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HRD MINISTRY PROPOSES NINE-YEAR TIME-OUT FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS EVER HEARD OF *SQ* ?

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: The new National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) says no student should be declared as having passed or failed until the secondary stage. Examinations before Class X must be replaced by school-based "continuous and comprehensive" evaluation.

At the higher secondary stage, the courses will be organised in four semesters using the credit system. Evaluation of the first three semesters will be the responsibility

of schools, while the fourth semester examination will be conducted by the boards.

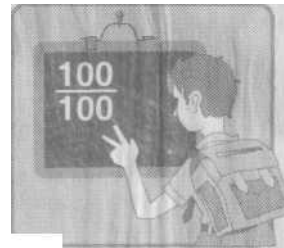
"The performance of students in school-based exams will be graded on a nine-point scale, using absolute grading and grading by directly converting marks into grades." The new curriculum framework was released by Union HRD minister Murli Manohar Joshi on Tuesday.

This new ten-year framework, prepared by a group headed by National Council of Educational Research and Training director J.S.

Rajput, will replace the present one developed in 1988.

It is likely to come into force from the 2002-2003 academic session. Mr Rajput said the new framework was being sent to all state governments. "And since they have already been consulted while framing the draft, it should be accepted," he said.

The new framework document says there is "widespread disparity"



in the standards of exams conducted by the 34 boards of secondary and higher secondary education in the country.

"This has led to a multiplicity of entrance tests conducted by professional institutions in areas like engineering, medicine and management," it said. This, in turn, had caused stress and strain among both students and parents, besides

giving rise to malpractices and wasteful expenditure. Consequently, a national-level body to ensure uniformity in standards was desperately required.

Other major recommendations are:

- Ensure availability of pre-school education to all children and prohibit formal teaching and testing of different subjects at this level.
- Stick to the basic policy of the three-language formula, with "emphasis on teaching Hindi as the official language of India and Sanskrit as the language of traditional wis-

dom and culture of the country"

- Integrate science and technology up to the secondary stage.
- Provide a strong vocational stream for "enhancing employability and entrepreneurship at the higher secondary stage".
- Use of different methods of grading scholastic and co-scholastic areas of learning.
- Provide wide flexibility and freedom in the choice of subjects among the courses to be offered at the higher secondary stage.
- Ever heard of SQ?

NEW DELHI: Ever heard of a Spiritual Quotient (SQ)? Well, if National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has its way, SQ will soon become a term as popular and prevalent as IQ.

One of the thrust areas identified in the new National Curriculum Framework for School Education is: "Broad-based general education to all learners up to the secondary stage to help them become lifelong learners and acquire basic skills and high standards of Intelligence Quotient, Emotional Quotient and Spiritual Quotient"

On being asked how on earth would one measure SQ, NCERT director J.S. Rajput said, "Some things like beauty, truth etc cannot be measured in numbers. Teachers will be trained to measure SQ. Ensuring information, knowledge, wisdom and spirituality in stu-

dents does not mean we are working on the basis of any one ideology"

Addressing around 10,000 school children at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium during the function, Union HRD minister M.M. Joshi also stressed the need for making "value education" an integral part of school curriculum.

The new framework, in fact, proposes that "education about religions and inherent values of all religions should be imparted at all stages of school education". Mr Rajput has dismissed persistent allegations about attempts to saffronise the curriculum as totally baseless.

"School education in the country seems to have developed some kind of neutrality toward basic values and the community in general has little time or inclination to know about religions in the right spirit," said the document

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NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT