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ABSTRACT

This description of the educational system of the German Democratic Republic provides readers interested in comparative education with an overview of the system's organization, fundamental concepts, and objectives since the revision of its structure following World War II. Brief statistical information on the country and its people is followed by an introductory section on the historical developments leading to the establishment of the German Democratic Republic. After a summary of the basic aspects of its current educational system, more detailed descriptions of the various educational levels are provided, including (1) elementary and secondary education, (2) engineering institutes and technical schools, (3) higher education, and (4) teacher education. Educational influences outside the formal educational structure are also mentioned. Throughout the study educational terms in German are placed in parentheses following their English equivalents. When no precise English equivalent exists for a German educational concept, this is explained. A map and several graphs and tables serve to illustrate the text. A selected glossary of German educational terms and a selected reading list are provided at the end of the article. (MK)

THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

Location: North-Central Europe between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Polish People's Republic.

Size: 41,760 square miles.

Main Subdivisions: 14 administrative Districts (*Bezirke*), each divided into counties. East Berlin, the capital of the country, is considered a separate (15th) administrative district.

Population: 17,042,000 (fall 1971).

People: An ethnically homogeneous German population with a small Slavic minority known as Sorbs, located primarily in the southeastern districts.

Official Language: German, spoken by virtually all people, including the small Sorbic minority, which is generally bilingual.

Literacy: Well over 90 percent.

THE BASIC SYSTEM

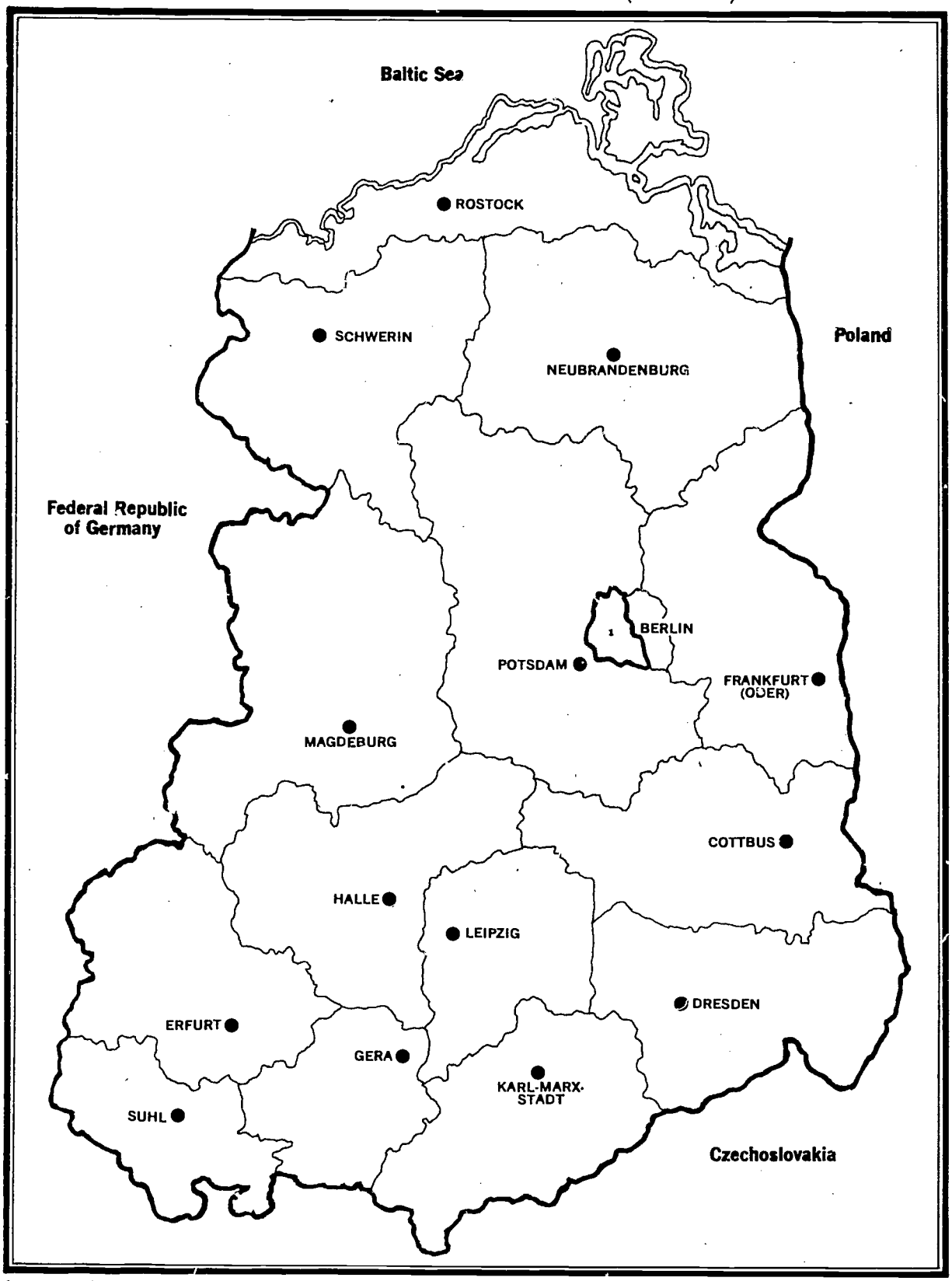
Historical Background

The portion of Germany that is now the German Democratic Republic (GDR) or East Germany was established in 1945 as the Soviet Zone of Occupation. Although World War II agreements among the Allies had specified that Germany would be governed as a unit, basic differences between the three Western occupation powers (France, Great Britain, and the United States) on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other led to a split among the powers and their occupation policies and procedures. In 1948 the Soviet Union withdrew from the four-power occupation agencies. In May 1949, a Basic Law (constitution) for the Western occupation zones was promulgated by the German Parliamentary Council with the approval of the Western powers, which led to establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in September. In October the Soviet Union announced establishment of the German Democratic Republic in its zone, with a constitution adopted on October 7, 1949.

At the end of the war, education in Germany had come to a standstill. Germany, however, possessed a literate population and a highly developed educational system. Like other Western European systems, it was characterized by early separation of programs leading to higher education from those leading to trades.

Before 1920 academic secondary schools in

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
WITH ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS (*BEZIRKE*)



[1] West Berlin

Source: Ruediger Thomas, *Modell DDR: Die kalkulierte Emanzipation* (Muenchen: Karl Hanser Verlag, 1972), p. 5.

