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Govt plans incentives for states to boost school education

Prashant K. Nanda
prashant.n@livemint.com
NEW DELHI

The Union human resource development ministry is looking to encourage states to improve school education and may grant more funds to states showing positive results.

The ministry has started work on ranking states on education outcomes. Following this, the centre will individually discuss specific problems with each state and help them improve the situation on the ground, at least two government officials said, requesting anonymity.

"We are developing a performance grading index. All states and Union territories are on board," said Rina Ray, HRD ministry's school education secretary.

According to the plan, the ministry may give funding above budgetary provisions to top-performing states.

School education is a constant worry among academics, experts and policymakers, and the latest effort aims to improve the sector that caters to nearly 220 million students in 1.5 million schools across India. In the 2018-19 Union budget, the school education sector was allocated ₹50,000 crore.

The performance grading index has been framed on a 70-point indicator.

Transparent recruitment

system, use of technology in improving teaching-learning experience, sharing of best practices, non-linear promotion system for teachers based on performance, student-teacher ratio, school infrastructure, pedagogy and learning outcome are some of the 70 indicators for which HRD ministry has collected data from states and Union territories.

"States should know in which indicators they are faltering so that focus can be given on individual problems," said a second government official, requesting anonymity. "There has to be a gap analysis and provision for learning

from each other," said the official, adding that the ministry is pushing some "structural reform in the school sector".

The official reasoned that in states, teacher promotion

depends on the number of years they work, but that will change. During the grading exercise, the HRD ministry has told states to adopt a system where they can directly hire principals and senior administrative officials or conduct a departmental exam for considering promotion of teachers.

"The Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan has introduced the limited departmental exam system for promotion of teachers and the results are showing in these central schools," explained the second official, adding that the index could be out in a couple of months.

The centre plans to rank states on education outcomes and help them improve situation on the ground