

# School Reform in Baden: Edict Issued by Margrave Karl Friedrich von Baden (May 13, 1803)

## Abstract

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Educational reform and innovation, driven both by Enlightenment precepts and state interest in an age of burgeoning nationalism, figured prominently in the reform era that accompanied the Napoleonic conquest and occupation of Germany. In Baden, new territorial acquisitions and the challenges arising from the coexistence of Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists inspired the following edict, which offers a good insight into German educational structures and ideals at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

## Source

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### Thirteenth and Last Organizational Edict

May 13, 1803

Considering the variety of educational institutions and the progress that We encounter in the territories now united under Our government, and considering the addition of a university in Heidelberg, whose common benefit for our territories also demands, apart from its own practical arrangement, the precise linking of the remaining educational institutions for male youths, We deem it necessary to issue the following general order concerning the organization

*of the common and scientific educational establishments:*

I.) The lower or elementary schools are intended to convey to the urban or rural dweller knowledge of all those things that are necessary to know for his life's occupation as a Christian and a citizen of the state, without, however, carrying him off to any intellectual development that would make him miss his occupational work or render it unpalatable to him. This specific restriction necessitates a dual division of the school plan into rural elementary schools and urban elementary schools, since the latter already require extended arrangements. According to that

A.) With respect to the *rural elementary schools*, the following is the aspect toward which Our ecclesiastical commissions – and under their supervision, the public servants or ecclesiastical overseers and special representatives, inspectors, or school visitors – have to work, and to which level everything must be elevated gradually in those regions where the status of schools is still lower, as soon as the teachers needed for this purpose have received the suitable training, and the means required for potentially continuing expenditures have been located.

1.) Everywhere, *permanent schools* must be organized, i.e. the kind held throughout the entire year and definitely not only in the wintertime, since otherwise during the summer the children always forget half of what they learned in the course of the winter; [...] in this context, however, one needs to take care that in the summer, *classes* are held early enough for the older children so that a good part of the day remains during which they can help their parents with domestic work.

2.) Throughout, the children must be exhorted to attend the *school* from the beginning of their seventh year, that being the determined *school age*, until the end of the thirteenth year among girls, and of the fourteenth year among boys, [...] [This means] that even those who perhaps pass with good success in earlier years must nevertheless stay in school up to the specified age for adequate reinforcement of the

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good basis established; those, however, who have, upon reaching these years, not learned the required material, must stay there for another year and must not be exempted from this extended sitting without urgent reasons.

3.) Willful *absences from school*, i.e. those not excused by illnesses of the children or temporary urgent domestic business, e.g. harvesting, haymaking, etc. or illnesses of the parents [...] must not be tolerated by the school supervisors. They must punish the children if their willfulness is to blame or the parents if they have given cause to the children for this conduct. Punishment of the former involves moderate beating, of the latter, sentencing to minor fines, either from 12 to a maximum of 60 kreuzers to the local alms, or by imprisonment in the village hall for a duration of four to 24 hours.

4.) *School supervisors* at rural schools in all towns are the parish priest, the highest-ranking secular municipal superior, and a church elder or church censor [guardian of morals] (wherever they exist), who in this context proceed according to the order of and through the censor and moral courts if such exist, and on their own, if such do not exist, but always jointly, being answerable to Us for the good progress of the school system in each respective case.

5.) *Chief school superintendents* are, among Catholics, the school visitors decreed by Us, among Protestants Our special representatives or inspectors, who not only have to use each opportunity to obtain knowledge concerning the state of schooling but also have to visit, from time to time, according to regulations to be prepared in detail, the schools of their district.

6.) *Subjects of instruction* in these schools must be: a.) Spelling, b.) reading, c.) writing of the German language, d.) arithmetic, e.) singing, f.) Bible history, g.) materials of religious instruction, (among which we count primarily that which must be committed to memory.)

