

Astronomy Classes to Replace Extra Language Lessons in New Russian Schools Proposals

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Russia's newly appointed Minister for Education and Science, Olga Vasilieva, has called for astronomy lessons to replace classes on a second foreign language in Russian schools.

Speaking in an interview with the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper on Wednesday, Vasilieva said that studying a second foreign language in a non-specialist school was, "basically a profanity."

"I only pray they can teach one foreign language decently," she said, adding that Russia's schoolchildren were "catastrophically overloaded."

Additional foreign languages should be optional subjects, and be up to "a working standard by the time a student leaves school," she said.

Scraping the classes would allow time in the curriculum for astronomy lessons for 16 and 17-year-olds, she said.

Physics teachers would be expected to teach the lessons, while Russia's state space agency, Roscosmos, announced in April that it could aid in preparing textbooks.

The organization even pledged to provide "astronauts and people connected to space" to participate in lessons, but admitted that the program may only become a reality in a small number of schools, Director of Roscosmos' Communications Department, Igor Burenkov, said.

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