

THE REORGANIZATION OF EDUCATION IN PRUSSIA

BASED ON OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS
AND PUBLICATIONS

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BUREAU OF PUBLICATIONS

Teachers College, Columbia University

NEW YORK CITY

1927

THE REORGANIZATION OF EDUCATION IN BRITAIN

REPORT OF THE
COMMISSIONERS OF HER MAJESTY'S
STATISTICAL DEPARTMENT

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TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Printed in the United States of America by
J. J. LITTLE AND IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK

**STUDIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
OF TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

NUMBER 4

**THE REORGANIZATION OF
EDUCATION IN PRUSSIA**

**The International Institute of
Teachers College, Columbia University**

The International Institute of Teachers College, Columbia University, was established in 1923 to carry out the following objects: (1) to give special assistance and guidance to the increasing body of foreign students in Teachers College; (2) to conduct investigations into educational conditions, movements, and tendencies in foreign countries; (3) to make the results of such investigations available to students of education in the United States and elsewhere in the hope that such pooling of information will help to promote and advance the cause of education.

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PREFACE

The educational systems of Germany have always been of interest to students of education in the United States. To-day when Germany is approaching the whole problem of education in the light of the new situation consequent on the Revolution and the adoption of a democratic constitution, what she does and thinks in education should be of additional interest. As in 1806 after the defeat at Jena, so in 1918 Germany recognized that the most important resource at her command, if she were to regain the ground that she has lost, is through a reorganization of her educational system. Students familiar with the history of German education will recognize many parallels and analogies between the situations in 1806 and 1918, just as they will realize that in the main Germany is taking up the threads of educational theory which were broken in 1819 and again in 1848 by the encroachment of political authority in the field of education. Allowing for differences due to the development of a science of education, the present philosophy of German education has its roots in the philosophies current in the days of Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Kant and Fichte and of the Neohumanistic movement.

The present volume is devoted to a study of the Prussian reorganization, partly because Prussia still seems destined to give the lead to the rest of Germany, partly because the situation appears to be more stable than in the other states. There are many, both in Prussia and in other German states, who are not satisfied with the solution. And, indeed, if the proposals and practices of the radical reformers as illustrated by the new systems established soon after the Revolution in Hamburg and Thuringia are compared with the reorganized system in Prussia, there may be reason for disappointment. Largely because it illustrates the difficulties that confronted the educational statesmen and administrators in this reorganization, it was considered that a translation of *Prussian Educational Systems* by Dr.

O. Boelitz, former Minister of Education in Prussia, would throw a great deal of light on the situation. This volume does not neglect to mention and discuss the more radical proposals and suggestions, but at the same time it discusses the possibility of putting them into practice in the light of conditions, political and economic, as they actually are at present. It is difficult to prophesy the future development of German education; more will depend on the economic and financial situation of the future than on the political, for from the point of view of the discussions in education the principles of democracy appear to be thoroughly established.

The study of education in Germany at the present time is valuable not merely to those who are interested in the readjustment of an educational system to new political and social conditions; it is interesting in many ways from the point of view of comparative education. Many of the problems with which educators in this country are concerned are being discussed and experiments are being made to find solutions. To cite only a few, the American student will find much to interest him in the attempts to solve the problem of educational opportunity and the use of tests and measurements for the purpose. The treatment of the difficult question of the curriculum is also of interest, starting with the first year of school with integrated instruction (*Gesamtunterricht*) and based throughout the elementary school on the utilization and interpretation of the environment (*Heimatkunde und Lebenskunde*). The reorganization of the curriculum and the consequent effect on methods of instruction involve the still more serious problem of preparation of teachers. Nor are the discussions and experiments in the fields of intermediate or junior high school education and of secondary education suitable for modern needs without their suggestions. Each of these questions is considered in detail in Dr. Boelitz' book. In order to present the concrete discussions this book has been supplemented by a translation of all the pertinent regulations which have been issued since 1918 and which constitute the basis of the present Prussian system.

