

New Education Minister Wants to Halve Number of State Scholarships

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Moscow State University, one of the country's leading universities, is seen in the background. **Maxim Stulov**

New education minister and former Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys rector Dmitry Livanov said the country needs to cut the number of university students that receive money from the state budget in .

In an interview with Rossiiskaya Gazeta published Tuesday, Livanov emphasized that the move would not undermine support for students, but would represent a shift in strategy. Despite a decreased need for new engineers, the number of students in the field has increased three-fold, he said.

"It's obvious that the number of [scholarship] spots should be decreased, but the stipend for each student should be significantly more," the minister said. Livanov suggested stipends should be raised from their current 60,000 rubles (\$2,000) per year to between 200,000 and 250,000 rubles (\$6,500 to \$8,000).

The minister also said the quality of technical education needs to be improved, suggesting that professors should be more actively recruited and salaries should be raised. Livanov said the average professor at his former university makes about 60,000 rubles a month and that some make as little as 30,000 rubles.

Previous education minister Andrei Fursenko had also spoken in favor of decreasing scholarship spots, saying there were only enough spots for students who can and want to study, Vedomosti reported.

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