

Transforming Education into a Driving Force for Ho Chi Minh City to Enter the “Era of National Ascent”

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ABSTRACT

The “era of national ascent” represents a major policy of the Party, the State, and the people. This policy aims to achieve a prosperous population, a strong nation, and a socialist society comparable to global powers. Ho Chi Minh City serves as the largest economic, political, cultural, and educational center in the country. The City must establish an advanced, modern, and integrated educational system to fulfill its pioneering role in this “era of national ascent.” This system should position the City as a high-quality educational hub for both the nation and the Asian region. This paper defines the conceptual framework of educational integration, analyzes empirical development indicators, and addresses core challenges including resource constraints and regional disparities. Through strategic multi-stakeholder collaboration, these efforts will transform education into a driving force to propel the City into the future era of ascent.

Keywords: *Education, Educational Metrics. Era of National Ascent, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.*

INTRODUCTION

Vietnam will enter the “era of national ascent” starting from 2025. This transition aims for a prosperous population, a strong nation, and a socialist society on par with global powers. Ho Chi Minh City remains one of the largest economic, cultural, and educational centers in the country. Therefore, the development of the City to align with the national era of ascent is an urgent task for the local Party Committee, government, and people. In this process, education plays a vital role in creating the momentum for the City’s advancement. What are the City’s educational goals for 2045? Which solutions will transform education into a driving force for the City’s successful entry into the “era of national ascent”? This paper seeks to analyze these specific questions by anchoring aspirational mandates within empirical educational data and establishing rigorous operational criteria for a modernized school model.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The “era of national ascent” constitutes a major policy of the Party to transform Vietnam into a prosperous nation. Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) plays a crucial role in this process as a vital political and cultural center. The City serves as the economic engine for both the region and the entire country. Furthermore, HCMC acts as a pioneering locality in entering this new era. Education remains a fundamental factor in creating the necessary momentum for the City’s advancement. This article employs methods of synthesis, statistics, and policy analysis to examine the educational development strategies of the Party, the State, and the City. Moving beyond macro-level policy descriptions, this study integrates empirical data from recent city mandates to establish verifiable targets, ensuring that the qualitative solutions proposed directly address the infrastructure, pedagogical, and fiscal challenges confronting the city’s school network.

RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1. Ho Chi Minh City and the “Era of National Ascent”

According to General Secretary To Lam, Vietnam possesses the necessary prerequisites to enter the era of national ascent. This era is defined as “a period of development and prosperity under the leadership of the Communist Party.” It focuses on the successful construction of a socialist Vietnam with a wealthy population and a strong, democratic, fair, and civilized society. Such progress will allow the nation to stand alongside global powers (To Lam, October 31, 2024). The General Secretary also emphasized Vietnam's core strategic goals for 2030 and 2045. By 2030, Vietnam aims to become a developing country with modern industry and upper-middle income. By 2045, the nation aspires to become a developed socialist country with high income. This vision requires the promotion of national spirit, self-reliance, confidence, and national pride. It also necessitates the close integration of national strength with contemporary global trends (To Lam, October 31, 2024). Therefore, the primary task of the Party, the government, and the people is to unify and leverage national strength for global and regional prosperity.

Currently, HCMC stands as the largest economic and financial hub in the country. The City serves as a catalyst for Vietnam's development and international integration. General Secretary To Lam affirmed HCMC's status as a particularly important strategic area. It functions as a specialized urban center for politics, economy, culture, science, and technology. The City acts as a gateway for international exchange and an economic locomotive for the Southeast region and the Southern Key Economic Zone (Hong Nga, Ka Mi, December 26, 2024). HCMC possesses significant advantages, including a population of over 10 million and an area of more than 2,095 km^2 . Its economic and social diversity reflects the social relations of the entire country. Consequently, the selection of HCMC for pilot policies ensures national representation. These pilot programs provide a basis for adjusting policies on a national scale (Do Duc Hien, Pham Thi Hau, March 13, 2023). Recently, HCMC has implemented various innovative models in finance, banking, and infrastructure investment. The City has also made significant progress in administrative reform and urban government models. These achievements enable HCMC to maintain its leading role in the era of national ascent. Mr. Phan Van Mai, Chairman of the HCMC People's Committee, stated that the City must lead the national efforts in this new era. This represents a profound mission and responsibility for Ho Chi Minh City (Ha Khanh, Nha Anh, December 31, 2024). Thus, the City plays a pioneering role in the “era of national ascent.” The local Party Committee and government must continue to promote Party traditions and ensure a strong, transparent political system. Strong and comprehensive innovation is essential to successfully implement this major Party policy (Pham Phuong Thao, February 3, 2025).

