

In a First, Mayor Closes Moscow School

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Mayor Sergei Sobyenin put public schools on alert that he would not tolerate sub-par educational standards Friday by announcing that a school had lost its accreditation after more than half its high school students failed a series of tests.

The school's closure, the first in the city's history, prompted City Hall's education department to declare the start of special checks at other schools to ensure that they met educational standards.

"This is an extraordinary happening," Sobyenin told a City Hall meeting Friday, [RIA-Novosti reported](#).

School No. 874, located near the Kuntsevskaya metro station in western Moscow, was stripped of its accreditation by a panel in City Hall's education department on Dec. 28 over "violations of the state's standards for secondary education by the contents and quality of the students' training," the department said in a [statement](#) on its web site.

More than half the school's students in grades nine to 11, which is the year Russian schools graduate their students, failed tests late last year in five of the 12 subjects they studied, department spokesman Alexander Gavrilo [told](#) RIA-Novosti.

The students failed the same tests for a second time on Jan. 13, getting even worse marks than the first time in some subjects, the report said.

Educators' main task now is to help the 11th graders pass their exams, Gavrilo told Interfax.

On paper, School No. 874 will cease to exist and be merged with School No. 97 in a neighboring district, but classes will not be interrupted and the teens will continue to study in the same building, Gavrilo said.

The director of School No. 874 has been dismissed, but the teachers will remain, he said.

He did not identify the director, but the school's [web site](#) said his name was Nikolai Kokorin and he was appointed in 2001.

Two years after his appointment, in December 2003, Kokorin told Uchitelskaya Gazeta (Teacher's Newspaper) that he had put a lot of effort into improving the school, attracting new teachers, introducing after-school tutoring so students could get extra help from teachers, repairing the building, organizing free student meals and banishing alcoholics and homeless people from the school grounds.

The monthly magazine Zdorovye Shkolnika (School Student's Health) [praised](#) Kokorin in August 2006 for using sports to keep students from disadvantaged families away from alcohol, drugs and crime.

Kokorin, a former player with Lokomotiv football team in Irkutsk, told the magazine that it was impossible to interest disadvantaged children in education and only "sports will save them."

Among the school's alumni is Sergei Morozov, a 2006 football champion of Europe and 2004 and 2005 football champion of Russia.

It was not immediately clear whether city authorities had checked the educational standards at School No. 874 before renewing its accreditation in late September. A copy of the accreditation document is posted on the school's web site.

Sobyanin said Friday that the city education department's accreditation panel had been reshuffled before it withdrew the accreditation. He did not give the reason for the reshuffle.

Repeated calls to Gavrilo of the education department, as well as the school's acting director, Irina Malchevskaya, who also heads School No. 97, went unanswered Friday. An inquiry submitted to the federal watchdog for education, Rosobrnadzor, also went unanswered.

Gavrilo told Interfax that the special checks into schools across the city would include the administration of special tests to students at schools thought to offer sub-par education.

The education department will also provide assistance to those schools "so that their work is

brought up to the necessary level," Gavrilov said.

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