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Russian Education Minister Seeks Compulsory Farm Work for Students

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Education and Science Minister Olga Vasilieva **Moskva News Agency**

Education and Science Minister Olga Vasilieva has called for the return of compulsory agricultural labor for Russian schoolchildren, the RIA Novosti news agency reported Monday.

According to Vasilieva, pupils should be put into Soviet-style "agricultural brigades" for work on farms "like we always used to do."

In addition, pupils should be made responsible for cleaning the schools in which they spend 11 years of their education, she said.

The process would contribute toward moulding "not young consumers, but creators," she

said, adding that it "poses no threat at all to the health of children."

Sending schoolchildren and university students to participate in mass agricultural work for short periods was a mainstay of the Soviet education system and persisted until the late 1980s.

Russian schools also have a long tradition of actively mobilizing pupils to clean classrooms and school facilities, a custom which, though in decline, persists in poorer regions.

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