3.2. Educational Development Policies of Ho Chi Minh City

Human beings serve as the key and deciding factor in the process of entering the new national era. The transition into this era requires “individuals of the new era.” The 13th National Party Congress explicitly defined educational goals for the coming period. These goals focus on developing comprehensive Vietnamese individuals with health, capacity, and high responsibility toward themselves, their families, and society. Education must emphasize ethics, personality, creativity, and core values. It specifically highlights patriotism, national pride, and the aspiration for a prosperous and happy nation (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). The new era requires a workforce with sufficient moral qualities, capacities, and skills for international integration. Therefore, enhancing the role of education to improve human resource quality and civil intellectual standards is an urgent requirement for the City's advancement.

The Resolution of the 11th HCMC Party Congress (October 2020) set specific educational objectives. The City aims to train high-quality human resources at international standards in priority fields. It seeks to maintain its role as the national center for education and training. The City plans to perfect its educational system toward smart education, open learning, and a learning society. Furthermore, HCMC focuses on developing “advanced and modern school models” following integration trends. Educational efforts aim to cultivate patriotic citizens with ethics, discipline, and social responsibility. Students should possess social skills, professional skills, foreign language proficiency, information technology expertise, and creative thinking (HCMC Party Committee, 2020). An advanced educational system is not merely defined by modern technical infrastructure but by a systemic shift

from rote knowledge acquisition to the holistic cultivation of human competencies. It represents a model where learning environments are personalized, continuous, and universally accessible through open learning frameworks. These core tasks address the need for improved public knowledge and educational quality to meet integration requirements.

Additionally, the Politburo issued Resolution No. 31-NQ/TW on December 30, 2022, regarding HCMC's development orientation to 2030 and 2045. A primary task is for the City to maintain its position as a major center for economy, culture, education, and technology. HCMC must drive the development of the Southeast region and the Southern Key Economic Zone. The City aspires to become a global competitor and a hub for innovation in Southeast Asia and Asia (Politburo, 2022). To achieve this, the City's education sector must adopt suitable development policies. Such policies will transform education into a foundation for integration and growth. HCMC must clearly demonstrate its status as the nation enters the era of ascent.

On January 16, 2024, the HCMC People's Committee issued Decision No. 192/QD-UBND regarding the City's Education Development Strategy. A key goal is the training of high-quality human resources with international competencies. The City intends to become a training center for high-quality labor for the ASEAN region and produce global citizens (HCMC People's Committee, 2022). Within the context of HCMC, "integration" implies the alignment of local educational benchmarks with regional and global standards. This translates into two functional targets:

Asian-Level Standards (by 2030): Synchronizing secondary and higher education curricula with leading ASEAN frameworks, prioritizing bilingual proficiency, cross-border institutional accreditation, and digital literacy.

World-Class Status (by 2045): Attaining global competitiveness in high-tech training sectors, nurturing global citizens capable of navigating international labor markets, and leading regional research innovation.

This strategy aims to place the City's education at the forefront of the country and the ASEAN region. It also seeks to catch up with advanced global levels and achieve superior competitiveness in specific training fields.

Human capital serves as the ultimate deciding factor in entering the nation's new era, necessitating "people of the new era." The Resolution of the 11th HCMC Party Congress (October 2020) and the Politburo's Resolution No. 31-NQ/TW set forth explicit benchmarks to elevate HCMC into a global competitor and an innovation hub in Southeast Asia and Asia (Politburo, 2022). On January 16, 2024, the HCMC People's Committee issued Decision No. 192/QD-UBND, approving the City's Education Development Strategy, outlining precise quantitative indicators to measure success.

To evaluate the feasibility of these mandates, the tables below detail official empirical development metrics for school infrastructure, digital transformation, and teacher qualifications across Ho Chi Minh City.