Germany often had their own preparatory sections so that students in this track could complete their entire education without sharing school experiences with children in other types of schools. In 1920, under the Weimar Republic, a law was passed requiring all children to attend the first 4 years (*Grundschule*) of the common elementary school (*Volksschule*). The basic educational system then consisted of the 4-year *Grundschule* followed by three major tracks consisting respectively of the following schools:

1. *The upper elementary school* (grades 5–8), which was followed by an apprenticeship with accompanying attendance at a part-time vocational school (*Berufsschule*), usually lasting for 3 years and leading directly to a trade. Before World War II this track enrolled about 80 percent of the pertinent age group.
2. *The middle school* (usually grades 5–10), which was designed to lead to occupations (e.g., secretarial) that did not require the highly academic education of the secondary school. The middle school generally enrolled about 5 percent of the age group.
3. *The academic secondary school* (*Gymnasium*) (grades 5–13), which led to the school-leaving certificate known as the *Reifezeugnis* or *Abitur*. This qualified the holder for university matriculation. Three types of secondary schools were generally offered—(1) classical, emphasizing Latin and Greek, (2) modern language, and (3) mathematics-science. Originally limited to the classical type, the term *Gymnasium* was ultimately applied to all three. Enrollments in the *Gymnasium* comprised about 15 percent of the age group.

After World War II East Germany, led by the Socialist Unity Party (*SED*: *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*), a union of the Communist Party and elements of the Socialist and Social-Democratic Parties, started to revise the educational structure. This revision, strongly influenced by Soviet models and experience, eliminated the traditional three-track pattern. The first step was taken in 1946 with establishment of a comprehensive, 8-year elementary school beginning at age 6, followed by a 4-year academic secondary school and vocational schools. In 1959 a new type of school, the 10-year general polytechnical secondary school (*Zehnklassige allgemeinbildende polytechnische Oberschule*), was introduced. Over a period of time this school replaced the 8-year elementary school, becoming the compulsory school for all children aged 6 to 16. It led to advanced secondary education and vocational training.

Structure

The key element in the educational system is the 10-year general polytechnical secondary school, hereafter called the 10-year school, compulsory for all children beginning at age 6. It is preceded by the kindergarten for children aged 3 to 6, and the nursery (*Krippe*) for children below age 3.

The 10-year school leads to either a 2-year extended secondary school designed to prepare for higher education, a 3-year vocational school that provides both professional and academic qualifications, or a 2-year vocational school leading to the trades. A 3-year vocational school is provided for students who leave the 10-year school after the eighth grade.

Special schools and classes for physically and mentally handicapped and disturbed children parallel the 10-year school. A small number of specialized schools are also provided for children who are exceptionally talented in a subject or field, such as mathematics, music, or sports.

Higher education consists of universities and other institutions of tertiary rank that provide undergraduate and advanced education in all major fields. Engineering institutes and technical schools occupy an intermediate position between secondary and higher education and serve as a stepping-stone from the former to the latter as well as providing access to numerous technical professions. A comprehensive system of "People's Colleges" (*Volkshochschulen*), factory academies, and village academies provides opportunities for adults to continue their education after entering the world of work.

Language of Instruction

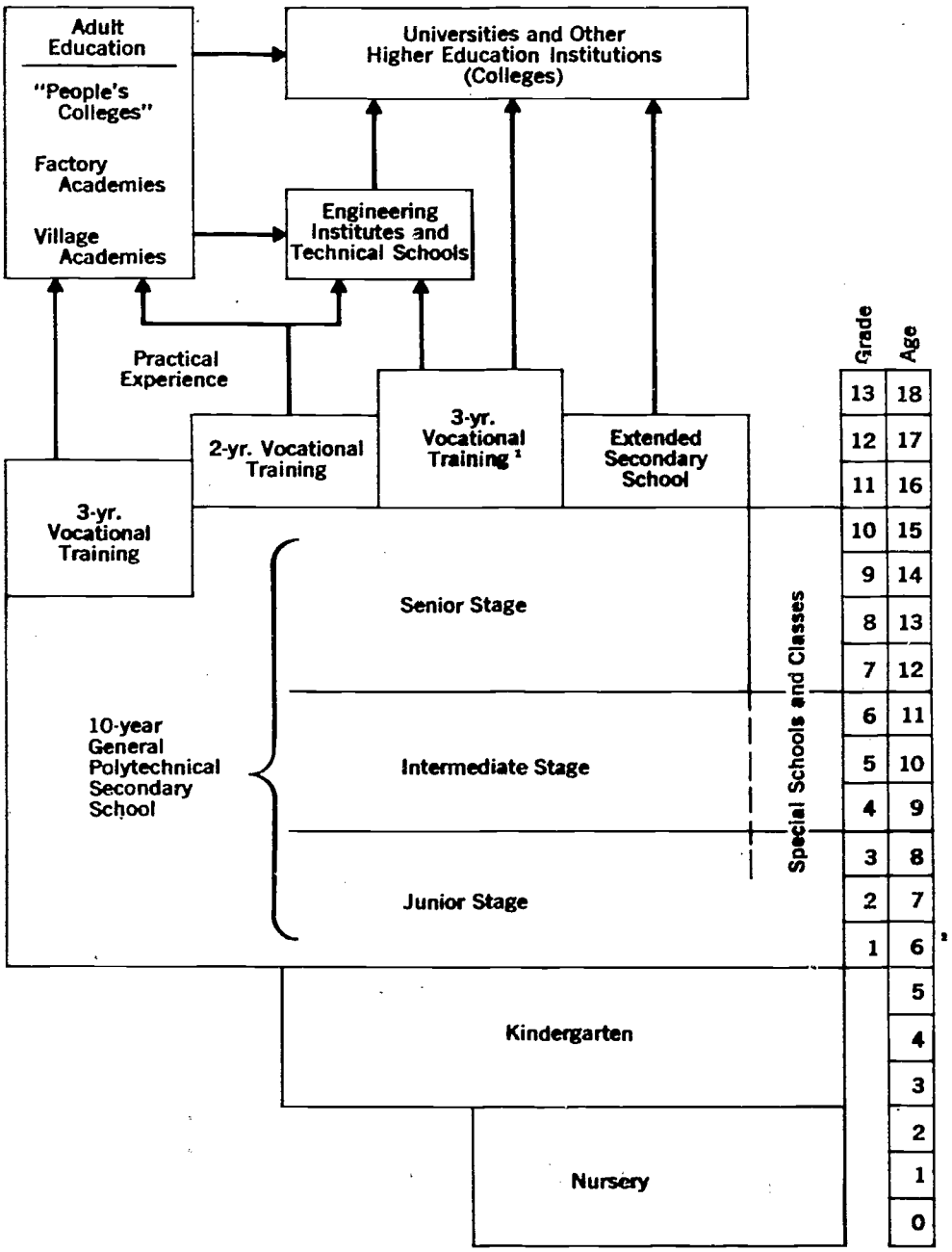
German is the language of instruction throughout the GDR. The small Sorbic minority in the southeastern districts, however, generally provides a bilingual education in Sorbic and German during the early years of schooling.

