

## **G8 and Spending a Year Abroad**

Many students take advantage of the opportunity of spending one or several years abroad during their secondary education. Such a stay can be regarded as the chance to increase the student's ability in academic subjects, improve the foreign languages skills enormously and in general broaden the student's horizon while encouraging personal development, independence and international ties. As in the German 13-year system, such a stay is naturally still possible in the 12-year system (G8). However, to ensure success for the stay abroad, there are certain things that need to be well prepared and planned in a timely manner.

The following alternatives can be taken into consideration from an academic perspective:

- If the student is planning to stay for one school year, then it should take place in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades are then to be spent at the German school in order to receive the German "Abitur".
- If the student is planning on receiving his/her diploma in North America, which is internationally recognized and permits study at a German university, then the stay should take place in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade or earlier, with a minimum stay of 2 years.
- If the student is planning on going in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade for one year only, it would mean returning to Germany to complete the German "Oberstufe" for 2 more years, after having improved his/her language capabilities and growing more mature during that year.

ssb Nottebohm assists the family in selecting the right boarding school in the United States or Canada. Concerns regarding a stay at schools of this type on the part of German schools are frequently based on false information or confusion with a public high school, where the standards are often not as high. The high academic standards at North American boarding schools and the spectrum of subjects offered are the equivalent of the level of subjects offered at a German "Gymnasium". Small classes, a close relationship between the student and teachers, who often live on campus and are involved in activities outside the classroom as well, the offer of extra help and tutoring as well as specific study times are all part of the study program at boarding schools, which also offer many more aspects in regard to forming a student's personality and character. Studying becomes part of everyday life, as it is required

for all students. Involvement in extra-curricular activities at school and participation in the school community inspire the feeling of belonging. An extraordinary selection of athletic and extra-curricular activities are offered, sparking interest in many new things and increasing the student's capabilities to work harder and give more, while also developing leadership skills and personal development. It is impossible not to increase learning skills in such an environment!

Preparing to go abroad and stay at a boarding school requires careful planning. Choosing the appropriate school plays a decisive role, and here it is vital that the student's needs as well as the requirements for the German state are met. Selecting the right courses also plays a significant role. If a student only stays one year, then it is decisive to ensure that the topics he/she is missing at the home school are covered. If the student is staying on to graduate, then special attention must be paid to the requirements enabling the possibility of studying at a European, and in particular, a German university. There should be no questions left unanswered in such cases. This not only includes careful planning, but also academic support and assistance during the stay abroad.

We will be happy to answer any further questions and provide assistance as needed. Please contact us directly by e-mail ([info@ssb-nottebohm.de](mailto:info@ssb-nottebohm.de)) or by phone 06221-9850950.