No attempt is made in the present volume to offer a critical evaluation of the new system; each criticism can be valuable only if based on an intensive study in the schools themselves. The International Institute plans to make a study of this type during

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the present year and to embody the results in a further supplementary volume. The present book is, therefore, presented as a picture of the hopes and aspirations of the Prussian educational authorities and of the tendencies and general direction that the system is to follow during the next few years.

I. L. K.
T. A.

New York, 1927

INTRODUCTION

THE PRUSSIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

FEDERAL PARTICIPATION

The administration of education in Germany is a state affair, and federal laws on education, when they are passed, are carried out by the state authorities. While the Constitution was under consideration and for a few years thereafter there was a strong movement in favor of greater federal participation than had existed before the War. Not only was it desired that the Federal Government should issue legislation in education binding on all the states, but it was hoped that it would coöperate with the states in the support of education.

The Constitution adopted in 1919 limited itself to defining certain general principles to guarantee educational rights and equality with a promise of subsequent federal legislation on specific points. Thus Article 10 provided that "the Federal Government may by law prescribe fundamental principles with respect to . . . (2) Education, including higher education and scientific libraries." The whole of Section IV (Articles 142 to 150) of the Constitution is devoted to Education and Schools. The Section provides that "art, science and instruction in them are free"; that education shall be furnished in public institutions; that the training of teachers shall be uniformly regulated; that the states are responsible for the conduct of education; that compulsory education shall be universal, full-time for eight years of the elementary period, followed by part-time education up to eighteen; that a common foundation school shall be established for all children; that schools may be organized on a denominational, interdenominational, or secular basis; that neither teacher nor pupils be compelled to give or participate in religious instruction; that private preparatory schools should be established; and that emphasis be placed on civic and manual training in the schools.

To carry out these fundamental principles the Federal Gov-

ernment through the *Kulturabteilung* of the Ministry of the Interior drafted a law which was passed on April 20, 1920, for the general establishment of the foundation school (*Grundschule*) and for the abolition of the preparatory school (*Vorschule*). This law was followed by Suggestions (*Richtlinien*) issued on February 25, 1921, for putting it into effect and on April 18, 1925, by Suggestions on the Curriculum of the *Grundschule*. Beyond this no further action has been taken by the Federal Government such as was expected, for example, on the training of teachers. There has, however, been established in the Ministry of the Interior a Committee on Educational Affairs of eight members (1924) to consult on common standards especially in the field of secondary education and the training of teachers, while "the states are required to submit for examination by the Committee before they come into force any decisive measures of a fundamental character that affect the educational system of other states."

That any further action of a regulative character will be taken by the Federal Government is doubtful and in 1924 the Federal Chancellor stated in Section 42 of the Third Tax Ordinance that "the conduct of the school and educational systems will in accordance with the regulations of a forthcoming federal law be left to the states to be regulated independently." Such a law has not yet been passed and the states have proceeded to organize their systems within the general provisions of the Constitution. While there is a considerable party that is still in favor of some federal regulations, there is a stronger party opposed to it through fear of uniformity and standardization. The Federal Educational Conference (*Reichsschulkonferenz*), held in 1920, pronounced in favor of federal uniformity in such matters as teacher preparation, minimum essentials in each type of school, minimum requirements leading toward the establishment of the *Einheitsschule*, length of school year, nomenclature, reciprocity of certificates, and statistics; it recommended decentralization of administration, each state legislating for itself in accordance with federal principles, and an arbitration board (*Reichskontrolle*) to decide on disputes between the Federal Government, states, and localities. So much in general has already been adopted, but there is no likelihood that the further suggestion that the Federal Government give financial assistance

to the states for educational purposes will be adopted in the near future.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATION IN PRUSSIA

THE MINISTRY

The central authority for the administration of education in Prussia is the Ministry for Science, Art and Popular Education (*Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung*) at the head of which is the Minister appointed by the president of the state. The work of the Ministry is divided among eight departments:—personnel, general, universities and scientific institutions, secondary education, elementary education and training of teachers, physical education, art education, and adult education. The officials in charge are known as *Referenten* and *Ministerialräte*. The Ministry also has the assistance of an expert in public health (*Landesgesundheitsrat*). A departure has been made from former practices, when the majority of the officials were experts with a legal or administrative training, in the direction of employing more officials with educational preparation and experience.