Academic Calendar

The school year begins in September and continues to the following July, with a long vacation of about 6 weeks in July and August. Short vacations are scheduled during harvest periods, the Christmas season, and spring.

At the university level a 10-month academic year, extending from September to July, was introduced in 1951. Most institutions of higher education list their academic year in two parts, usually September to January and February to July. A few specialized institutions show a division into three parts.

The Basic Educational Structure



[1] Includes courses for university matriculation.

[2] German charts show 7 in the age column for grade 1. This represents the 7th year of life (following the 6th birthday), corresponding to age 6 in English usage.

Source: Adapted from GDR, Ministry of Education. *Development of Public Education in the GDR.* Report to the International Conference on Public Education, Geneva. 1973, p. 4.

Table 1.—Number of schools and students by type of school: 1972

[. . . indicates source gave no data]

Type of School	*Schools*	*Students*
Preschools		
Kindergartens and weekly homes	11,359	659,852
Seasonal kindergartens	1,385	23,027
Total	12,744	682,879
General Schools		
10-year general polytechnical secondary schools	5,878	2,730,759
Extended secondary schools	291	55,064
Special schools	562	78,090
Total	6,731	2,863,913
Vocational Schools		
General vocational schools	298	142,216
Factory vocational schools	690	259,268
Medical technician schools	56	27,476
Total	1,044	428,960
Engineering Institutes and Technical Schools		
Full-time study	....	67,600
Correspondence study	....	67,200
Evening study	....	41,500
Total	196	176,300
Universities and Colleges		
Full-time study	....	113,665
Correspondence study	....	39,050
Evening study	....	618
Not specified	....	664
Total	54	153,997
Adult Education		
Factory and village academies, major industries only	....	821,664
"People's colleges"	....	266,844
Total	....	1,088,508
Grand total	20,769[1]	5,394,557

[1]Not including adult education institutions.

Source: Adapted from Deutsche Demokratische Republik, Staatliche Zentralverwaltung fuer Statistik, *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1974* (Berlin: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1974), pp. 354–73.

Grading System

When a child enters school at age 6, the school opens a personal report book with a page for each half year of the 10-year school. The teacher enters a half-yearly grade for each subject in the grade book, the 20th page marking the end of compulsory schooling. Grades are given on a five-point scale: 1—very good; 2—good; 3—satisfactory; 4—passable; and 5—unsatisfactory. Half-yearly pages are signed by the teacher and the principal; and the final page is signed by the examining commission, which consists of representatives of the school, the county education authorities, and the youth organization (Free German Youth—*FDJ*: *Freie Deutsche Jugend*).

The five-point scale is used at all levels of education, including the university.

Legal Basis

The basic principles underlying the educational system of the GDR were originally formulated in the Law for the Democratization of German Schools (1946) and found further expression in the 1949 Constitution. Higher education was centralized at the national level in 1952 with formation of a State Secretariat for Higher Education. The Law for the Socialist Development of the School System in the GDR (1959) established the 10-year school.

Education law at all levels was codified into a unified system by the Act on the Integrated Socialist Educational System (*Gesetz ueber das einheitliche sozialistische Bildungssystem vom 25. Februar 1965*). The principles expressed in the act received added emphasis in the Constitution of April 1968, which was amended in October 1974 and is currently in effect. The act itself has been amplified by decrees and resolutions, especially in reference to vocational and higher education.

Administration

All schools in the German Democratic Republic are public; private schools were eliminated by law in 1946.

The control of education is highly centralized at the national level throughout both the governmental and the party (SED) structure. General policy control is exercised through the Council of Ministers (*Ministerrat*), the chief executive organ of the GDR. Two ministries exercise primary jurisdiction over most of the educational system: the Ministry of Education (*Ministerium fuer Volksbildung*) over kindergarten, elementary, secondary, vocational, and some teacher education, and the Ministry of Higher and Technical Education (*Ministerium fuer das Hoch- und Fachschulwesen*), formerly the State Secretariat for Higher Education, over universities, other higher education institutions, and engineering institutes and technical schools that are ranked between secondary and higher education. The Ministry of Health (*Ministerium fuer das Gesundheitswesen*) is responsible for nurseries, and the Ministry of Culture (*Ministerium fuer Kultur*) for art schools.

The great importance attached to vocational training is evidenced by establishment of a State Office for Vocational Education, directly responsible to the Council of Ministers (*Staatliches Amt fuer Berufsausbildung beim Ministerrat der DDR*). This office serves as an advisory and coordinating body for all ministries and other agencies concerned with vocational education.

The GDR is divided into 14 administrative Districts (*Bezirke*) plus East Berlin. Although East Berlin, like West Berlin, has special status under four-power agreements, for all practical purposes it can be considered the 15th district of the GDR. (In GDR tabulations of the Districts, East Berlin is generally listed first.) Each District maintains an Education Office, headed by a director of education, three assistant directors, and three inspectors, augmented by an education committee.

The Districts are divided into urban and rural counties (*Stadtkreise, Landkreise*), each with a director of education and two inspectors. The principals of individual schools are responsible for the operation of their schools, including the educational and political activities of their teachers. The primary function of educational authorities at the District, county, and individual school levels is to insure that laws, directives, and instructions of the National Government are carried out.

The Ministry of Higher and Technical Education deals directly with higher education institutions (not through District agencies).

Financing

Tuition is free at all levels of education and, in addition, students in higher education institutions receive grants and allowances on the basis of need.

The National Government is directly responsible for financing both higher education and the central administration of all levels of education. District councils are responsible for financing both District administrative agencies and teacher training for the lower grades. Counties pay the salaries of teachers and of administrators of the county education offices. Communities (*Gemeinden*) within the counties maintain school buildings; provide school furniture, books, and materials; and pay the salaries of secretarial and custodial personnel. Sponsoring organizations, especially industrial enterprises, provide space and equipment for vocational training. Parents' Councils raise funds for special purposes. All funds, regardless of origin, are ultimately reflected in the national education budget.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

No school in the GDR is designated an elementary school. The traditional German elementary school (*Volksschule*) has disappeared from the vocabulary of the GDR since elementary education became part of the 10-year school—which has the title "10-year polytechnical *secondary* school." The 10-year school will be discussed as a unit. It is preceded by preschool education (nursery and kindergarten) and followed by extended secondary and vocational education.

