The Fido Concept

Fido Campus is to be a primary school in Munich where every child learns at their own pace and which writes, tries out and improves its own learning material. It does not exist yet. This paper says what we are setting out to do, why, and what about it is uncertain. As of November 2026.

Six times eight

In September 2026 a child in our arithmetic course had solved some two thousand times-table problems, nearly all correctly. Faced with 6 × 8, the child still looked at it like a problem never seen before. The course had kept the child busy, and the child had learned little from it. The teacher who works with the children told us, and two days later the course had been rebuilt. The story does not flatter us. We tell it because it shows what we want to build: a school that notices when practice is not turning into skill, and then changes the material.

We are a small founding team in Munich, parents building the school they would gladly send their own children to. The school is called Fido Campus; the approach and the learning platform behind it are called Fido Learning. Fido Campus is to start in 2028, 2029 at the latest: as a private all-day primary school, following the Bavarian LehrplanPLUS curriculum and approved by the state, an *Ersatzschule* in German law. For now all of this is a plan, and where the pages that follow use the present tense for simplicity, the future is meant.

Five decisions define this school. It writes its own material, because a textbook changes only every few years and a good idea otherwise stays in the classroom where it arose. Every child learns the basics at their own pace until they are secure, so that none waits and none builds on gaps. Software keeps the books on exercises, mistakes and repetition, so that the adults have time for the children. Learning takes three forms, practice, the workshop and free time, because nobody learns to ride a bike or to be honest the way they learn the times tables. And what the school develops belongs to everyone: the platform and the curriculum will be open source.

What is known and what is done

Every teacher knows after the first week that children learn at different speeds. Anyone who has ever learned vocabulary knows that you forget what you do not revisit. Learning research has measured both for decades, and reform schools have known for just as long that children grow through real tasks. Little of this has so far reached the ordinary classroom. The school system says so itself: in 2022 the scientific commission of the Kultusministerkonferenz, the conference of the state education ministers, recommended that primary schools check every child's progress several times a year and practise the basics regularly. The teachers are not the reason. The reason is how school is set up.

First, no human being can keep in their head, for a whole class, which child ought to practise which topic when, and revisit it when. So everyone practises the same thing on the same day, and one child is bored while another cannot keep up. Second, the school system as a whole learns slowly. A textbook is revised every few years. What a good teacher discovers in her class on a Tuesday stays, as a rule, in that class. And every teacher puts together their material largely alone.

Both can be changed today. Software can do the bookkeeping, and with artificial intelligence, AI for short, a single school can build for itself what until recently took a publisher and a software company: its own material and its own software. We want our children to have something of it, and not fifteen years from now.

A school that writes its own material

Fido Campus will be a lab school. The word sounds like guinea pigs, and the opposite is meant: what is tried out and improved is the material, not the child. The school develops its learning material and its learning platform itself, uses both in its own lessons and sees where children get stuck. Whatever snags gets changed, within the same school year. The whole staff, later several schools, works on one shared stock of material, and a second qualified person checks every change before a child gets to see it.

Does that take founding a school? We have found no other way. We are glad to be guests at existing schools, and our first pilot runs at one. But a guest can improve their own course and nothing else, neither the curriculum nor the day the course sits in. Only a school that holds its curriculum, its software and its day in its own hands can follow an observation back to its cause and then build the improvement in as well.

Ten years ago a single school could not have paid for this. Today AI helps the team write, check and program. The software that steers the practice is not a chatbot: it chooses exercises from a stock that people have checked and released, and it

invents nothing itself. For everything a child gets to see, a human being is answerable in the end. The children's data stay in the EU and flow into no commercial product.

Read more: Article 7 · How We Build the School · Article 10 · A New School

What the school is for

A school should prepare children for a life that goes well and that they direct themselves. A person needs four things for that. They must understand how the world works. They must be able to get something done in it. They must set goals of their own and pursue them. And they need something to put all of that towards. We call these four capacities understanding, efficacy, self-determination and meaning.

For the school, two goals of different kinds follow. The floor is binding for every child: reading, writing, arithmetic, clear thinking, organizing oneself, working reliably with others, and a broad general education. It covers the LehrplanPLUS in full, and the way to the Gymnasium, the academic secondary school, stays open. What lies above it we call the height. It has no upper limit, and the child has a say in it. A child who wants to learn calculus at ten learns calculus. A child who would rather build, perform or start a small business gets time and support for it.

Read more: Article 1 · What School Is For

Three ways of learning

You learn the times tables differently from riding a bike, and both differently from honesty. A timetable makes no such distinction: every subject gets its lesson, and every lesson looks much the same. With every topic we ask first what kind of knowledge it is, and how it is learned follows from that. That gives us three forms, and each has its place in the day.

