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Punjab budget: Free education for all till Class XII

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CHANDIGARH: Punjab finance minister Manpreet Singh Badal on Friday announced free education up to Class XII for all in the state. In addition, in the aftermath of fire in a school van killing four students in Sangrur this month, an allocation of Rs 10 crore has been made for free transport facility to students.

“Currently, the state government provides free education to all students up to class VIII and to girl students up to class XII. As part of our endeavour to educate all our children, it has been decided to grant free education in government schools to all students up to Class XII,” Manpreet said.

On free transport facility, he said, “In order to give a further impetus to primary education in the state and with a view to increase the outreach of the primary schools, I propose an allocation of Rs 10 crore in the year 2020-21 for free transportation facility for the students.”

The finance minister claimed that more than 5,500 primary, middle and high schools had been transformed into smart schools in the state with the help of NGOs, NRIs and charitable institutions. “The state has already notified the ‘Smart School Policy’ and I propose an outlay of Rs 100 crore this year for digital education,” he added.

For safety and hygiene of girl students, they are being given self-defence training in government schools and the state is

training all female teachers below the age of 50 years through expert karate trainers. In the year 2019-20, 261 female teachers have already been trained and the programme would continue in 2020-21. Besides, sanitary napkins are being provided to the girls in government schools. An outlay of Rs 13 crore has been proposed for the year 2020-21 for the purpose.

With a section of MLAs complaining about unsafe buildings of government schools during a discussion as part of the budget session on Wednesday, a budgetary provision of Rs 75 crore is proposed for the year 2020-21 for repair of unsafe school buildings.