Apart from these *basic schools*, four types of '*finishing schools*' have to be added in every location. The most important one among them

7.) is *Christian instruction* or *catechism instruction*, i.e. the pastoral education toward expansion and decent use of the religious materials learned at the basic school: in this regard, the church authority of each religious denomination has available more detailed orders, and thus We will be content to mention it here for the sake of completeness.

8.) The *vocational school*. In this school, certainly the girls must be taught spinning, knitting, and sewing in special classes by female teachers to be nominated. Where the first two female occupations are so common among the parents to begin with that the children can learn them at home with their mothers, official ordering of classes can be dropped, though an annual public examination of the children, in which they give a sample of the skills acquired, must not be omitted, so that, if parents' negligence should become a habit, one could immediately intervene by arranging public schooling. [...] In places where intense farming or suchlike work does not keep boys busy throughout the year, one ought to ensure, as far as appropriate, that they, or at least the poor boys, not be easily exempted from it, that they learn some needlework appropriate to the nature of the region. This they could use to help themselves if necessary and earn some kind of livelihood, even if it came only down to knitting in the end. [...]

9.) The *Sunday school*, whose attendance one should urge those children who have left school as a rule up to their twentieth year, or if there are reasons to deviate from this, for at least another three years after leaving school. Supervised by school supervisors and, as far as possible, with special assistance by the priests, this school is charged with continued exercise in religious knowledge, in singing, in reading, particularly in reading written essays, in writing, especially independent composition of small essays suitable for use in everyday life, and finally in arithmetic. However, this should not take place to such an

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extent that they complete written work at Sunday school, but that in a particular case, they are given exercises to carry out during the week, having to bring them in the following Sunday [...]. This school shall (with the exception of the particularly busy time of the peasant) extend throughout the year and concerns both sexes.

10.) The *middle school (Realschule)*: It is intended to develop the boys' secular subjects of instruction better. All of the boys that have left school, except those living in remote parts of town or on farms or those that are very poor, thus being able to spare less time and needing less education for their future advancement, shall attend their own lessons all winter long for three years after leaving school. The aim is to advance them in knowledge agreeable and serving the common good in arithmetic, composition of essays, reading different kinds of manuscripts, also by reading aloud passages of appropriate general education books; moreover, to provide them with a few initial basics of practical geometry, where the teachers are capable of such and enthusiasts are to be found.

What, moreover, concerns

B.) the *urban schools*, it is imperative that

11.) those *in smaller rural cities*, which merely support themselves largely by agriculture and common trades, be treated on the same footing, only that one has to strive, as far as the opportunity arises to do so, to link educational arrangements toward geometric drawing and architectural drawing.

12.) In the larger cities, which mainly deal with industries and artistic works, that type of education does not suffice; moreover, the type of different school divisions cannot be applied there in the same way. On the other hand, for the most part these places already have special institutes for both sexes, which, depending on their diversity and internal organization as well as local requirements, also demand a variety of curricula. Thus, with respect to these We only deem it necessary to note the following general points: For one thing a.) school lessons here must definitely be extended as well to the geography pertaining at least to the continents and their national division on the whole, further relating to Germany and the neighboring empires specifically, similarly to general world history, at least up to the downfall of the western imperial rule, and subsequently to German imperial history until recent times, though limited to the main epochs and major events; [...] c.) in this category, it is imperative to provide completely for both categories of drawing instruction outlined, and principally also d.) for the organization of French language classes, as far as the funds suitable for this purpose permit. In this connection, e.) in the capitals, one should direct attention toward how to establish technical classes as well, which would allow the children to obtain a grounding required of them for subsequent mature reflection regarding the handling and perfection of that knowledge. Where f.) in the same city secondary schools exist, certainly the teachers of such secondary schools may take care of this further instruction required in urban middle schools but in a way not resulting in a blending of those middle-class schools with these 'study schools,' a practice which would otherwise always tend to disadvantage the studies, and which therefore must be ceased wherever it may have existed. [...]

