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# Developing the Team of Primary School Principals in Hai Phong City to Meet the Requirements of the Two-Level Local Government Model in Vietnam

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**Abstract**---The development of the team of primary school principals in Hai Phong City is facing new challenges as the two-level local government model is being implemented. This study analyzes the current situation and proposes solutions for developing the team of principals to meet the educational management requirements in the context of administrative reform. The results indicate the need to focus on enhancing leadership and school management capacity, adapting to the new management mechanism, and developing modern management skills. The study proposes a model for developing the team of principals, including solutions for recruitment, training, professional development, and evaluation, aligned with the characteristics of the two-level local government model in Hai Phong.

**Keywords**---Development, Educational Management, Primary Schools in Hai Phong, Team of Principals, Two-Level Local Government.

## Introduction

The role of primary school principals is crucial in shaping the quality of education and the effectiveness of school management. As leaders in the education system, they play a significant part in ensuring that schools function efficiently and provide students with a solid foundation for learning. In recent years, Vietnam has undergone significant administrative reforms aimed at improving governance and public administration. One of the most notable changes is the implementation of the two-level local government model, which seeks to decentralize decision-making and empower local authorities to manage public services more effectively. This reform has brought both opportunities and challenges to various sectors, including education (Central Executive Committee, 2013; Ministry of Education and Training, 2020).

In Hai Phong City, the successful implementation of the two-level local government model requires an adaptive and capable team of school leaders who can navigate the complexities of this new administrative framework. As the local government structure evolves, school principals need to possess the necessary skills, leadership qualities, and management expertise to meet the changing demands of the education system (Sairam et al., 2017). However, the current team of primary school principals in Hai Phong faces several challenges in terms of professional development, leadership capacity, and adaptability to new governance mechanisms (Chrispeels et al., 2000).

The professional development of principals is particularly critical in ensuring that they are equipped to meet the demands of their roles in this evolving landscape (Admiraal et al., 2021). School leaders must be capable of fostering an environment of continuous improvement, aligning school management with the broader goals of educational reform. Moreover, principals must be responsive to the needs of their teachers and students, ensuring that educational practices remain effective and innovative despite the administrative changes (Ministry of Education and Training, 2019).

This paper aims to analyze the current state of the primary school principalship in Hai Phong, identify the key challenges faced by school leaders in the context of the two-level local government model, and propose strategies for developing a more effective and responsive team of school principals. By addressing these challenges, the study

seeks to contribute to the ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of education and improve educational governance in Hai Phong City. Through strategic planning, professional development, and an integrated approach to leadership, the city can cultivate a more robust team of principals capable of driving educational excellence (Huong et al., 2024; Nghia & Quang, 2024).

## Research Methodology

To assess the current situation of planning and developing the team of primary school principals in Hai Phong City in the context of implementing the two-level local government model, the study surveyed 78 participants, representing various management levels and education staff in the city. Specifically, the survey participants included: management staff, specialists from the Department of Education and Training, leaders of district education offices, as well as principals, vice principals, and teachers of primary schools.

The survey method utilized a Likert scale questionnaire ranging from 1 to 5, allowing participants to evaluate the extent and effectiveness of the planning and development of the principal team. The survey questions focused on issues related to planning and the development of the principal team, including: developing the plan, identifying implementation measures, establishing a development roadmap, and conducting periodic evaluations of this work.

The participants were asked to assess these factors from their perspective, providing information on the degree of implementation and feasibility of the plans, while also helping identify areas that require improvement in the development of the principal team in Hai Phong City. After collecting the data, the average scores for each factor were calculated and analyzed to compare the perceptions of different groups (management staff and teachers), allowing conclusions to be drawn regarding the effectiveness and areas that need improvement in the development of the principal team.

This survey methodology provides an overall view of the principal team development efforts and offers valuable information to adjust and refine the strategies and processes for developing school leadership in the context of transitioning to the two-level local government model.

## Research Results

*Current status of planning and developing the team of primary school principals in Hai Phong city to meet the requirements of the two-level local government model*

Table 1. The current status of planning and developing the team of primary school principals in Hai Phong City

Evaluation Content	Average Score (Leadership)	Average Score (Teachers)
Developing a specific plan to develop the principal team in line with the two-level local government model	3.68	3.42
Identifying implementation measures for developing the principal team in the context of administrative reform	3.15	3.38
Developing a roadmap for developing the principal team for the 2024-2030 period	3.22	3.28
Periodic evaluation of the implementation of planning and development	3.18	3.25
<b>Overall Average Score</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>3.35</b>

The survey results show that the overall average score for this work is 3.32 points (from the leadership group) and 3.35 points (from the teachers' group), corresponding to a "fairly implemented" level. This reflects that the planning and development of the principal team has received attention and initial positive results from educational management levels.

