The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will release a cut-down syllabus within a month to adapt to a shorter academic session and the loss of classroom time because of the COVID-19 pandemic, CBSE chairman Manoj Ahuja.

“There will definitely have to be some rationalisation of the syllabus, because there will definitely be some loss of time, even with blended schooling and home schooling... That’s what we are planning and we should be able to finalise it in a month’s time,” Mr. Ahuja said, speaking to teachers and principals at a virtual conference on schooling in the time of COVID, hosted by Ashoka University.

Important Points

- “What that would entail broadly is that we retain the core elements which are very necessary in terms of learning outcomes. But concepts which are duplicated or seem superfluous will be shaved off,”
- Schools will also be asked to start shifting to a competency-based education system from this academic year, with more focus on learning outcomes.
- Aimed at moving away from the rote-learning, content-based, examination-focused structure of Indian education, competency-based education looks to map a child’s understanding and application of concepts rather than knowledge of facts.
- While this is being done in an incremental manner, it means that from the coming year, the CBSE’s Class 10 board examinations will include 20% case-based questions, which have real life connections.
- There will be 10% such questions in the Class 12 board examinations for all subjects as well.
- Making this change in board examinations is just a small nudge to urge schools to change classroom teaching and assessment from Class 1 itself, said the CBSE chairman.
- The curriculum is being gradually overhauled to ensure that there are measurable learning outcomes attached to every single lesson, and ways to help teachers map whether each individual child is gaining competence in specific areas.

However, Mr. Ahuja emphasised that it is important for the wider ecosystem of parents, coaching centres, higher education institutions and recruiters to come on board too and be willing to change from a traditional mindset. “If getting into college or getting a job is still based on the old rote-learning, content-based model, there will be no incentive for change from the demand side,” he said, “The change needs to be simultaneous.”