Preschool Education

Preschool education is provided in nurseries for children under 3 years of age and in kindergartens for children from 3 to 6. (A child must be 6 by May 31 in order to start elementary school the following September.) Nurseries are generally established by communities or industrial enterprises, especially to help working mothers. They accept children from a few weeks old to age 3. Programs are conducted in cooperation with the families and are intended to develop the children physically and mentally, primarily through play. In 1971 about 28 percent of the age group were enrolled.

The kindergarten is considered part of the school system and operates under the guidance of the Ministry of Education. A new program introduced in 1968 goes beyond the "baby-sitting" concept of the kindergarten and includes speech development, an introduction to numbers, some nature study, and creative work. During the last year of the program a book entitled "Soon I Will be a School Child" is used to emphasize the transition to general schooling.

Some kindergartens, known as weekly homes, provide residential facilities, usually for short terms. In addition to the kindergartens that operate throughout the school year, seasonal kindergartens (*Erntekindergaerten*) are provided during harvest seasons, generally from May to October, in agricultural areas.

In 1971, 68 percent of the age group were enrolled in kindergartens.

General Education

The 10-year general polytechnical secondary school.—There are three stages in the 10-year polytechnical secondary school (*Zehnklassige allgemeinbildende polytechnische Oberschule*): The 3-year junior stage (grades 1–3), the 3-year intermediate stage (grades 4–6), and the 4-year senior stage (grades 7–10).

In terms of pupils' ages, the first two stages might be considered the elementary school and the senior stage the first cycle of secondary education. In terms of content and method, however, the intermediate stage resembles the senior stage rather than the junior. Whereas the junior stage has classroom teachers, trained in teacher-training institutes of less than higher education level, teachers for both the intermediate and senior stages are trained as subject-matter teachers in higher education institutions and work as subject-matter teachers in the 10-year school. The fourth grade is considered to be a transition grade from the junior to the intermediate stage. This is evident in the curriculum: subjects that are generally offered at the secondary level, such as foreign language and sciences, are introduced in the fifth grade. If an arbitrary division between elementary and secondary education were made, the logical point would appear to be between the fourth and fifth grades, which corresponds to the point of division between the traditional *Grundschule* and *Gymnasium*.

It must be emphasized that the 10-year school is operated as a unit. Since it is the compulsory school for all children, transition from stage to stage does not depend on a selection process. All pupils are eventually advanced although the progress of individual students may be retarded or accelerated in accordance with their ability to meet grade requirements.

In the junior stage emphasis is placed almost entirely on German and mathematics. The former includes social studies as well as language arts. Crafts are introduced in the first grade and carried through the intermediate stage as an introduction to polytechnical education. Gardening serves the same purpose. The program is rounded out with instruction in drawing, music, and sport.

The intermediate stage is characterized by introduction of the Russian language, biology, and geography in grade 5, and physics in grade 6. All subjects are compulsory. The hours per week assigned to Russian indicate that considerable emphasis is placed on this subject. All the above subjects are carried forward through the senior stage.

The senior stage presents three noteworthy features: A further increase in science education, a preparatory course for students planning to enter the extended secondary school, and major emphasis on polytechnical education. The increase in science education consists of the addition of chemistry and a year of astronomy to the sciences started in the intermediate stage. The preparatory program for students planning to enter the extended secondary school is conducted during the 9th and 10th years, and differs from the regular program primarily in that a second foreign language becomes compulsory rather than optional, and the content of other subjects is increased in difficulty.

The outstanding characteristic of the senior stage is the introduction of polytechnical education. Polytechnical education is more than a school subject or group of subjects. It is not vocational education or industrial arts but the total education of man in a technological society, a viewpoint presented by Karl Marx and advanced by various Soviet leaders. It emphasizes the key role of technological and economic processes in modern society and the need for modern man to understand the nature of these

Table 2.—Number of hours per week in each subject in the 10-year comprehensive polytechnical secondary school: 1973–74.

Subject	Year										
	1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1st half	2d half									
Required:											
German	11	10	12	14	14	7	6	5	5	3	4
Russian	—	—	—	—	—	6	5	3	3	3	3
Mathematics	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	5	4
Physics	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	2	2	3	3
Astronomy	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Chemistry	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	4	2	2
Biology	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	1	2	2	2
Geography	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	2	2	1	2
Crafts	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	—	—	—	—
Gardening	—	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Introduction to Socialist Production	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	2	2
Production Work	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	3	3
Draftsmanship	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
History	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	2	2	2	2
Civics	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	2
Drawing	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	—
Music	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sports	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
Total	21	21	24	27	29	31	33	32	33	31	33
Optional:											
2d Foreign Language	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	3	2
Needlework	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Grand Total	21	21	24	27	30	32	33	35	36	34	35

Source: GDR, Ministry of Education. *Development of Public Education in the GDR.* Report to the International Conference on Public Education, Geneva, 1975, p. 37.

processes. Skill training is one aspect of polytechnical education, but it does not represent the primary emphasis. The inclusion of "polytechnical" in the title of the 10-year school emphasizes the importance attached to this concept in education as a whole.

Polytechnical education is represented specifically in the curriculum by three subjects: Introduction to socialist production, production work, and draftsmanship. The first is intended to lay the theoretical groundwork for the concept of polytechnical education. Production work takes place directly in agricultural, commercial, and industrial enterprises. The enterprises supply the necessary financial resources, including personnel, space, equipment, and supplies. Substantial research has been conducted; syllabuses, textbooks, and other teaching aids have been developed; and specialist teachers have been trained to carry forward this program.

The third subject, draftsmanship, provides a technical skill needed for effective participation in actual production processes. In addition to the specific polytechnical subjects, other school subjects, especially the sciences, are expected to contribute to the polytechnical concept.

In 1972 approximately 90 percent of the students who completed the eighth grade entered the ninth

grade of the 10-year school. This figure is expected to rise from year to year so that it is anticipated that practically all physically and mentally healthy children will complete the 10-year school in the foreseeable future.

Upon completion of the 10-year school all students take a common comprehensive examination (*Abschlusspruefung*) conducted by the school with participation by the county education office. Successful students receive the school leaving certificate (*Abschlusszeugnis*). The results of this examination play an important part in deciding the future course the student will pursue. In addition to the examination, social and economic requirements as determined by national planning agencies as well as other considerations enter into the decision.

The student proceeding to more advanced education has three choices: Additional academic education in the 2-year extended secondary school leading to university admission; a combined vocational and academic preparation in the 3-year vocational program leading to technical proficiency, university admission, or both; and vocational education in the 2-year vocational program leading directly to employment.