Among the issues surveyed, the topic "Developing a specific plan to develop the principal team in line with the two-level local government model" received the highest evaluation. Specifically, the leadership group rated this item with an average score of 3.68, considered "good," indicating the efforts of management levels in developing a detailed and highly feasible plan. Meanwhile, the teachers' group rated this item with an average score of 3.42, considered "fairly good," reflecting the practical perspective of the effectiveness of the plans implemented. This

difference suggests that a closer connection is needed between planning at the management level and actual implementation at the school level.

Regarding the item "Identifying implementation measures for developing the principal team in the context of administrative reform," the survey results show that the leadership group rated this item with an average score of 3.15, while teachers rated it higher at 3.38, both considered "fair." This indicates that the identification of specific implementation measures has been addressed, but further improvements and additions are necessary, particularly those suited to the new management model. Specifically, in the transition to the two-level model, the clarity of implementation measures is crucial for ensuring the feasibility and effectiveness of the team development process.

*The current status of appointments, reappointments, dismissals, and transfers of primary school principals in Hai Phong city to meet the requirements of the two-level local government model*

Table 2. The current status of appointments, reappointments, dismissals, and transfers of principals

Evaluation Content	Average Score (Leadership)	Average Score (Teachers)
Organizing the selection of principals by the two-level local government model	3.38	3.32
Defining and clarifying the selection process for principals to meet the new management requirements	3.16	3.25
Conducting evaluations of principals' competencies according to principal standards	3.28	3.35
Ensuring the reasonable rotation and transfer of principals between schools	3.05	3.18
Transparency in the appointment and dismissal process	3.12	3.22
<b>Overall Average Score</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>3.28</b>

Appointments, reappointments, dismissals, and transfers of primary school principals are crucial steps in the development of the educational management team. In Hai Phong City, the implementation of the two-level local government model has created new requirements for these processes. The survey results show an overall average score of 3.24 points (from the leadership group) and 3.28 points (from the teachers' group), both of which are considered "fairly implemented." While the results are encouraging, there is still room for improvement to better meet the demands of the new management model.

Regarding the item "Organizing the selection of principals according to the process in line with the two-level local government model," the survey results indicate that the leadership group rated this aspect with an average score of 3.38 and the teachers rated it 3.32. Both ratings fall within the "fair" range. This reflects that the process for selecting principals has been established and implemented in accordance with the requirements of the new model, although further refinement is needed. In the context of the two-level model with a leaner organizational structure, selecting the right individuals for the right roles has become even more important, requiring the selection process to be transparent, scientific, and ensure that capable candidates are chosen.

For the item "Defining and clarifying the process of selecting principals to meet the new management requirements," the leadership group rated this with an average score of 3.16 and teachers rated it 3.25, both considered "fair." This result suggests that while a clear and specific process has been developed, it has not yet gained high consensus. In practice, the shift to the two-level model requires adjustments to the criteria, evaluation processes, and selection of staff to ensure alignment with the new management model. It is essential for a broad range of stakeholders to participate in developing and implementing this process to ensure its democratic, transparent, and effective nature.

*The current status of training and development of primary school principals in Hai Phong city to meet the requirements of the two-level local government model*

Table 3. The current status of training and development of principals

Evaluation Content	Average Score (Leadership)	Average Score (Teachers)
Organizing training for principals on management skills in the two-level local government model	3.72	3.48
Creating opportunities for principals to engage in self-learning and self-development to meet new requirements	3.18	3.45
Training on modern school management knowledge	3.42	3.38
Training on the use of information technology in management	3.35	3.42
Organizing courses on leadership for change	3.28	3.32
Evaluating the effectiveness of training and development	3.15	3.25
<b>Overall Average Score</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>3.38</b>

Training and development are key activities in the development of the principal team, especially during the transition to a new administrative management model. In Hai Phong City, this work has achieved encouraging results with an overall average score of 3.36 (from the leadership group) and 3.38 (from the teachers' group), both considered "fair." This demonstrates the proper attention given by management levels to enhancing the capabilities of principals during this critical transition period.

