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State Exams to Be Monitored Using CCTV Equipment

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Students taking the Unified State Exams. **olga_mezenceva**

National secondary-school exams taken by students before graduation will be monitored using video surveillance equipment starting next year in an effort to stamp out cheating, the education and science minister said Monday.

"The new measures will increase objectivity and transparency in the examination process, and ensure that the honest student can pass the exam honestly," Dmitry Livanov said, Interfax reported.

The Unified State Exams, which are used for university admission, were plagued by reports of widespread cheating this year.

In May, students taking the Russian-language exam in the Far East took photographs of the test papers and published them online, giving schoolchildren in western Russia a chance to

see what was in store for them. Results were also found to have been doctored by exam officials in nearly 20 regions.

The video surveillance systems that will be used to oversee the exams will be the same ones that were used to monitor the 2012 presidential election. Given that the equipment will not have to be bought, Livanov said the initiative would cost about 12,000 rubles ($360) per test session.

The video equipment will remain in schools beyond the 2014 test period, Livanov said. "It will be used to conduct the exam in the following years and for a variety of other educational purposes," he said, without elaborating.

The new system should be functioning by early April, Livanov said.

While the ministry sets about trying to improve the way exams are delivered, an educator from one of Russia's top research institutes has proposed making a change to university admission requirements.

The rector of the Higher School of Economics, Yaroslav Kuzminov, has sent a letter to the Education and Science Ministry and the federal education watchdog proposing that the winners of inter-school academic competitions, also known as Olympiads, be obliged to take an additional specialist-subject test to enter university.

Under the current system, which dates back to Soviet practice, Olympiad winners can be admitted to university without having to take the Unified State Exam. Kuzminov says his proposed changes would help battle corruption and weed out poor students before they enter university on a questionable academic record, Kommersant reported Monday.

Kuzminov's proposal will be discussed and "will very likely be adopted," an unidentified ministry official told the newspaper.

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