II.) The *secondary schools or lower study institutes* are also divided into several branches, namely

[...] *Latin schools*, [...] *pedagogical schools*, [...] *grammar schools*, [...] finally the *Lycei or academic grammar schools*, [...]. Since Our territories now united include all of these different categories, We decree the following in this respect: [...]

14.) The *Lycei* are to consist of five grades and an exempted order, and both the latter order and each of the grades are designated to have a period of two years' regular stay of the pupils. The *grammar schools* must certainly feature the same organization, only that the exempted order is left out, whereas the pupils usually need to stay in the highest grade for three years. The *pedagogical schools* must advance

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their students so far that they are capable of entering the highest grade of a grammar school as a beginner, just as the *Latin schools* must advance their pupils so far that they can enter the highest grade of a pedagogical school as beginners or the second highest grade of a grammar school. Under this arrangement, certainly those students of the *Latin schools* or *pedagogical schools*, who, for instance, through particular talent on the one hand or particular industry of the teacher on the other advance so far that they are qualified to enter the grammar schools one grade higher, shall not be barred from such higher entry; however, no pupil from such lower institutions of the *secondary schools* can immediately enroll in university by bypassing the *grammar schools* or *Lycei*. Such students must instead have spent three or at least two years at a *Lyceum* or two and in the best case, one year at grammar school, having put that time to good use.

15.) The *curricula* in these institutions must definitely be designed uniformly so that in themselves, the *Lycei* in their segment of grades become increasingly similar with the grammar schools, further the pedagogical schools among themselves, and the Latin schools among themselves, and that throughout, the more restricted of these institutions connects up properly to the higher type. The consequence should be that with respect to a change of the children from one educational institution to another, which occurs not so infrequently due to a transfer of the parents, these pupils can always enter, without any learning gap or delay, another institution at their proportionate level. Therefore, the three ecclesiastical commissions have to maintain mutual agreement concerning the *curricula* to be selected and followed, immediately submitting their advisory reservations, unanimous or conflicting, to Us for final settlement. In this context, We charge the local Lutheran church council with the initiative of that mutual agreement, since that local institution already features the most substantial manifestation. [...]

17.) At *grammar schools*, the foundation of the *Greek language* and at the *Lycei* the foundation of the *Hebrew language* must necessarily be among the subjects of instruction, the former of which has to be used by anyone dedicating time to universities, the latter by the future theologians.

18.) In terms of *scientific classes*, no greater amount shall be given at the *Lycei* than general world history, natural history, logic, general grounding in metaphysics, only to the extent that it serves as application and exercise of logic, pure mathematics, grounding in applied mathematics and of physics, as well as an encyclopedic overview of the extent of the individual faculty studies; anything further must be left to academic instruction.

Now with respect to this academic instruction itself, thus

III.) The University of *Heidelberg* is declared, confirmed, and newly endowed by Us to be the *state's institute of higher learning*: to this end

19.) We have now endowed and bestowed that same institution to such an extent that the annual sum of 40,000 guilders [...] over and above all of its expenses is designated as disposable expenditures of Our general purse and shall be anchored specifically by way of insurance in the revenues of Our Palatinate. We do so since the university has only few sources of income left while having accumulated such substantial debts against these revenues due to the cessation of income from the area on the left bank of the Rhine that the remaining revenues are thereby absorbed and We deem it most expedient to use them for repayment of these debts. [...].

20.) However, since not only the state but just as much the church benefits from maintenance of the state's institute of higher learning, which applies even more so as the clergy to be educated always comprises the majority of studying youths; moreover, since the great burden on all of the state's sources of revenue does not make sole absorption of that new endowment into the public purse possible, one quarter of those annual requirements amounting to 10,000 guilders shall be drawn from those church foundations of all Our territories, which after payment of their regular costs have surpluses. This shall

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occur in such a way that the *Catholic* foundation shall contribute to this end *two fifths* amounting to 4,000 guilders annually, the *Lutheran* one another *two fifths* amounting to the same sum, and finally the *Reformed* one another *fifth* amounting to 2,000 guilders [...].