Table 1: Infrastructure and Digital Transformation Metrics by 2030

Educational Indicator Category	Target Metric (By 2030)
Public kindergartens meeting national infrastructure standards	60%
Public primary schools meeting national infrastructure standards	80%
Public lower secondary schools meeting national infrastructure standards	70%
Public upper secondary schools meeting national infrastructure standards	50%
Schools fully implementing the "Smart School" model	100%
Comprehensive digital transformation (Integration with municipal/national databases)	100% of educational data integrated

Table 2: Teacher Qualification Benchmarks

Teacher Cohort by Educational Level	Mandated Professional Qualification Target
Kindergarten Teachers	100% holding a minimum of a College Degree in Pedagogy
Primary & Lower Secondary Teachers	100% holding a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree
Upper Secondary Teachers	40% holding a Master's Degree or higher

The existing foundation for these ambitious targets rests upon the city's vast intellectual capital. HCMC was among the first localities to achieve universalized education across all tiers and is home to approximately 1.6 million intellectuals, including 18,000 professors, associate professors, doctors, and leading specialists concentrated across 109 universities and 78 research institutes, accounting for over 20% of the nation's scientific intelligentsia (Ngoc Tan, December 22, 2024).

Thus, educational development is a central task for the City's Party Committee, government, and people. In the era of national ascent, education plays a vital role in creating “new era individuals.” These individuals must possess the necessary qualifications, ethics, and skills for socialist construction. Effective solutions are required to transform the City's education into a future driving force.

3.3. Solutions to Transform Education into a Driving Force for the “Era of National Ascent”

The Party and State consider education and training a top national priority. Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh emphasized the fundamental role of education in human development. Education determines social movement and ensures the success of high-quality human resource development (Ngo Huyen, August 19, 2024). The City possesses significant advantages for enhancing educational quality. HCMC is among the first localities to complete universal education at all levels, from preschool to high school. Notably, the City hosts approximately 1.6 million intellectuals. This group includes 18,000 professors, associate professors, doctors, and leading experts. The City's intellectual force concentrates in 109 universities, 371 science and technology organizations, and 78 research institutes. This force accounts for over 20% of the nation's scientific intellectuals (Ngoc Tan, December 22, 2024). These conditions enable the City to lead in educational innovation. The “era of national ascent” requires HCMC to leverage its achievements and overcome existing limitations. The following solutions are recommended:

First, the City should effectively implement “specific mechanisms” in education to improve quality. These mechanisms aim to transform HCMC into a modern service-industrial city and a leader in the digital economy. The City aspires to a prominent position in Southeast Asia regarding finance, culture, and science (Politburo, 2022). The State has issued several important resolutions, such as Resolution No. 54/2017/QH14 and Resolution No. 98/2023/QH15, to provide HCMC with specific development policies. These resolutions create a legal corridor for advanced and integrated educational policies. HCMC must pioneer digital and green transformations and the knowledge economy. The Politburo requires the City to focus on international-standard human resources adaptable to innovation (Politburo, 2022). The City must mobilize all resources, including facilities and personnel, to ensure sustainable national development.

Second, educational institutions must strictly follow the Education Development Strategy to 2030 and 2045. HCMC aims for Asian-level educational standards by 2030 and world-class standards by 2045 (HCMC People's Committee, 2024). This objective represents a significant responsibility for the education sector. School leaders need to research and implement these strategic contents across their units. Institutions should communicate City plans to every staff member and teacher. This approach will foster consensus and collective effort toward common educational goals.

Third, the City and its educational institutions must develop specific plans to enhance training quality. The primary focus remains on international-standard human resources and global citizenship. Educational processes must shift from mere knowledge acquisition to the comprehensive development of student capacities. Training

should emphasize ethics, discipline, and digital technology skills (HCMC People's Committee, 2024). Consequently, managers and teachers must update their knowledge in foreign languages and information technology. High-quality training requires a highly qualified teaching staff. City leaders and institutions must prioritize professional training and skill enhancement for educators.

