

# *Cuba Unveils Reforms to Improve Education*

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Havana, July 9 (RHC-Xinhua) -- Cuba's Education Ministry has unveiled a series of modifications to improve education during the 2014-2015 school year, local media learned at a government press conference.

Speaking to local reporters, Education Minister Ena Elsa Velazquez said the government consulted the educational community in drafting the changes, which include giving schools the autonomy to adapt school schedules to the community's needs and offering teacher training.

The changes "are the result of consultations with hundreds of teachers, presidents of school councils, students and education directors at all levels," she said.

"Teachers will have a day a week to develop methodology, and be given eight hours a week to that end, and they will have the chance to participate in postgraduate ... and masters courses," said Velazquez. Other changes include better vocational orientation for students, and allowing students to go home for lunch, in response to parental requests.

The number of students in Cuba represents almost a fifth of the population. Education, like healthcare, is free and universal in Cuba, and considered both at home and abroad as one of the main achievements of Cuba's 1959 revolution.

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