



GREETINGS

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Welcome Speech at the Reception in the Residenz on November 3, 2010

"Hope and joy is the best medicine of all." This statement by Wilhelm Raabe does not however in any way imply that the clinical treatment of illnesses is of mere secondary importance: highly qualified medical specialists are of course absolutely vital!

It all however comes down to the complete personality of the patient and thereby also the psyche. The seventh HOPE Congress which commences today is being held under the motto 'The sick child – supported by a network of education and medicine'. This motto describes this holistic approach in a nutshell:

- the medical care of patients stands on an equal footing with social and intellectual needs:
- school tuition – even during serious medical crises – can hereby make an essential contribution.

This is because tuition has two very positive secondary effects: The school situation in itself brings joy – as it brings a slice of everyday life into the hospital: this psychological component should not be underestimated for the healing process!

Additionally: HOPE was not merely a random choice as the acronym for the 'Hospital Organisation of Pedagogues in Europe', the organiser of this congress which has been committed to the maintenance of educational rights for young patients for more than two decades.

Normal education despite exceptional health circumstances is – alongside medical treatment – also closely linked with hope as it opens perspectives:

- of a life beyond the confines of the hospital
- and that this will once again become reality for the affected children and young persons in the near future.

The topic of school education for sick children and young persons is therefore of major significance. This topic is at the same time so complex that results can only be achieved through cooperation between numerous participants.

- For this reason, I am pleased to see that representatives from all participating specialised areas have come together in Munich – from the fields of education, psychology and medicine.
- Speakers from all over Europe – and also from beyond – demonstrate that this is a cross-border topic.

I am certain that the conference will bring fresh impulses through the exchange of experiences, best practice and new research findings which can improve the cooperation between educational and medical care for sick children.



In my capacity as the Bavarian Minister for Cultural Affairs, I am aware of the fact that the political sector must also undertake responsibility for creating favourable framework conditions.

In Germany, we were quick to recognise the political-educational significance of schooling for sick children at an early stage and identified this area as a common concern for all 16 federal states:

- As early as 1998, the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs for the Länder of the German Federal Republic published groundbreaking recommendations for the targeted support of 'schooling for sick children'.
- The resulting cooperation between the Länder focused on improvements which would bring further benefits not only for the sick children themselves, but also for their brothers, sisters and parents.
- Cooperation is essential for the reason that the best possible medical care does not stop at federal boundaries:

On average, a quarter of all pupils attending the Bavarian schools for sick children come from other federal states. In individual cases, the pupils also include children from abroad. It is therefore a positive signal that representatives from all federal states are present today!

I am thoroughly convinced that all children and young persons have a right to the best possible education – this is a core requirement to ensure educational equality and the equality of participation! This is all the more vital in the case of a serious illness, irrespective of whether the disorder is of a psychological or physical and a chronic or acute nature.

Ill health brings dramatic changes to everyday life and puts severe restrictions on the young patients' quality of life:

- they are frequently confined for extended periods in hospital,
- separated from family and friends,
- far away from their everyday lives,
- and sometimes additionally severely burdened by their health problems.

In view of this difficult situation, schooling for sick children is of great importance:

- it can help to bring a glimmer of normal life into the daily hospital routine,
- and can guarantee that the scholastic career is not interrupted:

This schooling is oriented towards individual learning requirements and medical conditions to guarantee the right to education for all pupils.

- It aims include -

> the continuation of motivated learning despite poor health,

> the retention of educational standards

> and to ensure as far as possible that children are able to return to their home school and, if possible, even to their former class.



“Schooling for sick children” also brings relief for the parents of these children. At least one of the numerous problems encountered by affected families can be addressed and the continuing education of their child is secured.

Particularly today in times of intense discussion on the topics of inclusion and universal equal opportunities within the educational process, 'schooling for sick children' takes on a major significance. Cooperation with the child's home school also plays a significant role:

- Individual learning plans can be organised in consultation with the child's teachers.
- Vital social contacts between the sick child and its home class can also be retained.
- The school for sick children also has to undertake extensive efforts in an advisory function:
- This must focus on the conception of the entire educational framework – from treatment in hospital to the return to the home school.
- In certain cases, this can also include the provision of advice on the further school career.
- It can also encompass recommendations to compensate for educational disadvantages in cooperation with doctors, the home schools and parents.

The demand for these services has been rapidly increasing over the past few years: the number of pupils in schools for sick children in Bavaria has risen by almost 23 % since 2000. This is due to

- not only the consistent increase in pupil numbers in child and youth psychiatric units,
- but also improvements in therapeutic measures for children with serious medical problems.

We are committed through our Christian system of values to provide support for these young persons and their families in difficult situations: 'The sick child – supported by a network of education and medicine' – this is the focus of our objectives! I would like to offer my thanks to everyone who is daily committed to this formidable task:

- educationalists, doctors and medical staff,
- parents and family members
- all supporters
- and representatives from political, organisational and social associations.

Great recognition is also due to the team at the 'School for sick children in Munich' for the planning and realisation of this congress.

I would urge you all to take the opportunity this evening to strengthen the ties between medicine and education!

I wish you all highly stimulating and interesting discussions.