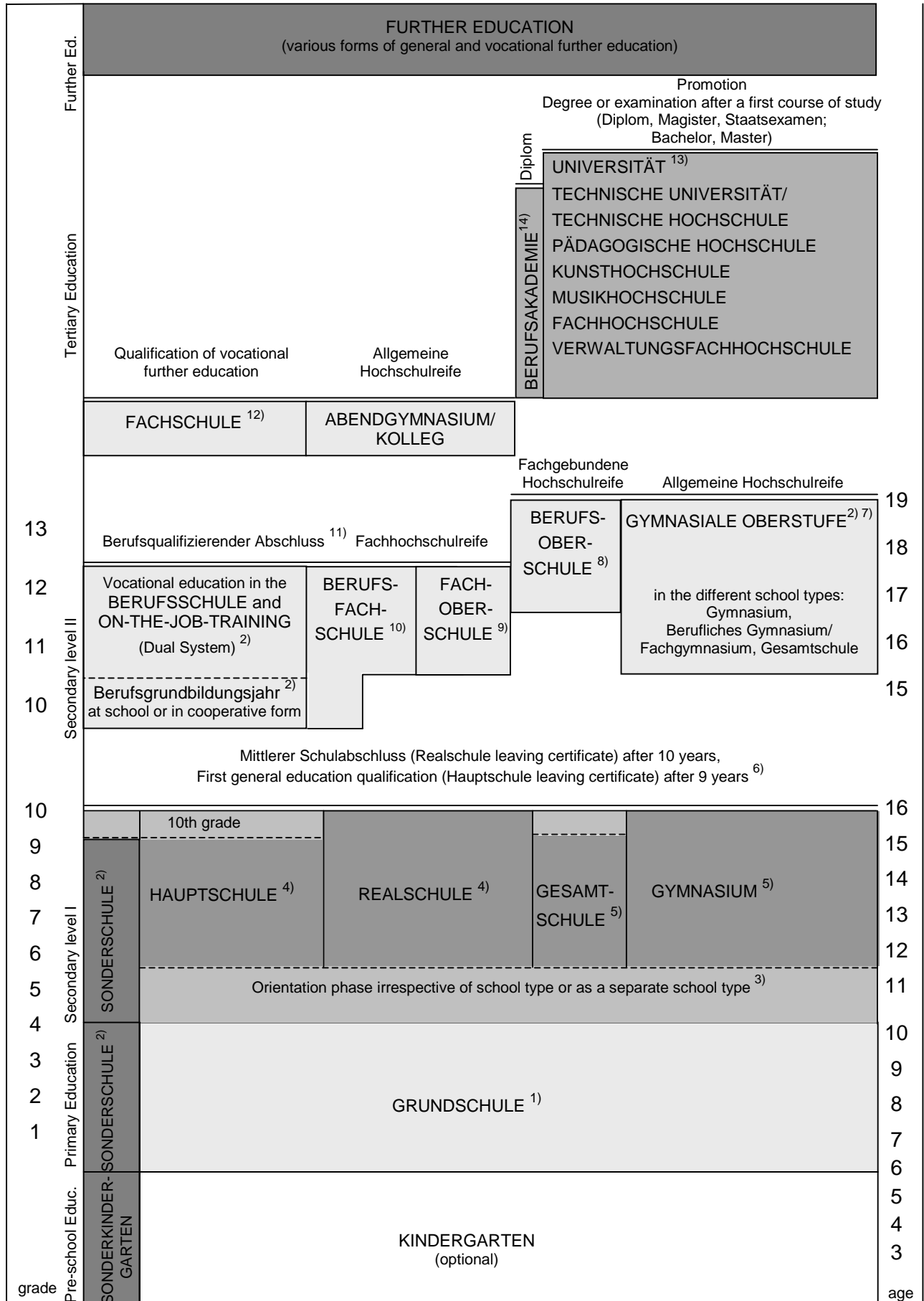


**Basic Structure of the Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany
- Diagram**

Basic Structure of the Educational System in the Federal Republic of Germany



Annotations

Diagram of the basic structure of the education system. Lower secondary education is portrayed in line with the distribution of the school population in grade 8 as per 2001 taken as a national average: *Hauptschule* 22.7%, *Realschule* 24.4%, *Gymnasium* 29.5%, *integrierte Gesamtschule* 8.9%.