The item "Organizing training for principals on management skills in the two-level local government model" received the highest ratings among the training and development activities. Specifically, the leadership group rated this aspect with an average score of 3.72, categorized as "good," reflecting strong investment in specialized training programs. Teachers also rated this aspect highly, with an average score of 3.48, categorized as "good," indicating the positive impact of these training courses. In practice, the city has organized many training courses on modern school management, leadership in the new context, and the application of information technology in educational management, helping principals grasp the new management requirements and methods suited to the two-level model.

Regarding the item "Creating opportunities for principals to engage in self-learning and self-development to meet new requirements," there is a discrepancy in ratings between the two groups. Teachers rated this aspect higher with an average score of 3.45, categorized as "good," while the leadership group rated it 3.18, categorized as "fair." This difference may stem from varying perspectives on the actual conditions created for self-learning and self-development. In a context of increasingly complex work and time pressures, it is crucial to create favorable conditions for principals to enhance their skills independently. This requires not only time and financial support but also fostering a lifelong learning culture among the management team.

*The current status of implementing policies, creating a development environment for the team of primary school principals in Hai Phong city to meet the requirements of the two-level local government model*

Table 4. The current status of implementing policies and creating a development environment for the team of principals

Evaluation Content	Average Score (Leadership)	Average Score (Teachers)
Creating favorable conditions for infrastructure and equipment serving management tasks in the new model	3.68	3.46
Creating a favorable environment for principals to develop management capabilities in line with the two-level organizational structure	3.22	3.42
Implementing an appropriate reward and recognition system based on	3.35	3.38

Evaluation Content	Average Score (Leadership)	Average Score (Teachers)
position and competence		
Providing career advancement opportunities	3.28	3.35
Building a professional and democratic work culture	3.38	3.45
Offering psychological support and encouragement for principals	3.32	3.40
<b>Overall Average Score</b>	<b>3.35</b>	<b>3.39</b>

Policies and working environments are critical factors that directly influence the motivation and development of the principal team. In the context of implementing the two-level local government model, refining policies and creating a conducive environment have become even more urgent. The survey results show that the overall average score for this area is 3.35 (from the leadership group) and 3.39 (from the teachers' group), both considered "fair," reflecting initial efforts in improving working conditions for the team of principals.

The highest-rated item is "Creating favorable conditions for infrastructure and equipment to serve management tasks in the new model." The leadership group rated this with an average score of 3.68, categorized as "good," indicating significant investment in infrastructure and equipment. Teachers rated this aspect 3.46, categorized as "fair," reflecting that improvements are still needed. During the transition, equipping schools with modern working tools and management information systems is essential for principals to effectively perform their roles in the new management model. The city has made progress in upgrading infrastructure, providing computers, and management software to schools. However, continued investment is necessary to meet the growing demands of educational management.

Regarding the item "Creating a favorable environment for principals to develop management capabilities in line with the two-level organizational structure," the average scores were 3.22 from the leadership group and 3.42 from the teachers, both considered "fair." Although the rating is "fair," this item scored lower than others, indicating a need for more effort in building a professional, democratic, and creative work environment. In the two-level model, with fewer intermediate management levels, principals have more autonomy but also bear greater responsibility. Therefore, creating a supportive work environment with assistance from the community and management agencies is crucial for principals to fully utilize their capabilities.

### **Measures for developing the team of primary school principals in Hai Phong city to meet the requirements of the two-level local government model**

#### *Raising awareness among management staff and teachers about the importance of developing the principal team to meet the two-level local government model*

This measure aims to raise widespread awareness among all management staff, teachers, and education staff about the crucial role of the principal team in the transition to the two-level local government model in Hai Phong City. The two-level local government model not only changes the management mechanism but also directly impacts the development and operation of educational institutions. Principals will need to perform leadership and management roles within a new decentralized power structure, where decisions and resources are coordinated from the city level down to districts and communes. Therefore, it is vital to fully recognize the importance of the principal team.

By raising awareness, management staff and teachers will better understand the need to build a team of principals with outstanding leadership and management capabilities, who can adapt and maximize effectiveness under the new governance system. Developing this team will not only improve educational quality but also create favorable conditions for achieving the city's educational goals. Therefore, it is necessary to organize workshops, training courses, and communication activities to raise awareness among all stakeholders and build consensus on the importance of developing a quality team of principals that meets the demands of the two-level local government model.