Practice

What has to be secure is practiced until it is: facts such as the times tables, procedures such as written arithmetic. What the child should be able to do is fixed; how long it takes is left open. A child moves on only once a topic is secure, and research calls this mastery learning. Afterwards the topic comes back over weeks and months so that it is not lost; this is called spaced repetition. Both are well researched, and yet at hardly any German school are they the core of the morning, precisely because someone would have to keep the books for every child. With us, learning software takes that on.

It does not make for a morning at the screen. The children move between a lesson in a small group, work with books and hands-on material, and short blocks at the software. The software sets exercises and keeps the books; the explaining is done by people. Practice happens in the morning, when children are most awake. There is no homework.

The workshop

What you are meant to understand and to judge, you do not learn by repetition. You only have a concept once you have done something with it. In the workshop an adult works with a small group on experiments, on art and craft, on conversations about history and ethics, and on projects of their own that leave something to show at the end. A workshop is not a lecture in a small room: the instruction is short, the doing long.

Free time

Some things nobody can teach you. A child learns to set out to do something and to see it through only by doing so. In free time the child decides what to do, and the school provides room, material and time. Attitudes such as honesty are on no timetable either; they grow at shared meals and in the chores of the house. So with us free time is a form of learning and not a break from it.

The day and the adults

The day puts the three forms in order. The morning is for practice. The afternoon belongs to the workshops and to free time and stays screen-free. It is the second half of the school day, not after-school care tacked on to the lessons: the same adults are there as in the morning.

At Fido the teachers are called learning guides (Lernbegleiter:innen). Because the software takes the choice of exercises, the correcting and the repetition schedule off their hands, they have time left for what only people can do: explain, listen, encourage. It makes them more important, not more dispensable: as the adults children attach to and as role models. Every child has one key adult, who stays with them for years.

No grades, more information

We give no grades. Many a school that does without grades thereby also tells children and parents less; we want the

opposite. Every child sees every day what they can already do and what they are working on next. The parents see it in the learning journal, which the child keeps, and in the progress meeting. There it is also on the table where the child stands measured against the LehrplanPLUS, that is, where they would stand at a state school. No single test decides whether a learning stage has been reached; it shows in several sources that are independent of one another, among them the data of the learning software, the judgment of the learning guide and a piece of work the child has made.

Doing without grades has a price: without grades we cannot issue the transfer report (Übertrittszeugnis). A child who moves to a state Gymnasium or Realschule after year four goes into trial lessons there, as children from Montessori schools do. We tell every family this before admission, and year four prepares for it.

Children and families

Whether school years go well depends at least as much on the other children as on the curriculum. We watch most for the child who has no friend. Mixed-age groups widen the circle in which that child can find one. Smallness alone is no protection against bullying; that has to be built. Bullying lives off its audience, so we start with those who look on.

For families, daily life should get easier with the school. The school day covers a working day, and the evening belongs to the family. What parents need to know comes from one person, the child's key adult, who gets in touch when something is up, and not only at parents' evening.

Read more: Article 4 · A Day at Fido · Article 5 · Living Together · Article 6 · How We Recognise Progress

The curriculum, ordered differently

The Bavarian LehrplanPLUS stays fully intact with us; we only order it differently. A timetable sorts the material by subject and school year. We sort it first by the kind of knowledge, because that decides in which of the three forms a topic is learned, and then by stages. A stage is a package of skills, not a school year, and it is complete when everything in it is secure: for one child after months, for another after years.

The whole curriculum exists as a knowledge graph, a network of topics in which each knows its prerequisites. That is why the learning software can meet a child where they stand. Every topic also names the place in the LehrplanPLUS that it covers, so that for every child it can be shown what of the Bavarian curriculum is already secure. You can look at this today in the curriculum explorer (explore.fidolearning.com), including the stages that are still empty.

Read more: Article 2 · Seven Kinds of Knowledge and the Curriculum Map

What is evidenced and what is not

The parts of this school are evidenced to different degrees. Mastery learning stands best: in over a hundred comparison studies, from the upper primary grades to university, students learned what they practiced clearly better with it, the weaker ones most clearly. On general tests that ask about other things the advantage stays small. So we promise secure skill in the practiced material and no more. Spaced repetition is very well evidenced in the lab, less well studied in class.

Workshops, mixed-age groups and the prepared environment are established practice; they are not evidenced by studies. We take them over from schools that have worked this way for decades, Montessori schools above all. So we have little to invent, and that takes away part of the venture's risk. What is new is that one school puts these parts together and sticks to it. That is where the difficulty lies: doing many known things well at the same time. So we do not take everything on at once, and whether the parts work together as we hope, we are testing step by step in pilots.

The tired Tuesday

The biggest open question is motivation. Learning software helps the child who keeps going. But how every child keeps going, even on a tired Tuesday and with a topic they do not like, is unsolved. That is where we work hardest.