The function of the Ministry is to prepare bills and the budget, to issue decrees, regulations, and suggestions, to outline courses of study, to approve textbooks and school materials, to supervise the training of teachers and of teachers in service, to provide funds for education, and to select some of the higher officials in the various branches of the educational service. The official organ of the Ministry is the *Zentralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichtsverwaltung in Preussen*. Associated with the Ministry but not a constituent part of it is the *Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht*, which serves as a clearing-house for information on education, conducts research, institutes lectures and courses in education and allied fields, and organizes tours for educational investigations in different parts of the country, and so on. (See pp. 157 ff.) The state also maintains a State Bureau for Educational Information.

Besides the Ministry for Science, Art, and Popular Education, other Ministries are concerned in the administration of special branches of education. Thus the Ministry of Commerce is responsible for industrial and commercial education, and the Min-

istry of Agriculture for agricultural education. The Ministry of Public Welfare (*Volkswohlfahrtsministerium*) has charge of child welfare and the care of young children and children of school age outside of the schools, supervises institutions for orphan and defective children, and coöperates with the Ministry for Science, Art, and Popular Education in the medical inspection of schools. The actual supervision of schools apart from the general welfare of the children is in the hands of the Ministry for Science, Art, and Popular Education.

PROVINCIAL SCHOOL BOARDS

For general administrative purposes Prussia is divided into thirteen provinces, each under an *Oberpräsident*. For educational purposes the supervisory authority in each province is the Provincial School Board (*Provinzialschulkollegium*); the *Oberpräsident* is technically the chairman of this board but his duties are as a rule delegated to a vice-president whose preparation may be in the field of law or of education. The members of the board (*Oberschulräte*) are educators in increasing numbers, while others are legally trained administrators; recently women have become eligible for membership on the Provincial School Boards.

The chief function of these Boards is the supervision of secondary education and the exercise of certain disciplinary authority over teachers in elementary schools. The supervision of the training of elementary school teachers, formerly entrusted to the Provincial School Board, has now been transferred to the Ministry.

COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS

A further administrative subdivision of the provinces is found in the counties (*Regierungen*) of which there are thirty-four. The supervision of education in each county is in the hands of a Section for School Affairs (*Abteilung für Schulwesen*) at the head of which is the county president (*Regierungspräsident*) or the director of the section (*Abteilungsdirigent*) in his place. The members consist of county councillors (*Regierungsräte*), school councillors (*Schulräte*), architects (*Bauräte*), physicians (*Medizinalräte*), and legal experts appointed by the county president.

The directors of the Section for School Affairs are increasingly men of experience in education rather than in law.

The functions of the County Section for School Affairs are the appointment and supervision of elementary school teachers, the supervision of public and private elementary schools and of certain extra-school matters, and the administration of school property and endowments. The Section publishes its regulations in the *Regierungsamtsblatt*, where they must appear to have legal force, or in some official educational journal.

INSPECTION

For purposes of inspection the counties (*Regierungen*) are divided into inspection districts (*Kreise*), each under an inspector (formerly known as *Kreisschulinspektor* but now as *Schulrat*). Article 144 of the Constitution removed one of the chief grievances of the teaching body by the provision that inspection should be solely in the hands of professional educators and in 1920 the number of inspectors was increased and full-time positions were everywhere made available. Another grievance of long standing was removed by a law of July 18, 1919, which abolished the position of local school inspector (*Ortsschulinspektor*), who was most usually the local pastor and very rarely a man of professional training.

