

# *School Year Opens in Cuba Today in Middle of New Challenges*

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Havana, September 5 (RHC)-- The 2016-2017 school year opened in Cuba today, Monday, with two declared aims: increasing the quality of education while improving student behavior and teaching excellence.

Minister of Education Ena Elsa Velazquez said the new school year will be marked by a slight increase in elementary school enrollment and a higher number of teacher training schools, which will stand at 24.

Over 1.7 million students have been registered for the course, in the country's 10 600 education centers. Ninety-four percent of the teachers needed will be available, said the minister.

Faced with what some have termed an exodus of teacher who leave education to pursue other professions, in the last 3 years pedagogical schools have graduated more than 14 thousand teachers for elementary, pre-school and special education, and the current registration surpasses 21 thousand teacher students in all 24 teacher-training schools.

As new elements, the minister announced the opening this year of a pedagogical school in the municipality of Manzanillo, eastern Granma province, and the first graduation of English Language teachers for elementary education, which is in tune with the strategy of the Ministry of Education to boost the learning of English in the country.

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