

Teachers Ask Putin to Make Homework Voluntary for Older Students

By [The Moscow Times](#)

September 05, 2013

The  Moscow Times

A group of teachers has asked the Kremlin to free up time for older schoolchildren to set aside homework and receive an education from Moscow's museums and theaters.

President Vladimir Putin and acting Mayor Sergei Sobyenin met with the teachers on Wednesday and agreed to seriously consider their suggestions to make homework voluntary, Interfax reported.

Schoolchildren aged 15 to 16 study six days a week in public schools. Their 37 hours of classwork are supplemented by 20 hours of assigned homework.

By expecting schoolchildren to do so much homework, "we are depriving them of the possibility to take advantage of what Moscow has to offer," said Vita Kirichenko, winner of the 2012 teacher of the year competition.

Learning should be a pleasure for children, considering the educational ambience given to the city by its museums and theaters, educators said during the meeting.

"We suggest letting students choose for themselves the form of self-education that will be most effective in the latter stages of their school life," Kirichenko said.

Sobyanin appeared to embrace the teachers' appeal. "The paradox is that the better the teacher, the less homework they dish out because better teachers have time during lessons to cement schoolchildrens' knowledge," he said. "Weaker teachers have to assign more homework to achieve the same results."

Putin said that although it was a thorny issue, he agreed that overloading children causes them to lose attention and become tired.

"It is extremely important that schoolchildren have free time. Of course, we would like that time to be used to maximum effect, sensibly," Putin said.

The president said that Sobyanin would draft a proposal and send it to the relevant departments to "give them some homework to do."

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