

TN govt drops plan to conduct public exams in Classes 5, 8

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THE TAMIL Nadu government on Tuesday rolled back its controversial decision to hold public examinations for Classes 5 and 8 from this academic year. A statement by the AIADMK government, released in wake of criti-

cism from academics and opposition parties, said the old examination method will continue.

As per the state government's plan, students of Class 5 were to appear for three exams — English, Math and Tamil — while Class 8 students were to appear for all five subjects.

After School Education Minister K A Sengottaiyan announced the move, it was viewed as a policy decision that would put students under severe stress. The plan also challenged the state's long-standing "no-detention policy" till Class 8.

Questioning the move, educationists argued public exams in Class 5 and 8 will impose unnecessary stress on students, which may lead to more dropouts.

The government's refusal to divulge the reason behind the new plan invited more criticism. A senior state education department official said they proposed the plan with a hope

that it will make the system more accountable for both teachers and students.

The official told *The Indian Express* the idea was originally proposed by the Centre to implement in Tamil Nadu on a pilot basis before considering the same for CBSE and other systems.

"What was pointed out from Delhi was the dangers in letting students pass Class 10 through a liberal exam system while they do not have the quality of Class 6 students. The idea was to ensure the quality in school education, especially in state board when the no-detention system and lapses in the school system itself leading to serious flaws in the merit prospects of a generation of students from state board schools. Even if these concerns and issues still remain valid, the government has finally taken a view to probe other ways to address this problem instead of public exams in Class and 8," said a senior government secretary.