We start with what children bring anyway: curiosity, enthusiasm, the wish to be able to do something and to decide for themselves, to be known, to belong and to be seen. A school can create conditions under which these drives kick in for schoolwork too. The first is the warmth of the adults. Then come progress the child can see, responsibility that means something, and a daily trade: a child who concentrates while practicing earns extra free time.

At the start, small rewards from outside help too. We know the objection: reward children for work, and you may take away their own drive. So only necessary practice that does not yet run by itself is rewarded, and never something a child likes doing anyway. Over the school years we phase the rewards out. Whether that succeeds, we measure. How much well-designed motivation matters we learned from the Alpha School in Texas. There are no leaderboards with us: every child learns at their own pace, and that pace is nobody else's business.

Read more: Article 3 · What Drives Children · Article 8 · Where the Ideas Come From

What the city gets out of it

Fido Campus will be a private school that charges fees and selects its children. Such a school benefits its own children first, and what it gives back to the city and the school system it has to show.

First, the selection. Fees by income and free places are what the German constitution demands of every private school; that is the condition, not a merit. Admission goes to those who fit the school, and with us that means something specific: our model requires that a child learns to sustain the concentrated work of the morning. There is no entrance test, and we do not advertise as a school for the gifted. Children with special educational needs are welcome when their support is secured. Even so, we will not be a cross-section of Munich.

So the school has to give back more than its selection costs. The learning platform, the curriculum and the methods will be open source, the mistakes from the pilots included. State school, another new school or a family at the kitchen table: anyone may take what we develop and need not ask us. The material gets better with every school that joins, and people only want to work on what belongs to everyone. What works at the lab school should help children at state schools too. And every year we give a public account of what the school has cost and what has flowed back.

Read more: Article 10 · A New School · Article 9 · Fido Alongside Other Schools

Where we stand

We are at the beginning, and the plans are at an early stage. In November 2026 it looks like this. The learning platform is running: the learning software, a view for the learning guides and the knowledge graph, which maps the LehrplanPLUS topic by topic.

A pilot has been running at a small independent school since August 2026, at first with a handful of children and our arithmetic course; that is where the story of 6 × 8 comes from. In November a second block begins with about 40 children and a history course whose texts one of that school's founders writes himself. This does not prove that children learn better with Fido. What it has shown is that the loop of observing and improving works.

For the approval, the pedagogical concept exists in a first complete version; the other documents are drafts. The conversation with the Regierung von Oberbayern, the district government that decides, is still to come. So far Fido is a private undertaking. The school will be run by a non-profit company (gGmbH) that has not yet been founded. We have no premises. And what we lack most is first-hand primary-school teaching expertise.

A ladder of pilot steps leads to the school of our own, from small groups through whole classes to a group of our own. Before each step we write down what it is meant to show, and we climb to the next rung only when the previous one has shown it. We file the complete application in 2027. The first class is to start in 2028, otherwise in 2029; which year holds we decide by mid-2027 at the latest. In 2029 our eldest child starts school too. A Gymnasium is to follow when the first children finish year four.

What it could fail on

Five hurdles can hold the school up. We name them so that you know what you are getting into.

- The first is the approval. The German constitution permits a private primary school only if the authority recognises a special pedagogical interest, and the hurdle is high on purpose. Our argument: as far as we know, no primary school in Munich yet combines individual learning paths with continuously evidenced progress and openly developed material. We seek the conversation with the authority before we file the application.
- The second is the people. We need teachers and educators who want to shape this day and who give up the security of a civil-service post for it. We are looking for them already, at first as advisers in the pilot.
- The third is the effect. Whether children learn better and more gladly with us is not evidenced. The pilots are there to test it, and we also publish what does not work.
- The fourth is the money. For the build-up and the first years we need funding, for instance from foundations; first conversations are under way.
- The fifth is the demand. A new school needs families who trust it before it exists. So we are talking to them already, and their objections go into the concept.

Read more: Article 11 · The Pilot at an Existing School · Article 12 · Where We Stand

What you can do

Nobody builds a school alone.

- If you have children and can imagine a school like this for them, talk to us: about a pilot, a holiday course or the first class. Your doubts help us too.
- If you teach: we are looking for a teacher with primary-school experience who accompanies us as a coach and says openly where the model misses reality.
- If you work in politics or administration, what helps us is advice on the approval route, a contact at the right office, a pointer to premises in Munich and a school that dares a pilot. And we would like your view on where the open material could be of use to state schools.
- If you want to work with us: we are looking for subject experts who check or write learning material, developers for the platform and people with experience from other schools.

Please pass this paper on. For every question it only touches, there is an interactive article of 10 to 20 minutes at fidolearning.com. Questions and objections reach us when you reply to our email.

As of November 2026 · Fido Campus, Munich · fidolearning.com · The one-page summary is on the website too.