begin from June 2014), include Dariapur, Gomtipur, Pritampura, Isanpur and Ramapir nukra. While the selection of these areas has been done on the basis of a survey, carried out by the board to gauge the demand and possible number of students who would enroll in these schools, the target certainly is the middle class, even slums.

These schools will open in five different zones of Ahmedabad, leaving only the New West zone that is not expected to get one. The school board is also contemplating to rope in non-government organisations and educational societies that could provide support and guidance in setting up these

schools.

Apart from providing English-medium municipal schools to residents who cannot afford private schools, the reasons cited by the AMC school board include meeting the demand raised by parents. These new schools would be on the lines of the Shahpur APS; KG I , KG II and Class I. At present, there are nearly 150 students at Shahpur APS, the first English-medium municipal public school.

"Irrespective of community or economic status, the preference for English-medium schools among society has witnessed an increase every year. The AMC school board thought why not start government schools in English medium that do not have issues of exorbitant fee, donations and other additional expenses. Also, the response to APS in Shahpur has been encouraging," said the AMC School Board Chairman Jagdish Bhavsar.

The survey carried out by the board revealed that despite the increasing number of English-medium private schools in the city, they were not running out of students.

Some of the areas covered in the survey included Girdharnagar and Saraspur that have middle and lower middle class population and have witnessed an increase in private schools.

Among the five areas shortlisted for English-medium government schools, the survey revealed, the demand was the highest from Gomtipur. "The residents of Gomtipur have been demanding an English-medium school since last year. The survey has estimated that the school will get over 50 students at the entry level, KG I," said AMC School Board Administrative Officer L D Desai.

The school board is planning to use the existing infrastructure for new schools. For this, the existing school buildings would be used for new schools as rooms are available during morning shifts, similar to the arrangement done in Shahpur. The AMC school board is running 456 municipal schools across Ahmedabad, but the majority of these schools are Gujarati-medium.