The *Schulräte* are state officials appointed by the Minister. The position is open directly to elementary school teachers, the former preliminary examinations having been abolished by the decree of September 1, 1919. The inspectors are responsible for the complete supervision of the external and internal affairs of public and private elementary schools, and of rural continuation schools, unless there are special officials for these. They are the professional leaders in elementary education; they approve courses of study and lesson plans, conduct conferences of teachers and principals, and exercise disciplinary power over the professional and outside conduct of teachers with the right to warn and censure.

Inspectors may be present at meetings of school deputations and committees, but, although they have no vote, they may object to local resolutions that appear to conflict with laws and regulations or with the interests of the state.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

Cities. The administration of education in cities is shared between the mayor, the administrative officers (*Magistrate*), the city council, and the School Deputation (*Schuldeputation*). The first three of these authorities are responsible for the budget, the provision of school materials, the administration of school property, and appointments. For the rest educational matters affecting elementary schools are delegated to the *Schuldeputation*, which consists of representatives of the permanent city officials, of the city council, of the teachers, and of the public. The teacher representatives are elected by and from the local teaching body; the public representatives are elected by the city council. In addition the *Schuldeputation* includes official representatives of the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish denominations. The city health officer and other public officials may be invited to serve in an advisory capacity. Women may serve as members. The term of office is six years. The chairman of the deputation is the mayor or a deputy nominated by him. The *Schuldeputation* may appoint committees for individual schools or to look after the interests of any particular denomination. Berlin is an independent school union divided into districts each with its own *Schuldeputation*.

City educational authorities may establish secondary schools but only with the approval of the Ministry, which in such cases considers the need for such schools and the ability of the locality to support them. The local authorities in turn must undertake the provision of suitable sites, buildings, and equipment, must designate the type, number, and salaries of the teachers, and must organize a suitable system of administration. After a school is established and approved the supervision of both its external and its internal affairs is in the hands of the pertinent Provincial School Board. With the internal affairs, the actual direction and the teachers, the local authority has no right to interfere except in minor matters, such as the remission or reduction of fees, and granting teachers leave of absence, or permission to undertake outside work or to live outside of the city limits.

Rural Areas. In the rural communities that constitute school areas (*Schulverbände*) the preparation of the budget, the administration of school property, and the supervision of school

accounts are entrusted to the general administrative authorities. For educational purposes, however, there is established a school committee (*Schulvorstand*) responsible to the general administration and to the superior authority for elementary education. Unlike the *Schuldeputation* the *Schulvorstand* is an independent unit consisting of the president of the community, elected teachers, and representatives of the public and of the religious denominations appointed by the local council. The chairman of the committee is appointed. The function of the committee is to exercise general superintendence over the external welfare of the schools under them and to promote sound relations between the school and the home.

Several rural communities may combine to organize a union school district (*Gesamtschulverband*) under a single *Schulvorstand*, constituted in the same way as the committee of a single community.

PARENTS' COUNCILS

A Ministerial decree of November 11, 1919, required the establishment of parents' councils for every school. The councils are elected by parents who have children in a school, and their function is to promote the best possible relations between the school and the home. The councils are advisory and express the views of the parents on such matters as discipline, the physical, intellectual and moral development of the children, and other matters of general rather than individual interest. A further activity of the councils is to organize parent-teacher meetings, lectures, and school exhibitions.

TEACHERS' COUNCILS

Teachers' councils have been established in country areas and in other districts, coterminous with political or school inspection boundaries. Regulations on the constitution and powers of these councils (*Bezirkslehrerräte* and *Kreislehrerräte*), which have been established by law, have not as yet been defined. The *Bezirkslehrerräte* are established to act in an advisory capacity to the *Regierungen* on general educational matters, such as the regulation of questions affecting teachers, which they do by presenting petitions, memoranda, and reports; they coöperate in selecting one of the three members of the committees for the final appointment of teachers; and they report on the qualifications

of candidates for inspectorships. The authorities of the *Regierungen* may send representatives to the meetings of the councils, which may also be attended by the inspectors.

