

**Treffen mit der US-Delegation zum Thema**

**Berufsbildung**

**Montag, 20.03.17, 08:30 Uhr**

**SBFI, Einsteinstrasse 2, Bern**

Governor Fallin from Oklahoma,  
Governor Bevin from Kentucky,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Bern. We are delighted that you are interested in the Swiss education system, and in particular in vocational and professional education and training. We hope to provide you with plenty food for thought.

Allow me to introduce myself briefly. My name is Bernhard Pulver, and I am the vice president of Bern's Cantonal Government. Within the government, I am responsible for educational and cultural policy. I am also the minister for education and training in Bern.

The seven government members in our canton are all elected directly by the people and so had to obtain a majority of the votes. Together, we form a collegial

governing group, where everyone has the same rights: The president has no special power to tell us what to do. We are elected for a four-year term. I was elected for the first time in 2006, and have been the minister for education and training ever since then.

I would like to say a few words on the role of the cantons: Switzerland – like the United States – is a federalist state. The cantons are the member states of Switzerland. They are actual states, and together they form the Swiss Confederation. The cantons have many responsibilities and powers,

- As far as security is concerned, they are in charge of the police; there is no federal police force,
- in almost all areas of education, they run schools and higher education institutions,
- they have their own court systems,
- they are in charge of cultural policy,
- they have extensive jurisdiction in tax matters.

However, the Confederation has full or shared responsibility in many areas. Overall, this creates a complex network of powers. The basic principle of the Federal Constitution is clear: whatever is not defined

as a responsibility of the Confederation is the responsibility of the cantons. Furthermore, any amendments to the Constitution require the approval of a majority of the people and of the cantons in a popular vote.

Here are two more points that may well be of interest to you.

We are very proud of our education system.

- In our country, around 20% of young people go to a college prep school (referred to as a baccalaureate school in Switzerland), and then on to university or to a teacher training college. This percentage is lower than in other countries. That is why our higher education institutions are of high quality. Around half of our universities rank among the 200 best in the world.
- We may not have that many university graduates, but our vocational and professional education and training is excellent. The training we offer is unique in that trainees generally spend most of their time doing a real job and only one to two days a week in a classroom. When they begin their traineeship they already

have a contract with an employer and they are immediately integrated into the work process. In addition to learning practical skills, they also become familiar with the company ethos. I believe this is the key to success of our vocational and professional education and training. This also means that the companies themselves provide the bulk of the training, and not the state.

However, the federal state sets the rules for most of the important elements of vocational and professional education and training. But this is not a top-down approach, since professional organisations define the educational content, which is subsequently adopted by the federal government. The cantons organise the classroom instruction part of the training. We may not be able to cover the entire topic, but you will hear more about this today.

I hope you have a great time here in Switzerland, and will be happy to answer your questions.