The extended secondary school.—In the extended school (*Erweiterte Oberschule*), 2 years of preuniversity training are offered to graduates of the 10-year school who wish to enter higher education institutions. The curriculum stresses foreign languages, mathematics, and science. Educational authorities emphasize that it is particularly important for these students, who are expected to occupy positions of leadership in the future, to maintain close relationships with the working classes. Scientific and practical work, listed as an optional subject, is intended to achieve this purpose by providing opportunities for work in industrial and scientific establishments.

Five residential extended secondary schools have been established for children who are exceptionally gifted. The curriculum remains essentially the same, but all subjects are carried to a substantially higher level. A few specialized schools have also been established for children with exceptional talents in a particular field. To date the emphasis in these schools has been on sports or music. In addition to intensive work in a specialty, students complete the usual requirements of the extended secondary school. Competitions in particular subjects, for example in mathematics, are held at the county, district, and national level to encourage able students to reach their highest potential.

Upon completion of the extended secondary school, students take a national school leaving examination (*Reifepruefung*), the successful completion of which entitles them to the secondary school leaving certificate known as the *Reifezeugnis* or *Abitur,* which is the traditional prerequisite for admission to higher education institutions.

Table 3—Number of hours per week in each subject in the extended secondary school: 1973–74

Subject	Year 10	Year 12
Required:		
German	3	3
Russian	3	3
Second foreign language	2	3
Mathematics	5	5
Physics	3	3
Astronomy	—	1
Chemistry	2	3
Biology	2	3
Geography	2	—
History	3	—
Civics	1	2
Sports	2	2
Total	28	28
Optional:		
Scientific and practical work	4	4*
Art or music	1	1
Others	3	3
Grand total	36	36(32)

*First half of year only.

Source: GDR, Ministry of Education. *Development of Public Education in the GDR.* Report to the International Conference on Public Education, Geneva, 1975, p. 41.

Special education.—Special courses and special schools (*Sonderschulen*) for physically and mentally handicapped and disturbed children parallel the classes of the 10-year school, usually from the 3d through the 10th year. The schools have small classes and much individualized work. Some students are able to reenter the regular classes; others receive whatever training they can absorb.

Vocational Education

There are three distinct vocational training programs: A 3-year program and a 2-year program, each following completion of the 10-year school, and a 3-year program following the eighth grade. The first of these combines vocational training leading to a skilled worker's certificate (*Facharbeiter Zeugnis*) with academic courses leading to the *Abitur.* When this program was first introduced,

both courses were required with the intent that all students would possess both an academic and a vocational qualification. Experience showed, however, that this placed an excessive burden on many students and the requirement to complete both qualifications was dropped.

By far the largest number of graduates of the 10-year school enter the 2-year vocational program leading to the skilled worker's certificate (*Facharbeiter Zeugnis*). The training consists of a great deal of practical work in business and industrial firms, accompanied by theoretical instruction in trade-related and background subjects.

The program following the eighth grade provides vocational training for school leavers who do not complete the 10-year school (about 10 percent of the relevant age group). Completion of this training leads to a partial vocational qualification (*Teilberuf*). Workers at this level usually can continue their training in their place of employment in order to reach the skilled worker (*Facharbeiter*) level. As enrollments in the upper years of the 10-year school continue to increase, these programs for early school leavers are to be phased out.

About two-thirds of the vocational schools, called factory vocational schools, are operated directly by industries, with general direction and guidance provided by the Ministry of Education. Most of the remainder are operated by the educational system but maintain close contact with industry through a system of apprenticeships. A number of schools specializing in medical technician fields are supervised by the Ministry of Health.

Upon completion of the vocational school, students (except those who selected the *Abitur* option) generally go directly to work. Additional educational opportunities are available through evening courses, factory and village academies, and other types of part-time schooling. After some on-the-job experience, workers may also enter full-time engineering institutes and technical schools. (These will be discussed in a subsequent section.)

The strong emphasis placed on vocational education may be seen in the 1972 enrollment figures: while about 55,000 students were enrolled in extended secondary schools, about 429,000—more than seven times as many—were enrolled in vocational schools.

Adult Education

Adult education provides continuing opportunities for the working population to upgrade and renew skills and qualifications, to fill gaps in earlier training, and to keep pace with rapidly changing technologies. This type of training is generally carried on directly where the workers are employed. Training facilities in industrial enterprises are called factory academies; those concerned with agriculture and related fields are called village academies. The academies enable workers with partial qualifications to become fully qualified as skilled workers. In addition they provide opportunities for skilled workers to prepare for new fields or to advance to more specialized levels. Although the academies do not offer formal academic credit, a completed academy program sometimes can be applied to reduce the length of an academic program in the same field at a college or engineering institute.

A second major area of adult education is represented by the "people's colleges" (*Volkshochschulen*), which have played a role in German education since the 1920's. The programs of these institutions are not as job oriented as those of the factory and village academies and provide a wide range of courses in political, economic, social, linguistic, and cultural fields. They include courses for adults leading to specific academic qualifications offered by other schools. For example, in 1972 about 17 percent of the students were engaged in programs leading to one of the following: Completion of the 8th, 10th, or 12th grade; admission to specialized schools; and university entrance examinations (only 215 students). Other programs provide courses in single subjects or fields, with or without terminal examinations.

In addition to the institutions previously described, clubs of various kinds, houses of culture, libraries, and television programs provide opportunities for adult education.

ENGINEERING INSTITUTES AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS (*FACHSCHULEN*)

A group of institutions with a long tradition in German education, *Fachschulen,* occupy an intermediate position between secondary and higher education. Controlled by the Ministry of Higher and Technical Education, this category consists of engineering institutes (not to be confused with colleges of engineering at the higher education level) and other specialized schools (generally called technical schools in English translations of *Fachschulen,* although they include many types that would not be called technical schools in common English usage).

The objective of these schools is to develop highly skilled technicians in many fields by providing training at a level substantially higher than the skilled-worker training offered by vocational schools, but

at a less theoretical level than that offered by corresponding university programs. For example, graduates of engineering institutes frequently are employed as technical assistants to university-trained engineers.

In 1972 there were 196 such schools enrolling 176,300 students, about a third of whom were engaged in full-time study, and the others in evening and correspondence study. Programs covered a wide variety of fields, but four major fields accounted for 97 percent of the enrollment—technical, 42 percent; economics and business, 32 percent; education, 16 percent; and agriculture, 7 percent.

Entrance requirements vary with the type of school. The basic requirement is completion of the 10-year school. In all fields offered at a lower level in vocational schools (agriculture, commerce, industry), additional requirements are a skilled worker's certificate and 1 or more years of practical experience. *Fachschule*-level education programs train teachers for nurseries, kindergartens, and the lower level of the 10-year school, and also some teachers for vocational schools. For prospective vocational school teachers the skilled worker's certificate is a prerequisite; for other prospective teachers, it is not.

