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Dismissals at Education Ministry Amid Increasing Criticism

By The Moscow Times

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Six officials have been fired and two demoted at the Education Ministry amid increasing criticism and an investigation into misconduct, with Deputy Education Minister Igor Fedyukin announcing his resignation on Tuesday.

The dismissals are the result of an investigation conducted by the General Prosecutor's Office into the conduct and practice of the ministry, Interfax reported.

The report, published on the prosecutor's website Tuesday, says the Education Ministry has "permitted severe violations" both in the awarding of academic degrees and in its oversight of the bodies that judge academic candidates.

The investigation concluded that the ministry did not take measures to repeal decisions to award academic degrees to numerous individuals with plagiarized material in their dissertations. Action was taken on the issue by the ministry only during the investigation,

according to the report.

The news comes on the same day that Deputy Education Minister Igor Fedyukin confirmed that he would be leaving his post. Fedyukin stated that he submitted a resignation letter following "unprecedented pressure" over the ministry's work.

"I hope that my departure will lower an amount of unprecedented pressure around decisions, made by the ministry," Fedyukin said, RIA Novosti reported.

He was a proponent of the reformist Russian Academy of Science.

Prior to his ministerial work, Fedyukin worked at the Russian Economic School, where he was a senior expert.

He was also a published journalist, working for Vedomosti newspaper and Kommersant newspaper, for which he wrote stories on science and education.

The reports of his resignation came after criticism from Vladimir Zhirinovsky, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, who attacked the validity of Fedyukin's academic credentials, calling him an underachiever with no right to "dictate to our academics," RBK reported.

Accusations of plagiarism have been leveled against four other ministry officials by a member of the United Russia party, Vesti.ru reported.

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