

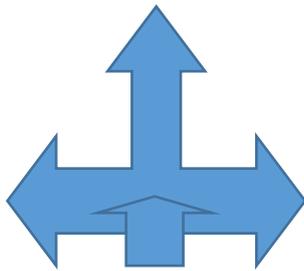


## Planning the Future with the Right Career Choice at Basel Secondary Schools in Switzerland



Dear Readers,

After two years of kindergarten and six years of primary school, the students in Basel participate in 3-year-secondary school. Secondary schools in Basel consist of 9th, 10th and 11th grades of 11 years of compulsory education. The educational objectives of eight-year primary school education are deepened and expanded at these grades of secondary schools. After finishing secondary school level, it is expected that every student will be able to find a suitable career for themselves (Erziehungsdepartement, 2023a).



Students' marks in the last two grades of primary school are decisive for participation in performance courses. Depending on these marks, students qualify for A level (general standards), E Level (advanced standards) or P level (High standards). If students aim for a more challenging performance level, there is a chance to take an optional entrance exam. Performance characteristics are permeable: if students perform very well, they can move on to a higher performance level. In case of insufficient performance, it will be vice versa. All three courses offer a

comprehensive general education and preparations for various connectivity solutions. Schools ensure that everyone gets the support they need (Erziehungsdepartement, 2023a).

In the 6th grade, two certificates are given to students and are assigned to one of the secondary school's three different curriculum (A, E, P Level) paths based on their academic performance in primary education. Although secondary school lasts three years, not all the students finish their school with the same school curriculum they started. Their curriculums can be changed according to the school performance (Erziehungsdepartement, 2023b). The aim here is to educate the children up to their academic capacity.

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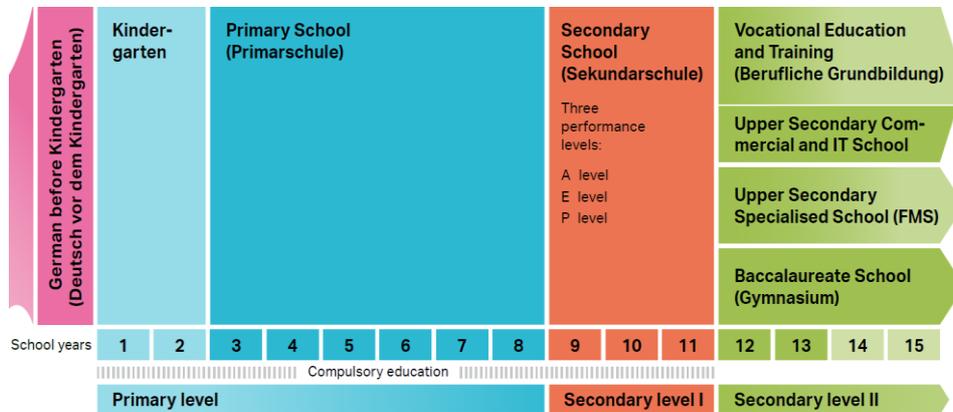


Figure 1  
The Education System in Basel (Erziehungsdepartement, 2022c)

The lesson names, curriculum objectives and weekly lesson hours change according to the level of the school. Likewise, the requirements for the subjects are different. These differences can be seen at Curriculum 21 but, in general, students take 34 lessons per week. As usual, students have to take some compulsory subjects like German, but starting from the second year, students choose four of these subjects from a list of elective lesson list. There is a two-hour selection each for artistic design, technical design, textile design, music, Latin, Italian and MINT (Mathematics/ computer science/nature/ technology) classes. Students' individual performance is assessed through certificates and learning reports, which are discussed at a field meeting in each year. At the end of the secondary school, a certificate of completion is given and this certificate also includes the results of S2 check (Erziehungsdepartement, 2023a).

Compulsory education ends with the completion of a secondary school. Career orientation plays a central role in all three performance levels. This decision is not a final decision, it is the decision whether to attend in basic vocational education or secondary education. Every choice must be made consciously. To made a decision clear, students are asked to answer some questions that will help them to define themselves. The questions are like below (Erziehungsdepartement, 2023d):

**Interests and tendencies:** *What do I like doing?*

**Skills:** *What do I find easy? What fits me?*

**Career choice:** *Which occupations are there?*

**Career:** *What can I do now and what can I learn later?*

**Basic vocational education plus further education:** *Do I want to learn a craft now?*

**Secondary school plus education:** *Do I want to attend school?*

Vocational orientation is a part of teaching in all three performance areas (A, E and P) and in special offers in secondary schools. During these years, students learn about various professions various training courses and future prospects (Erziehungsdepartement, 2023e). Career orientation is carried out on various topics according to a timeline. Second class of the secondary school is an important step because students learn how to create application files, conduct job interviews and get to know companies through trial days. From the second year onwards, all students keep a career choice agenda and if necessary they can get support from the teachers who are experts in career orientation (Erziehungsdepartement, 2023a). The special features of the school are listed below (Erziehungsdepartement, 2023f):

*A-Level (general standards)*

Students in this level receive a solid general education and they get the necessary qualifications to get a good job. They are prepared for apprenticeship or certification. A-level students can also go to high schools if they do well in school or get a vocational diploma during an apprenticeship. An A-level classroom usually consists of small number of students as the teacher can work in small groups to provide good relations.

*E-Level (advanced standards)*

E Level students receive the necessary vocational education with a challenging apprenticeship. If they are interested, they can pursue a vocational baccalaureate at these schools. With this baccalaureate, they can join applied sciences universities and attend courses at the university. If students' performances are well enough, they can also participate in other schools such as business schools, computer science schools, technical schools, or grammar schools.

*P-Level (High standards)*

A high level of independent learning ability is a prerequisite for P level curriculum. P-level graduates go through a rigorous training and apprenticeship process to qualify for this diploma. In P level, career orientation is as important as in A and E levels.

All secondary schools offer daily activities in addition to compulsory subjects. There are extracurricular events and courses and participating in these activities is optional and there is no attendance check. It is parents' responsibility to make students join these free events. Parents who want to be active in the school have many opportunities to do so. (Erziehungsdepartement, 2023g).

Sincerely,

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