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# Grosse SF-Umfrage

## Englisch macht Schule

Die von der «Schweizer Familie» in Auftrag gegebene Umfrage belegt: Ein Grossteil der Schweizer Bevölkerung zieht Englisch dem Französischen vor.



**English first:** 71 Prozent der Deutschschweizer begrüssen es, wenn Primarschüler zuerst Englisch lernen. Die Romands sprechen sich diesbezüglich zwar weniger klar aus, doch immerhin 52 Prozent teilen die Meinung der Deutschschweizer.

A recent survey of 500 people from the German as well as the French speaking part of Switzerland has shown that 71 % of Swiss Germans think it is a good idea if Primary School pupils learn English in the first instance and French in second place. Only 52 % of French speaking Swiss think alike and 48 % want the French language taught first and English second.

### A meeting of cantonal education directors has failed to find a solution to one of the most divisive issues in Switzerland today:

whether English or a second national language should be taught first in school.

The conference deferred taking a decision until next June. In the intervening period the cantons will hold a national consultation on the issue. The issue has caused deep splits between those cantons which fear that giving English priority will undermine national unity, and those that see it as a crucial tool for children in the modern world.

The 26 education chiefs, who were meeting in Montreux, did agree on 18 of 19 recommendations for the overhaul of language teaching in Switzerland. These included the introduction of two foreign languages at primary school level and that a pupil should be able to use these two languages equally well at the end of obligatory schooling at 15.

But they were split down the middle on the crucial issue of which language should be introduced first. Thirteen cantons said they wanted it to be a national language and 12 – all of them German-speaking – said they wanted a free choice. One canton, Basel City, abstained.

“This result cannot form the basis for a solid recommendation,” the education chiefs said in a statement. They said the text of the two rival recommendations would be used instead as the basis for a national debate. “The cohesion of our country demands that we understand each other and presupposes a deep knowledge of more than one national language. English must not become the lingua franca of Switzerland,” the statement said. “However, a knowledge of English has become indispensable.” The education directors said they would consult the federal government, parliament and teachers’ organisations. It called on all cantons to only implement measures in this field as pilot projects. This was directed principally at canton Zurich, which pre-empted the Montreux conference by announcing it would introduce English as the first foreign language, at the expense of French, from 2003. A number of schools in Zurich have already made the change as an experiment.

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