The ability of pupils to transfer between school types and the recognition of school-leaving qualifications is basically guaranteed if the preconditions agreed between the Länder are fulfilled. The duration of full-time compulsory education [compulsory general education] is 9 years [10 years in five of the Länder] and the subsequent period of part-time compulsory education [compulsory vocational education] is 3 years.

- 1 In some Länder special types of transition from pre-school to primary education [*Vorklassen, Schulkindergärten*] exist. In Berlin and Brandenburg the primary school comprises 6 grades.
- 2 The disabled attend special forms of general-education and vocational school types [in some cases integrated with non-handicapped pupils] depending on the type of disability in question. Designation of schools varies according to the law of each Land.
- 3 Irrespective of school type, grades 5 and 6 constitute a phase of particular support, supervision and orientation with regard to the pupil's future educational path and its particular focuses. In some Länder, the orientation stage [*Orientierungsstufe* or *Förderstufe*] is organised as a separate organisational unit independent of the standard school types.
- 4 The *Hauptschule* and *Realschule* courses of education are also offered at schools with several courses of education, for which the names differ from one Land to another. The *Mittelschule* [Sachsen], *Regelschule* [Thüringen], *Sekundarschule* [Sachsen-Anhalt], *Erweiterte Realschule* [Saarland], *Integrierte Haupt- und Realschule* [Hamburg], *Verbundene Haupt- und Realschule* [Hessen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern] and *Regionale Schule* [Rheinland-Pfalz, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern], as well as comprehensive schools [*Gesamtschulen*] fall under this category.
- 5 The *Gymnasium* course of education is also offered at comprehensive schools [*Gesamtschule*]. In the cooperative comprehensive schools, the three courses of education [*Hauptschule, Realschule* and *Gymnasium*] are brought under one educational and organisational umbrella; these form an educational and organisational whole at the integrated *Gesamtschule*. The provision of comprehensive schools [*Gesamtschulen*] varies in accordance with the respective educational laws of the Länder.
- 6 The general education qualifications that may be obtained after grades 9 and 10 carry particular designations in some Länder. These certificates can also be obtained in evening classes.
- 7 Admission to the *Gymnasiale Oberstufe* requires a formal entrance qualification which can generally be obtained after grade 10. At present, in most Länder the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* can still be obtained after the successful completion of 13 consecutive school years. In some Länder, the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* can either be acquired after 12 years of schooling, or the conversion in successive stages to 12 years of school education is

currently under way. In other Länder, a shorter school education of 12 years up to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* is an optional offer.

- 8 The *Berufsoberschule* has so far only existed in a few Länder and offers school-leavers with the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* who have completed vocational training or five years' working experience the opportunity to obtain the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*. Pupils can obtain the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* by proving their proficiency in a second foreign language.
- 9 The *Fachoberschule* is a school type lasting two years [11th and 12th grades] which takes pupils who have completed the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and which qualifies them for higher education *Fachhochschulreife*. Pupils who have successfully completed the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and have been through initial vocational training can also enter the *Fachoberschule* directly in the 12th grade.
- 10 *Berufsfachschulen* are full-time vocational schools differing in terms of entrance requirements, duration and leaving certificates. There is a special form of the two-year *Berufsfachschule* that requires a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* for admission leading to a state-recognised examination as assistant. One or two-year courses at *Berufsfachschulen* offer basic vocational training. Under certain conditions the *Fachhochschulreife* can be acquired on completion of a course lasting a minimum of two years.
- 11 Extension courses are offered to enable pupils to acquire qualifications equivalent to the *Hauptschule* and *Realschule* leaving certificates.
- 12 *Fachschulen* cater for vocational continuing education [1-3 year duration] and as a rule require the completion of relevant vocational training in a recognised occupation and subsequent employment. In addition, the *Fachhochschulreife* can be acquired under certain conditions.
- 13 Including institutions of higher education offering courses in particular disciplines at university level [e.g. theology, philosophy, medicine, administration science, sport].
- 14 The *Berufsakademie* is a tertiary sector institution in eight Länder offering academic training at a *Studienakademie* [study institution] combined with practical in-company professional training in keeping with the principle of the dual system.

As at December 2002