Programs are generally 3 or 4 years in length. Upon completion of the *Fachschule,* graduates receive a certificate in the particular field of study that was pursued. For example, a graduate of an engineering institute receives a certificate *Ingenieur* (in contrast to the graduate of a college of engineering, who is a *Diplom-Ingenieur*). A specialist in economics is a *Volkswirt,* a kindergarten teacher is a *Kindergaertnerin,* a teacher for a vocational school is a *Berufsschullehrer.*

The *Fachschule* qualifies its graduates not only for numerous positions in commerce, education, and industry, but also for university matriculation, generally in the same field of study. (For example, a graduate of an engineering institute would most likely enter a college of engineering.) In 1970 the engineering institutes and technical schools were the largest source of students qualifying for admission to higher education.

HIGHER EDUCATION

German terminology frequently causes confusion in English translation because some terms have different meanings in different contexts. The general term for higher education is *Hochschule.* The latter term is also used to designate specialized institutions that are not called universities because of their limited programs; for example, *Technische Hochschule, Paedagogische Hochschule.* Official publications of the GDR in English translation generally call these institutions colleges (technical college, college of education).

Another source of confusion is the word "institute" (*Institut*), which is used in three different ways: Traditionally, as the research facility assigned to an academic chair at a university; as a specialized institution at the tertiary level (e.g., *Paedagogisches Institut*—translated by the GDR as Institute in some cases, but usually as College of Education); and as a specialized institution at the *Fachschule* level (e.g., *Institut fuer Lehrerbildung*—Teacher-Training Institute; *Ingenieurschule*—translated by the GDR as Engineering Institute).

This publication will use the following designations, which appear to correspond most closely to official GDR practice:

University: Institutions with the title *Universitaet.*

College: Institutions at the higher education level that are not called universities (*Hochschule, Institut, Akademie*).

Institute: Institutions of less than higher education level, translated as Institute by the GDR (*Ingenieurschule, Institut fuer Lehrerbildung*).

Research Institute: The traditional facility at a university (*Institut fuer Geschichte der Medizin, Institut fuer tropische Landwirtschaft*).

University Reform

A major concern of educational authorities in the Soviet Zone of Occupation was a complete reform of higher education institutions. This was undertaken before the GDR was established and has been carried forward to the present.

Three major reforms have been identified. The first (1946) was directed toward denazification and abolition of the "elitist" character of the traditional German university. To accomplish the latter, "workers and peasants faculties" were added to the universities to enable young people who had not completed the *Abitur* to prepare themselves for university matriculation. As a result, the participation of working-class students was substantially increased.

The second reform (1951) emphasized development of the "socialist" university. The study of Marxism-Leninism was introduced as a compulsory subject for all students. The traditional two-semester organization was replaced by a 10-month

study year and correspondence study was introduced. Continuing emphasis was placed on admission of students from the working and farming groups so that students from these backgrounds constituted about 50 percent of the student body by 1963. Increased emphasis on academic qualifications since that date resulted in a reduction to about 38 percent by 1967.

The third reform (1967) abolished the traditional faculties, replacing them by smaller sections (*Sektionen*), corresponding approximately to departments. Programs of study and their duration were revised. A major concern was to establish closer relationships between university study, research, and production so that university programs would contribute as directly and quickly as possible to meeting the country's social and economic needs. An increasing proportion of university research has been taking its direction from the needs of industry.

Types of Institutions

Higher education institutions fall into two general categories—(1) universities, which offer advanced study in a variety of fields, and (2) specialized institutions (colleges), which usually offer advanced education in a single neld. There are 7 institutions in the first category and 47 in the second.

Of the seven universities, those of Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden are by far the largest, with 13 to 14 thousand students each in 1971.

A large number of the 47 colleges were founded since 1946. They may be classified by specialization as follows:

Total	47
Agriculture	2
Education, including Physical Education	10
Liberal Arts (Art, Cinematography, Design, Literature, Music, and Theater)	11
Medicine	3
Social Sciences (Commerce, Economics, Law, and Political Science)	4
Technical Fields (Architecture, Building Construction, Chemistry, Engineering, Machine Construction, Maritime Engineering, Mining, and Transportation)	17

Admission

There are three paths leading to admission to higher education. The "traditional" German path (through the *Grundschule* and *Gymnasium*) is represented in the GDR in a highly modified form by the 10-year school followed by the 2-year extended secondary school, terminating with the *Abitur*. A second path consists of academic courses in the 3-year vocational school or in evening adult programs leading to the *Abitur*. A third is through graduation from an engineering institute or technical school. Of the students who qualified for matriculation in 1970, 35 percent obtained the *Abitur* through the extended secondary school, 17 percent through the 3-year vocational school or adult programs, and 48 percent through an engineering institute or technical school.

Academic Programs

University academic programs that were developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries have often been cited as examples of an unusually high degree of academic freedom. At that time universities were envisioned as a "community of scholars" that spent as much time as needed on the project at hand: class attendance was not required; progress was counted in semesters, not in courses; and intermediate examinations were infrequent. The 1967 reform of higher education in the GDR made substantial changes in traditional procedures and placed university study on a precise schedule. The first 2 years consist of basic studies, including Marxism-Leninism, foreign languages, military training, and sport; and terminate with a preliminary examination. This period is followed by 2 or 3 years of study in a major field, including extensive practical work; and terminates with a state examination leading to the first academic degree. Additional years of study and experience lead to advanced degrees.

Degrees

There are three degrees, awarded at successive levels of accomplishment—the diploma (*Diplom*), the doctorate (*Doktor*), and the Doctor of Science (*Doktor der Wissenschaften*). The diploma is awarded in most fields upon completion of 4 years of study. Medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, theology, and occasionally some others require 5 years. Some examples of diplomas are *Diplom-Ingenieur* (*Dipl.-Ing.*), Diploma in Engineering, 4 years; and *Diplom-Mediziner* (*Dipl.-Med.*), Diploma in Medicine, 5 years.

The doctorate requires a dissertation and 3 or 4 years of study and experience beyond the diploma. Some examples of titles are *Dr. Ing.*, Doctor of Engineering; *Dr. Med.*, Doctor of Medicine; and *Dr. Phil.*, Doctor of Philosophy.

The Doctor of Science is the usual prerequisite for a university professorship (corresponding to the traditional *Doktor Habilitation* in prewar Germany and in the Federal Republic). It requires a second dissertation and an additional 4 or 5 years of study and experience beyond the doctorate.

