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Lehrplan 21

A new curriculum for compulsory schooling
in the canton of Bern

Information for parents

**Elterninformation
Englisch**

Erziehungsdirektion des Kantons Bern
www.erz.be.ch



In a nutshell

- > The new curriculum, **Lehrplan 21**, depicts **society's mandate for compulsory schooling**, as past curricula have done. It sets out what compulsory schooling is to provide for the next generation in the way of **general education**.
- > **Lehrplan 21** serves teachers as a **compass** that helps them in planning their lessons.
- > For the first time in Switzerland's history, the **21** German-speaking and multilingual **cantons will share the same curriculum**.
- > **Lehrplan 21 aligns the educational content of compulsory schooling** across cantons. It will not fundamentally change the schooling however.
- > In the canton of Bern, the **content and subjects taught will remain essentially the same**. Rather than focussing only on **knowledge acquisition**, the curriculum has a stronger focus on the ability of pupils to **apply knowledge (competence orientation)**, which is new.
- > **Lehrplan 21** reflects developments in our society: **more lessons** are devoted to **media and computer science, mathematics and German** than has been the case up to now.

The introduction

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The schools have ample time to introduce **Lehrplan 21**.

In the canton of Bern, **Lehrplan 21** comes into force on 1 August 2018 for pre-school and years 1–7. One year later it will come into effect for year 8 as well and then, on 1 August 2020, for year 9.

The schools and teaching staff will have ample time to introduce the curriculum in a careful and considered manner. The curriculum will be fully implemented by the end of July 2022. From that point on, all teaching will be geared toward **Lehrplan 21**.

For the schools, teaching development takes centre stage. Teachers plan implementation options and work together to refine their teaching. They pay particular attention to making sure that their pupils have a wide range of opportunities to apply the knowledge they acquire. The **Pädagogische Hochschule Bern (PHBern)**, Bern's teacher-training university, supports them in this.

Competence orientation



Knowledge is the basis for every competency.

The curriculum currently in use in the canton of Bern was introduced in 1995. It describes **learning targets**. **Lehrplan 21** builds on this further, defining **competence targets**. These describe what pupils should know and be able to do at the end of their compulsory schooling. The aim: pupils should be able to apply their knowledge in an age appropriate manner and receive the best preparation for their further training possible.

In competence-oriented teaching, the focus is on **educationally rich assignments**. Doing such assignments **promotes** pupil's development of **multiple competencies**.

Levels and subjects

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Subject areas remain for the most part unchanged

Lehrplan 21 is divided into three levels, called “cycles”: pre-school through year 2, years 3–6 and years 7–9.

Pupils receive instruction in the following subjects:

- **Deutsch** (German); **Französisch** (French); **Englisch** (English)
- **Mathematik** (mathematics)
- **Natur, Mensch, Gesellschaft (NMG)** (nature, human, society)
- **Gestalten** (pictorial design, textiles and technical design)
- **Musik** (music)
- **Bewegung und Sport** (physical education)
- **Medien und Informatik** (media and computer science)

Instruction in foreign languages will continue unchanged: **French** is taught **from year 3**, **English from year 5**. This has been the practice in the canton of Bern since 2011.

Lehrplan 21 also refers to **interdisciplinary topics** such as **Berufliche Orientierung** (career guidance) and **Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung** (education for sustainable development). These topics are handled in multiple subjects.

Time allocation table

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More lessons – less homework

Lehrplan 21 strengthens instruction in the subjects of **German** and **mathematics** in the canton of Bern. The number of lessons on these subjects has been below those in other cantons up to now.

The topics **media** and **computer science** will also be strengthened: under the new curriculum there will be one lesson per week on these topics in school years 5 and 6 and also in years 7 and 9.

In years 8 and 9, the time allocation table now provides for at least 3 lessons devoted to **individuelle Vertiefung und Erweiterung (IVE)** (individual learning to increase depth and breadth) in German, mathematics and foreign languages. These lessons can be used to prepare pupils for specific forms of further training (vocational education and training, Federal Vocational Baccalaureate, Baccalaureate school, other in-school training programmes).

Due to the increase in the number of lessons, the **amount of homework will be reduced**. Per week maximums are:

- **30 minutes** for pre-school – year 2
- **45 minutes** for year 3 – year 6
- **90 minutes** for year 7 – year 9

Reports

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Fewer assessment reports – parent-teacher meeting takes on even greater importance.

Grades will continue to be assigned to assess children's and adolescents' performance.

The **meeting between the teacher and the pupil's parents** will also continue to play an important role in the future. Under [Lehrplan 21](#), teachers will continue to hold one parent-teacher meeting each year. A new aspect is that the most important agreements can be recorded in **abbreviated minutes** of the meeting.

The current **assessment report** will be simplified. The first assessment report will be issued at the end of year 2, which is new; reports will then be issued again at the end of years 4, 5, and 6. Also new is the fact that lower secondary level pupils (years 7–9) will receive **yearly assessment reports** rather than twice-yearly reports. It will continue to be possible to transfer to a different requirement level during the school year.

The move from primary to lower secondary level



The procedure will remain the same.

The **procedure for moving** from the **primary level** to the **lower secondary level** will remain the same. As before, performance in the subjects **German, French** and **mathematics** and the cross-curricular competencies will be the decisive factors.

For those **entering the Baccalaureate** school in year 8 or year 9, everything will remain the same. **German, French, mathematics** and **nature, human, society (NMG)** will continue to be the decisive subjects. As in the past, there will be a recommendation procedure that takes subject-specific and cross-curricular competencies into account.

One new aspect is that pupils will receive a **portfolio on their cross-curricular competencies** in addition to the assessment reports at the end of years 7, 8 and 9. The portfolio will document how independent and reliable they are and how well they can work in a team.

The portfolios will offer host companies or higher schools with insight into these important competencies of the pupils.

Teaching materials



Only a few new teaching materials will be needed.

Most of the current teaching materials can also be used under [Lehrplan 21](#). In the subjects German, mathematics, English and French in particular, materials geared towards competence oriented teaching are already being used.

As in the past, the use of specified teaching materials is **mandatory** only for **mathematics** and the **foreign languages**.

In all schools in the canton of Bern, mathematics is taught with:

- **Schweizer Zahlenbuch** at the primary level
- **mathbuch** at the lower secondary level

In the subject of French, the materials used are:

- **Mille feuilles** (years 3–6)
- **Clin d'œil** (years 7–9)

In the subject of English, the schools use:

- **New World** (years 5–9)

Schools receive a list of recommended teaching materials for other subjects but decide for themselves which materials they wish to use.



Dear parents

Lehrplan 21 builds on a well-established foundation and reflects new developments. The aim is to provide optimal support to pupils.

For the first time, the **21** German-speaking and multilingual cantons in Switzerland will share a common curriculum. This makes sense in our (territorially) small country and accords with the wishes of a large majority of the population.

The new curriculum will not radically change our schools: rather than introducing new content, it provides for a harmonization of targets.



Bernhard Pulver

Director of Education in the Canton of Bern



General information on compulsory schooling in the canton of Bern is available at: www.erz.be.ch/elterninfo