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EDUCATION in Switzerland is administered principally by the cantons (of which there are 25, each with its own Department of Education) and local authorities. As in England the Federal or Central Government has no power to determine the curriculum of public or private schools.

The Federal Authorities only intervene in order to establish certain standards below which education must not fall, as well as the requirements of the "Federal Maturity Examination", the school-leaving certificate which enables the entrance to universities.

Each canton enacts its own laws for the maintenance, support and administration of its public school system.

The principle of free, compulsory education is maintained throughout the country but within this framework, account is taken of regional differences and traditions, particularly at the primary school level.

Thus the school systems within the Swiss Confederation vary from canton to canton but, as in England, it is possible to detect general characteristics, particularly at secondary school and university levels.

In general, the pattern of primary education is that all children go to a common school between the ages of six or seven and 10 or 11.

Then, as in England, pupils either continue at primary

school or enter a cantonal secondary school establishment, comparable to the English grammar school.

At 16, after passing final examinations, education may be continued at the gymnasiums (senior high school) which the student leaves two or three years later after obtaining his "baccalaureat" or "Swiss Maturity Certificate".

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