21.) The general studies of this *interdenominational school of higher learning* shall be devoted to the three Christian religious communities that enjoy civil rights in Germany to such an extent that the subject of religion shall include canon law and that within it, each chair shall be occupied *twofold*, namely by one Protestant and one Catholic; the chair in dogmatics and anything associated with it, however, *threefold*, namely by two instructors each from the Protestant denominations; in all of the remaining sections, though, We will appoint, in each case to be settled, the most worthy competent candidate for the chairs, irrespective of religious characteristics.

22.) In the *church section*, the subjects taught permanently in accordance with Protestant as well as Catholic principles shall include dogmatics, dogmatics history, and polemics, (for which are designated three chairs from the three Christian denominations), moreover theological morals, pastoral theology, homiletics and catechetics, both theoretical and practical, canon law, church history, and exegesis of the Old and New Testaments, along with the appropriate language instruction (for which *six additional* chairs are designated, half of them for Catholics and half of them for Protestants); [...]

23.) In the *section relating to constitutional law*, the subjects lectured permanently shall include German law, imperial history, constitutional law, feudal law, penal law, also constitutional and legal practice, which shall be distributed among *five* full instructors, who in addition must be prepared to give classes on everything desired by any individual enthusiasts that may be present, providing insight into the legal relations of the rulers and subjects in regard to the German Empire as a whole and to individual territories in general, or with respect to Our electorate specifically, also concerning the legal relations of the subjects between one another according to their different estates and situations.

24.) In the *medical section*, for which *six* chairs shall be available, it must be possible to learn any material related to knowledge of the healthy and diseased state both of the human and the animal body, the treatment of it on healthy and sick days, related to knowledge of the preparation and application of the remedies for internal and external use that serve to this end, and finally related to the prevention or elimination of the hindrances interfering with good health; particularly, however, the subjects that must be lectured always, though partly in proper alternation from one semester to the next, include the following: anatomy, neurology, and skeletology, the physiology of the human body, hygiene and obstetrics, internal and external medicine, the science of instruments and bandages, official natural history and pharmaceutical chemistry, and finally veterinary pharmaceuticals in its entire breadth.

25.) For the *politico-economic section*, *three to four* teachers shall be nominated, who have to divide among them the lecture on forestry, urban economics and agriculture, mining and plane surveying studies, land-based architecture and hydraulic engineering, the study of arts and trades, chemistry, and political science [...].

26.) For the *general section*, which teaches all subjects of intellectual and sensory insight according to its general variabilities, [...] *six to seven* chairs shall be maintained, among which shall be distributed the belles sciences, inquiring philosophy (that which deals with non-sensory subjects, i.e. as logic, metaphysics, natural law, morals, practical philosophy), objective philosophy (as pure and applied mathematics and study of nature), knowledge of the major empirical subjects (through statistics, history of states, cultural and commercial history, natural history, history of philosophy, geography and regional geography), to which is added as the *eighth* instructor the university astronomer to be located in Mannheim [...].

27.) In the *cultivating section*, there shall be available *four* exercise instructors for riding, fencing, dancing,

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and drawing, as well as two language instructors for English, French, and Italian. [...]

Source: *Kurfürstlich Badische Landes-Organisation. In 13. Edicten sammt Beylagen, und Anhang.* Karlsruhe: Macklot, 1803, pp. 1–8. [Separate pagination of the edicts.]; reprinted in Walter Demel and Uwe Puschner, eds., *Von der Französischen Revolution bis zum Wiener Kongreß 1789–1815.* Deutsche Geschichte in Quellen und Darstellung, ed. Rainer A. Müller, vol. 6. Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1995, pp. 349–62.

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