The functions of the *Kreislehrerräte*, which cover a smaller area, are, in general, functions similar to those of the *Bezirkslehrerräte*.

SCHOOL SUPPORT

The cost of education is borne by the state and the school districts, the state undertaking an important share of the cost of the salaries of teachers and the school districts the remaining costs with aid from the state, if necessary. In order to equalize the burden for the salaries of elementary school teachers there was established a *Landesschulkasse* (State Elementary School Fund Bureau) by the *Volksschullehrerdiensteinkommengesetz* (law of December 17, 1920, amendments of January 1, 1925, and regulations of June 3, 1921). The Bureau acts as a central organization to administer funds contributed by the state and local authorities. The Bureau is not technically a state office but an organization created to relieve the educational authorities of direct relations with the teachers in such matters as the securing of personal records. It is administered by a treasurer appointed by representatives of the local authorities. Payments are made by the Bureau either directly, as in the case of pensions and allowances for dependents, or through the office of the treasurer of the school or general local administration.

The funds from the Bureau are made up of grants from the state, miscellaneous incomes, and grants from the school districts to make up the balance needed to meet the obligations. The state contributes one-fourth of the salaries of all teachers on the basis of one teacher for sixty pupils, one-fourth of the cost for pensions and allowances for dependents, and a contribution determined in the budget annually for emergency needs. The total amount of the state's contributions to the *Landesschulkasse* is not expected to exceed more than one-fourth of the estimated cost of salaries, pensions, dependent allowances, and other grants. The local authorities are required to contribute the balance. For any activities beyond a certain minimum, such as the provision of advanced work in the elementary schools, reduction of the size of classes, payment of substitutes and so on, the local authorities must raise additional funds themselves.

In addition to the contribution made by the state to the *Landesschulkasse*, it also contributes a sum, not exceeding half of the cost of salaries and maintenance, calculated on the basis of pupil enrollment (*Beschulungsgeld*). School districts that are unable to support the cost of education even with the contributions coming directly from the state and indirectly from the state through the *Landesschulkasse* may resort to the state for additional assistance.

The state may further grant assistance toward the cost of school buildings under certain conditions, mainly the size and need of the school district. The amount of such assistance is limited to one-third of the cost, the details of which are carefully defined and scrutinized.

For the payment of salaries in middle schools an arrangement somewhat similar to the *Landesschulkasse* has been established. The cost of secondary education, except in the case of state schools, is borne by the local authorities.

PREPARATION OF TEACHERS

From the provision of Article 143 of the Constitution it was expected that the preparation of teachers would be regulated by the Federal Government. Since the Federal Government took no steps in this direction, each state began to establish its own system, based, however, on one uniform requirement that the preliminary preparation of future teachers should be in a secondary school and up to the level of university entrance standards. For the rest the important question that remained to be solved was whether the professional preparation should be given in the universities or in special institutions of a university grade but not constituent parts of the universities. Saxony and Thuringia decided on the former course; Prussia adopting the latter has established *Pädagogische Akademien*. Three such pedagogical academies have already been established.

The purpose of the two-year course there offered is to give pedagogical training, a mastery of educational values in relation to intellectual, religious, moral, technical, and artistic development, the recognition of the origin of educational values in popular culture, and the cultivation of a strong professional sense. The academic training is to give a mastery of the educational materials to be used in the elementary schools; the practical

preparation is to be given through observation, discussions, conferences, and practice teaching; in addition provision is made for training in skill (technical) and art subjects. A professional examination, on the result of which teachers are admitted to temporary appointment only, is held at the end of the two-year course.

Permanent appointment of elementary school teachers can be obtained either by passing a second examination after two years and before the completion of five years of service, or by completing an approved course in a coöperative study group (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*).

The system of training teachers for secondary schools remains unchanged except in a few details. Candidates are required to have spent a number of years in a university, to pass the state examination, and then to spend two years in professional preparation (*Vorbereitungsjahre*) in a designated secondary school.