Employment

The choice of fields of study is determined in part by the national planning agencies, which estimate requirements in the various fields. Employment upon graduation also depends substantially on planned position requirements. The Act on the Integrated Educational System of 1965 specifies (article 60) that "students shall be encouraged to start work where they will best serve the all-round development of the GDR" and that authorities are to plan employment so that the student knows his or her assignment 1 year before graduation.

Administration

Higher education institutions are headed by a rector, who is appointed by the Minister of Higher and Technical Education. The Minister also appoints the professors and lecturers. The rector is assisted by directorates for curriculum, research, planning, and finance.

Academic leadership is exercised by the Scientific Council (*Wissenschaftlicher Rat*), which is elected by the sections. It awards degrees; determines the university research plan, assuring cooperation among the various academic disciplines; and maintains relationships with industry.

There is also a Social Council, which consists of members elected by the university and of representatives of the economy, state agencies, and social organizations appointed by the Minister. Its function is to advise the university on needs and viewpoints of society as a whole.

Table 4.—Universities, with location, date of founding, sections, and research institutes: 1971

Name	*Location*	*Date Founded*	*Sections*	*Research Institutes*
Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University	Greifswald	1456	Economics Education Electronics Fine Arts Geography Geology History Languages Mathematics Natural Science Pharmacy Philosophy Physical Education Protestant Theology	
Friedrich-Schiller University	Jena	1558	Biology Chemistry Economic Cybernetics Education Instrument Technology Languages Law Literature and Fine Arts Marxism-Leninism Mathematics Medicine and Dentistry Philosophy and History Physical Education Physics of Instrument Construction Protestant Theology	Classical Studies and Archeology History of Medicine and Natural Science

Table 4.—Universities, with location, date of founding, sections, and research institutes: 1971 (continued)

Name	*Location*	*Date Founded*	*Sections*	*Research Institutes*
Humboldt University, formerly Friedrich-Wilhelm University	Berlin	1810	Aesthetics and Fine Arts Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine Asian Studies Biology Chemistry Criminology Economics Education Foreign Languages Geography History Horticulture Law Library and Information Science Marxism-Leninism Marxist Leninist Philosophy Mathematics Medicine Medicine and Dentistry Nutrition and Food Technology Philology and German Studies Physical Education Physics Protestant Theology Psychology Theory and Organization of Science	
Karl-Marx University, formerly the University of Leipzig	Leipzig	1409	African and Near-East Studies Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine Biosciences Chemistry Computer Technology and Data Processing Cultural Sciences and Germanic Studies Economics Education and Psychology History Journalism Languages Law	Teacher training (Basic Marxism-Leninism) International and West German Studies Institute for Foreign Students Tropical Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine Physical Education

Table 4.—Universities, with location, date of founding, sections, and research institutes: 1971 (continued)

Name	*Location*	*Date Founded*	*Sections*	*Research Institutes*
Karl-Marx University (cont.)			Marxism-Leninism Marxist and Leninist Philosophy (Scientific Socialism) Mathematics Physics Protestant Theology	
Martin-Luther University, Halle-Wittemberg	Halle	1509	Agriculture Applied Science Economics Education Fine Arts Geography History Languages Law Medicine Natural Science Pharmacy Philosophy Physical Education Theology Mathematics	
University of Rostock	Rostock	1419	Agricultural Technology Animal Husbandry Biology Chemistry Education and Psychology Electronics Engineering History Languages and Literature Latin-American Studies Marxism-Leninism Mathematics Medicine Physical Education Physics Shipbuilding Soil Conservation and Plant Production Studies Management Theology	Economics Industry Foreign Languages Computer Center

Table 4.—Universities, with location, date of founding, sections, and research institutes: 1971 (continued)

Name	*Location*	*Date Founded*	*Sections*	*Research Institutes*
Technical University	Dresden	1828	Architecture Automotive and Land Development Technology Basic Machine Engineering Chemistry Construction Engineering Data Processing Economics Education (Professional and Technical) Electrical Engineering Electronics and Precision Engineering Energy Transformation Forestry Hydraulic Engineering Industrial Economics Industry Information Technology Labor Studies Marxism-Leninism Mathematics Physics Processing Technology Production Techniques and Machine Tools Surveying and Cartography	Computer Center

TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and is carried out in a variety of institutions, depending on the level of classes to be taught.

Preschool and Lower Grades of the 10-Year School

Teachers for the preschool level and the lower grades of the 10-year school are trained in teacher-training institutes (*Institute fuer Lehrerbildung*) that are included in the general category of technical schools. Entrance requirements are completion of the 10-year school or an equivalent level obtained through vocational training or evening schools. Students take a 4-year course consisting of general subjects, Marxism-Leninism, professional study (educational history and theory, psychology, and methods), and practice teaching. The latter is distributed throughout the 4 years, increasing in weekly hours as the student progresses.

Intermediate and Upper Grades of the 10-Year School

Teachers for the intermediate and upper stages of the 10-year school are trained at universities, colleges of education (*Paedagogische Hochschulen, Paedagogische Institute*), and specialized colleges such as those of music, art, and physical education. Students generally enter these institutions with the *Abitur* and pursue a 4-year course. The course consists of general and professional studies, Marxism-Leninism, and advanced work in the subjects the students plan to teach. Each student is trained in two subjects, which are offered in standard combinations; e.g., German and history, or biology and chemistry. Upon completion of the program

students take a national examination (*Staatsexamen*), which licenses them to teach.

Extended Secondary School and Other *Abitur* Classes

Teachers for the extended secondary school and other *Abitur* classes generally are trained at universities or at the larger colleges of education (Potsdam, Erfurt, or Dresden). The course of study is similar to that for teachers of the 10-year school. Teachers generally must complete several years of successful teaching in a 10-year school and participate actively in community affairs before they are assigned to an extended secondary school.

Vocational and Technical Schools

Teachers of vocational and technical subjects complete either (1) a 4-year program of studies at a university or technical college or (2) a *Fachschule* program augmented by teacher-training courses. The former generally teach the theoretical aspects of vocational subjects, whereas the latter are usually concerned with practical training.

Teachers' Centers

Teachers' centers play an important part in inservice training and also serve as social centers for the profession. The leading one is the Berlin "House of the Teacher" (*Haus des Lehrers*), a 12-story building in a prominent location. It provides opportunities for short courses, lecture and discussion groups, and recreational and cultural activities. It houses a large, specialized education library with both an active reference and lending service. It also offers research facilities and services to foreign educators who wish to study the educational system of the GDR.

