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THE GERMAN SCHOOL SYSTEM: THE EXPERIENCE OF SAXONY

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"Everyone is important!" — one of the leading principles of the Saxony educational policy. This is reflected in the Saxon structured school system, which properly takes into account different inclinations, talents and promotes their development and achievement of educational goals of students. At the same time, the ability to transfer from a school of one type to a school of another type is a defining characteristic. This means that all paths are always open. Each matriculation certificate provides an opportunity to complete further educational stages leading to successful professional training and study at a higher specialized educational institution or university. Saxon schools also enable students who grow up bilingual or multilingual to achieve individual academic success.

The school system in Saxony includes: elementary school (grades 1 to 4), upper secondary school (grades 5–9/10), upper secondary school +

(grades 1–9/10), gymnasium (grades 5 to 12), public school (grades 1 to 12), correctional schools (grades 1–9/10).

Elementary School

German schoolchildren start first grade at the age of 6. In the first and second years of study, classes with beginner schoolchildren are built on the individual level of knowledge and personal experience of children, since students must first learn to learn, and phases of concentrated exercises alternate in a timely manner with relaxation time. In the third and fourth grades, German teachers prepare students for the requirements of middle school/secondary school+/gymnasium. Grades are gradually introduced to schoolchildren from the second grade, because the students themselves are interested in knowing what level they are at. Student evaluations are, first of all, recognition of the results by the students themselves, and secondly, evaluations should encourage and motivate in learning. Unlike the Ukrainian NUSH (New Ukrainian School), according to which Ukrainian schoolchildren begin to learn a foreign language, for example, English, from the first grade for 2 hours per week, German beginner schoolchildren begin to learn English from the third grade, also 2 hours per week. However, in some schools, in particular private schools, another foreign language can be studied from the first grade. In German primary schools, religion/ethics is offered to all students from the first grade. They study Protestant, Catholic and Jewish religions. Those who did not express a desire to study the subject "Religion" should attend classes on the course "Ethics".

In my opinion, the choice of studying one or another subject/subjects from primary school is aimed at forming a developed personality and self-identification of the child in society, which in later life will allow him to freely choose one or another path to development and lay the foundation for the start of formation soft skills.

Complete High School/Complete High School +

Secondary school students have the right to choose from a wide range of compulsory subjects. Upon completion of secondary school, it is possible to obtain the following certificates:

- certificate of completion of incomplete secondary school or qualification certificate of completion of incomplete secondary school after the 9th grade

- a certificate of graduation from a real school after the 10th grade

Students of grades 5–6 get acquainted with the new requirements of secondary school, start studying new subjects, master new teaching methods and test their abilities. In the sixth grade, students must decide which educational course is better for them: high school or real school, because already from the 7th grade, students start preparing for the certificate of completion of incomplete high school or real high school, depending on

personal academic success. Also, starting from the 7th grade, students are offered mentorship on their way to a vocational gymnasium or a vocational school. It should be noted that secondary school students start learning a second foreign language (the first foreign language, as a rule, is English, which they start learning in elementary school) from the 6th to the 10th grade, and then in a vocational or technical high school or in a general gymnasium. From the 11th grade, learning a second foreign language is optional. The second foreign language to be studied is usually Spanish, French, Polish, Czech, etc. Classes in a second foreign language are in the form of optional classes.

Gymnasium

It should be noted that, like middle/high school + or public school, 5th and 6th grades are primarily for orientation. From the 6th grade, students begin studying not only a second foreign language, but also physics and chemistry (for example, in Ukraine, physics and chemistry are studied from the 7th grade). Profile classes are usually held 2 times a week, and for students who start learning a third foreign language in the 8th grade, it replaces school profile classes. Gymnasiums in Germany, as a rule, offer independently developed concepts, which accordingly form a special profile of the school and contain regional and local features of classes and support school development in areas such as professional and educational orientation, as well as media education, political education or education for sustainable development. The evaluation system is replaced by a differentiated scoring system from 0 to 15, where 0 is the lowest score and 15, respectively, the highest.

The most important thing for gymnasium students is to get the matriculation certificate, the so-called Abitur, so they start preparing for it as early as the 10th grade. Therefore, the path to study at a German institution of higher education is quite difficult for future applicants, and later - students, because thanks to the presence of a certificate of complete secondary general education, the Abitur, students get the right to enter any German institution of higher education or university.

Public school

On July 15, 2020, the parliament of the state of Saxony passed a law on the introduction of a public school in the Free State of Saxony. The public school is a new type of school, and its implementation became possible from the 2021/2022 school year. The public school includes grades 1 to 10, as well as grades 11–12. In this type of school, it is possible to obtain the following certificates:

- certificate of completion of incomplete secondary school or qualification certificate of completion of incomplete secondary school after 9th grade;

- a certificate of graduation from a real school after the 10th grade;
- a general certificate of maturity for admission to a higher education institution after the 12th grade.

In my opinion, the newest organizational form of education in a public school is quite attractive, because students can study in one school, starting from elementary school, without changing the location of the main place of education, which is important for the adaptation and education of schoolchildren, while having a choice which educational ladder to stop at and which type of certificate to get. All decisions will depend on the individual needs of the students and their professional aspirations in the future. The system of evaluating the knowledge of public school students coincides with the system of evaluating the classical German gymnasium: from 0 points to 15 points.

Correctional schools

This type of German school is designed for students with special educational needs, however, it should be noted that there are two equivalent ways for such students to receive support in Saxony, namely:

- education in correctional schools;
- inclusive education in primary and secondary schools, provided that certain requirements are met.

The right to choose is very important for parents of inclusive children, because in this case, the interests of the child are decisive. Many correctional schools teach their students for a limited time in order to best prepare them for learning in other types of schools. It should be noted that correctional schools are also regional centers of competence in education for students with special educational needs, which provide professional consultations, diagnostics and support for inclusive education in regular schools.

We can highlight the types of correctional schools in Germany (Saxony):

- a school focused on emotional intelligence and social development;
- school with language orientation;
- a school with a focus on learning;
- a school focused on intellectual development;
- a school with a focus on vision;
- a school with a focus on hearing;
- a school focused on physical and motor development;
- school in a clinic or hospital.

On its own example, Saxony successfully implements the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, involving students with special educational needs in professional and social development in correctional and comprehensive schools. Currently, about

11,000 students have inclusive education in regular schools. Graduates of correctional schools can begin vocational training after graduation or receive a certificate that entitles them to enter a higher education institution.

Therefore, in the Saxon school system, every student of education gets his chance on the way to the dream qualification in the future. Various types of schools make it possible to successfully obtain a quality education according to an individual learning trajectory.

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