Fourth, the City needs policies to attract and leverage the role of intellectuals, especially high-quality intellectuals, in education. Intellectuals are the deciding factor for the success of educational innovation. Therefore, attracting high-quality human resources to the City's education sector is essential. The City's Party Committee and government must establish policies to attract talents and highly skilled professionals to public service units. These efforts aim to build a professional, ethical, dedicated, and creative workforce with innovative thinking and strategic vision (HCMC People's Committee, 2024). Educational institutions should focus on solutions to improve training quality. This includes investing in human resources to meet labor market demands and reach international standards in priority fields (Politburo, 2022). Schools serve as the primary units in training high-quality human resources for Vietnam's integration. Consequently, schools must communicate the goals of educational innovation to all staff, teachers, and learners. This contribution will enhance training quality to meet social requirements.

Fifth, the City should apply specific mechanisms to effectively mobilize resources for educational development. According to the Education Development Strategy, the goal for 2030 is to ensure that a high percentage of public schools meet national standards for facilities. This includes 60% of preschools, 80% of primary schools, 70% of lower secondary schools, and 50% of upper secondary schools. Additionally, 100% of schools in the City strive to follow the smart school model (HCMC People's Committee, 2024). To fulfill its role as a “locomotive” in the era of ascent, the City aims for total digital transformation. The target includes 100% of educational data connecting to City and national databases. All learners will access modern digital learning spaces. Furthermore, all educational institutions will implement technological solutions for teaching and management. Every learner and teacher will have the necessary conditions to effectively access the 2018 General Education Program and online learning activities (HCMC People's Committee, 2024). These are vital indicators for the City's education to lead the country. To ensure these goals, the City must build facility development strategies aligned with socio-economic trends. Educational institutions must review facilities and plan for repairs. They should also mobilize legal revenue sources to strengthen infrastructure for the 2018 General Education Program. The government must prioritize resources for facilities, equipment, and internet infrastructure for schools and community learning centers. Utilizing technological platforms will provide diverse learning tools. Training sessions on effective and safe internet information exploitation are also necessary (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). These efforts will transform the City's education into an advanced, modern, and integrated hub for Asia.

Sixth, attention must be paid to teacher recruitment and salary reform to attract talent to the education sector. Recently, additional income payments for managers and teachers have produced positive results. Flexibility in budget use to promote innovation is an important measure to attract highly skilled labor to public units (HCMC People's Committee, 2022). The City aims to develop a teaching staff sufficient in quantity and qualified in expertise. Specifically, the target is for 100% of preschool teachers to have at least a college degree in pedagogy. Furthermore, 100% of primary and secondary teachers must hold at least a bachelor's degree. For upper secondary schools, 40% of teachers should possess a master's degree (HCMC People's Committee, 2024). The City needs to continue training programs to improve foreign language and information technology skills for teachers. Education leaders must coordinate with local districts and Thu Duc City to innovate recruitment. This includes building specific mechanisms for subjects that are currently difficult to recruit.

Seventh, City leaders and the education sector should focus on building a learning society with equal opportunities for all. This policy ensures that everyone, including ethnic minorities and the poor, can engage in lifelong learning (HCMC People's Committee, 2024). The City must prioritize equity in educational access for students in island communes, suburban districts, and difficult areas. This includes support for orphans, people with disabilities, and those from low-income households. Simultaneously, the City should mobilize resources from the public and businesses to ensure the educational budget. Leaders must reform the use of the state budget by increasing investment in facilities and enhancing school autonomy. Promoting socialization and encouraging

private educational models are essential to meet social demands. Educational socialization will significantly solve the problem of investment funding. The main goal is to achieve equality in state support for both public and non-public school learners. These actions will allow the City to reach Asian standards by 2030 and global standards by 2045. This progress will contribute effectively to the City's entry into the “era of national ascent”.

CONCLUSION

Ho Chi Minh City maintains a pioneering role in the process of entering the “era of national ascent.” In this context, education serves as a foundation and a driving force. It enables the City to successfully implement the policies of the Party and the State to become a national and regional center for economy, politics, culture, science, and technology. Therefore, the City and the education sector must adopt breakthrough policies to successfully execute the HCMC Education Development Strategy to 2030, with a vision to 2045. Building an advanced, modern, and integrated educational system will position the City as a high-quality educational hub for the country and Asia. Such progress will provide the necessary momentum to propel the City into the future “Era of National Ascent”.

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