Plans for Comprehensive Teacher-Training Programs

Proposals have been made to combine all teacher training into comprehensive programs that would eliminate the different types of institutions for training teachers for specific levels. The colleges of education at Potsdam, Erfurt, and Dresden already have comprehensive programs to train all types of teachers. A target date of 1975 has been set to convert the other colleges of education into similar institutions. It is anticipated that education sections at universities will emphasize theoretical studies and research rather than teacher training when colleges of education are expanded into comprehensive institutions.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The German Pedagogical Central Institute was established in 1954 to promote the advancement of pedagogical sciences in the GDR, to influence the development of educational practices, and to train a cadre of research specialists. The institute played an important role in developing curriculums for the schools and for teacher training. An important research task has been to study and make available to GDR educators the educational experiences of the Soviet Union and other peoples' democracies.

In September 1970 the Institute was reorganized as the Academy of Educational Sciences of the GDR (*Akademie der Paedagogischen Wissenschaften der DDR*), modeled on the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the Soviet Union, to which it refers as its "sister academy." The Academy has its own offices and conference facilities. It sponsors conferences, short-term institutes, work centers, and research groups; coordinates educational research at universities and colleges of education; and organizes joint projects "covering several disciplines as well as cooperation between educational science and practice."

OTHER EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCES

The most important influences on education outside the school are youth organizations and parents' councils.

Youth Organizations

The official youth organizations of the GDR are the Free German Youth (*FDJ: Freie Deutsche Jugend*) for young people aged 14 through 26, and the Pioneer Organization "Ernst Thaelmann" (*Pionierorganisation "Ernst Thaelmann"*) for children from 6 to 14.

The organizational structure of the FDJ from the lowest to the highest level includes local groups at the factory, school, university, or small agency level; organizations at the village, city, county, or large enterprise level; and finally the Central Council and the Congress of Members.

Within the school, the major function of the FDJ is to assist teachers in developing political education. Units at the university level are expected to further the development of the socialist state and to promote Marxist-Leninist doctrine. In addition to performing a political role, the FDJ at all levels provides a variety of recreational and cultural activities through sports, clubs, and youth centers, and provides an important link between school and leisure activities.

Since the FDJ is represented on final examination boards, selection committees, and other groups whose decisions have a direct effect on the lives of young people, participation in the organization's programs is an important factor in personal and academic advancement in the GDR.

The structure of the Pioneer Organization is closely related to the schools. The "Pioneer Group" generally consists of the pioneers of a school class. At large schools the Pioneer Groups are organized into "Pioneer Friendships," the highest organizational unit. Central direction is provided by the FDJ. The purpose of the organization is similar to that of the FDJ, adjusted to the lower age level.

The School and the Family

Formal contacts between the school and the family are established when a child enters the first grade. On the Sunday preceding the beginning of the term, parents of beginning pupils bring their children to the school for a festive introduction. In the following week they return to elect a Parents' Committee (*Klassenaktiv*) for the class. The Parents' Committee for each class delegates one of its members to the Parents' Council (*Elternbeirat*), which advises the school principal on policies that affect parents' interests.

The committees and councils are expected to uphold the policies and to help fulfill the schools' programs. They are a convenient vehicle for promoting home-school cooperation.

SELECTED GLOSSARY

German	*English*
A	
Abitur	Secondary school leaving certificate
Abschlusspruefung	Final examination
Abschlusszeugnis	Leaving certificate of the 10-year school
Allgemeinbildende Schule	School of general education
B	
Berufsausbildung	Vocational education
Berufsschule	Vocational school
Berufsschullehrer	Vocational school teacher
Bezirk (pl., *Bezirke*)	Administrative District
Bildungssystem	Educational system
D	
Diplom	Diploma
Diplom-Ingenieur	Engineer with higher education diploma
Doktor	Doctorate (academic degree)
Doktor der Wissenschaften	Doctor of Science
E	
Elternbeirat	Parents' Council
Erntekindergarten	Seasonal kindergarten
Erwachsenenbildung	Adult education
Erweiterte Oberschule	Extended secondary school
F	
Facharbeiter	Skilled worker
Facharbeiterpruefung	Skilled worker examination
Facharbeiter Zeugnis	Skilled worker certificate
FDJ: Freie Deutsche Jugend	Free German Youth—the official youth organization of the GDR
G	
Gemeinde (pl., *Gemeinden*)	Community
Geschichte	History
Gesetz	Law, act
Grundschule	The lower level of the traditional German elementary school
Gymnasium	Academic secondary school
H	
Haus des Lehrers	Teacher Center
Hochschule	General term for a higher education institution; also used frequently to designate a specialized institution (engineering, etc.).
I	
Ingenieur	Engineer
Ingenieurschule	Engineering institute of less than university level
Institut (pl. *Institute*)	Institute, used to designate a research facility at a university, a specialized institution of higher education (college), or a specialized institution of less than higher education level
Institut fuer Lehrerbildung	Institution of less than college level to train teachers for lower grades
K	
Kindergarten (pl., *Kindergaerten*)	Kindergarten
Kindergaertnerin	Kindergarten teacher (feminine)

German	English
Klasse	School class or grade
Klassenaktiv	Parents' committee
Kreis (pl., *Kreise*)	County
Krippe	Nursery (literally, crib)
L	
Landkreis	Rural county
Lehrerbildung	Teacher training
M	
Ministerium fuer das Gesundheitswesen	Ministry of Health
Ministerium fuer das Hoch- und Fachschulwesen	Ministry of Higher and Technical Education
Ministerium fuer Kultur	Ministry of Culture
Ministerium fuer Volksbildung	Ministry of Education
Ministerrat	Council of Ministers, the executive body of the GDR
O	
Oberschule	Secondary school
P	
Paedagogisches Institut (pl., *Paedagogische Institute*)	College of Education
Paedagogische Hochschule	College of Education
R	
Reifepruefung	Secondary school leaving examination
Reifezeugnis	Secondary school leaving certificate—same as *Abitur*
Rektor	Head of a higher education institution
S	
Schule (pl., *Schulen*)	School
SED: Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands	Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the ruling political party of the GDR
Sektion (pl., *Sektionen*)	Section—academic divisions of universities, similar to departments, replacing the traditional faculties
Sonderschule	School of special education
Staatsexamen	State examination. (In the GDR this is national level since there are no states.)
Stadtkreis	Urban county
T	
Technische Hochschule	College of engineering (higher education level)
Teilberuf	Semi-skilled vocational level
Tropische Landwirtschaft	Tropical agriculture
U	
Universitaet	University
V	
Volkshochschule	"People's College," an institution of adult education
Volksschule	Elementary school
Volkswirt	Economist
W	
Wissenschaft	Science in the broadest sense, including all fields of knowledge
Wissenschaftlicher Rat	Scientific Council of a university, responsible for academic affairs
Z	
Zehnklassige allgemeinbildende polytechnische Oberschule	10-year general polytechnical secondary school

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