

EDUCATION

E-Governance Platforms

WHAT ARE THEY: Dashboards that capture student, teacher and institute data

USES: Helps audit performance

FOR STUDENTS: Single point for student performance (say in 12th you want to know how the child performed from 1st standard onwards, all data will come up in one place)

FOR TEACHERS: Records outcomes like performance of class, attendance record, activity log etc

FOR ADMINISTRATORS: Plans education needs like in which courses seats should be increased; what should be the focus of higher education etc

EDUCATION

Marketplace

Number of schools

1.4 m

Universities

712

Colleges

36,671

A Dashboard for Education Metrics

In one of the biggest technology interventions in schools and colleges, new platforms that help improve outcomes for all stakeholders are being introduced, writes **Shelley Singh**

It is a difficult choice for most parents. Which higher education course should their children pursue? Most force the child to go for what they think will be good for the child rather than what the child is good at. So a student with a nose for liberal arts might have to pursue engineering. Or another nursing ambitions to become a doctor might find herself in a B-school.

The upshot: many children end up becoming also-rans in their professions.

This happens partly due last-minute decision making — similar to trying to win a marathon by putting all efforts in the last few kilometres instead of planning the whole race well. Parents should go by what the results and performance of the child in school revealed rather than what they believe is ideal for the child or what is a popular job at a point in time.

But that is easier said than done. Rohini Ahluwalia, chairperson, Ahlcon International School in Delhi, says parents lack data that capture the life cycle of the student. "If in 10th or 12th standard, parents get advice based on the child's inclination and interest towards certain streams and not what's popular, things will be better."

Around 500 institutions have signed up for Edu-Cloud in the last 12 months and it has been introduced in 50 institutions, including DPS, Pathways in Delhi NCR and Sri Chaitanya schools in Hyderabad.

Google has Google Classroom which also aims to make education systems paperless.

"We have seen demand for education platforms increase in the last 12 months as these help differentiate institutions that don't use technology tools. Besides, the benefits like smarter infrastructure, low costs, better connectivity with alumni make it a compelling proposition," says Alok B Lall, director, Microsoft Office.

Rohin Kapoor, director, Deloitte, a consultancy, says, technology disruption is important if institutions are to improve their education outcomes. "Even the ministry of HRD is encouraging use of software that helps manage institutions — from administrative tasks to student and teacher development." Kapoor says software like M-Star and PeopleSoft modules are used for managing multiple processes in education institutions.

Partha Mohanty, technology head, MGRM, believes M-Star platform can help policy makers and administrators as well

TECH WAVE

Help is at hand. A number of technology platforms that help improve outcomes for students, institutions and administrators by tracking their performance and interests over the years have been developed.

Ahlcon, for example, uses an education e-governance platform called M-Star that captures student and teacher performance on a daily basis — metrics like attendance, participation in activities, report cards and results to help administrators take informed decisions about student, teacher and institution performance.

This data is crunched and analysed to give actionable outcomes — like identifying and nudging students not taking part in extra-curricular activities or introducing new teacher training programs based on how students take to teachers.

“At the end we have a graph of the child’s growth, teacher’s performance on a single platform that helps improve overall performance of students and the school,” says Ahluwalia. So, in 12th standard if parents, counsellors or administrators want to know how a child performed throughout school, it’s all available with a few clicks — that is, all report cards at one place.

M-Star was developed by MGRM, a New York-based technology service player. The company says 10,000 researchers worked for around two decades to develop the platform and its research included studying education systems at about one lakh institutions worldwide.

Many Takers

Such systems are being implemented by a growing number of schools like Sardar Patel and Bal Barhi in Delhi, Kendriya Vidyalayas and schools in Himachal Pradesh. Microsoft has a platform called Edu-Cloud, a cloud based computing solution whose ambitious goal is to have classrooms without printed books. Edu-Cloud comprises a suite of solutions that deliver digitized content, assessment, learning, besides automating the back office (like e-mailing fees due instead of paper based fee; online only admission process etc), creating a digital library and so on.



ROHIN KAPOOR
DIRECTOR, DELOITTE

Technology disruption is important if institutions are to improve their education outcomes. Even the government is encouraging use of software that helps manage institutions

for opening new colleges and finding out popular streams and hence make arrangements to meet any shortfall of seats. Or if a trend of low grades in maths persists on the dashboard across schools, administrators can take appropriate action to investigate causes and offer solutions.

Physical record keeping is eliminated as teachers input student data on a daily or weekly basis. This includes attendance, performance in class tests and annual exams, extra-curricular activities, transport, teacher details, fee processing, library management and so on.

The eventual goal of such platforms is to help institutions shift from manual and semi-automated administrative systems that work in silos to a technology driven platform linking public institutions and administration state-wide and nationwide. Mohanty believes such a platform will give a macro view of institutions and even going down to view on individual performance of each child, teacher and institute with just a few clicks.

Such systems cost ₹120-150 a child a year. “While data capture is one aspect, which essentially means transferring what was in handwritten files to computers, the bigger advantage lies in analytics that runs behind that give actionable outcomes,” says Ahluwalia.

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