#### *Strengthening the capacity to build plans and strategies for developing the principal team for the department of education and training leadership in the context of the two-level local government model*

In the two-level local government model, planning the principal team plays an essential role, as education management will be focused at the city level. This requires education management agencies to develop leadership strategies aligned with the new model. Planning the principal team is not merely about selecting and allocating

personnel but also about creating a long-term strategy for developing leaders capable of effectively managing in the new system.

The leadership of the Hai Phong Department of Education and Training needs a deep understanding of strategic personnel planning, ensuring effective coordination between the city and district levels in the appointment, transfer, and utilization of principals. This plan should be based on scientific analysis, evaluating leadership competencies, management experience, and adaptability to the new decentralized model. These plans need to be implemented systematically and with a long-term vision to ensure the principal team meets current demands and can handle future changes. To achieve this, the leadership must master strategic personnel planning methods to develop principals who are strategic thinkers, adaptable, and capable of making sound decisions in educational management (Martins et al., 2019).

*Strengthening the organization of training and development for primary school principals to meet the principal standards in the context of the two-level local government model*

Training and development for principals are essential to ensure the team meets the requirements of the two-level local government model. This training not only helps principals acquire new knowledge but also enhances their management, leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills in the educational environment. Under the two-level model, principals need to be equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills to manage effectively from the city level down to the district and commune levels.

To effectively implement this measure, the Hai Phong Department of Education and Training should conduct surveys and a comprehensive evaluation of the current capabilities of primary school principals in the city. This will help identify strengths and weaknesses in each principal's management skills, enabling the development of tailored training and development programs. The training programs should be scientifically designed, focusing on practical and urgent issues, aimed at improving principals' abilities to manage and solve problems in school leadership and management. Additionally, the Department should organize regular professional development activities to help principals maintain and update their knowledge while reinforcing the necessary skills to meet the demands of the new management model.

*Reforming the appointment, transfer, and promotion processes for principals according to principal standards suitable for the two-level local government model*

The appointment, transfer, and promotion processes for principals are crucial for ensuring that the leadership team meets the educational management requirements under the two-level local government model. To build a strong team of principals both in terms of quantity and quality, a scientific, rational, and fair process for selecting, appointing, and transferring principals is required. Appointments should be based on the candidates' real competencies, particularly their leadership ability, strategic vision, and adaptability to the new management model (Dobre, 2015).

Reforming the appointment process will not only ensure fairness and transparency in selecting school leaders but will also help build a team of principals capable of facing the challenges of educational management. Principals should be selected not only based on professional criteria but also for their ability to make accurate, flexible, and creative management decisions, creating an effective working environment for teachers and students. The promotion and transfer of principals according to the Principal Standards will strengthen the sustainable development of the educational leadership team, helping Hai Phong's education system thrive in the future (Figueiró & Raufflet, 2015).

*Regularly organizing inspections and evaluations of principals according to the principal standards in the two-level local government model*

Inspection and evaluation of principals are vital for monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of educational leadership under the transition to the two-level local government model. Through these activities, the Department of Education and Training can assess how principals are fulfilling their duties and take timely corrective actions to improve management effectiveness. These inspections and evaluations must be conducted regularly, fairly, and objectively, based on clear, standardized criteria established by the Ministry of Education and Training.

This evaluation process not only helps the Department assess the performance of principals but also allows the principals themselves to gain insight into their competencies and areas for improvement, motivating them to enhance their management skills. This measure creates a competitive and developmental work environment, encouraging

principals to continuously learn and improve in response to the ever-growing demands of educational management under the two-level local government model (Turgunov & Akmalova, 2021).

## Conclusion

Developing the team of primary school principals in Hai Phong City to meet the requirements of the two-level local government model is a comprehensive process, involving strategic planning, quality selection, objective evaluation, reasonable promotions, scientific transfers, continuous training, and the establishment of a professional work environment for educational leadership. In the context of transitioning to the two-level local government model, this development is crucial for ensuring effective education management at the city level.

The practical research shows that the development of primary school principals in Hai Phong City is gradually moving towards professionalism, but more synchronized and comprehensive solutions are needed to meet the demands of the new management model. Based on theoretical analysis and the current situation, the article has proposed six specific measures to develop the team of primary school principals according to the Principal Standards, suitable for the educational management characteristics within the two-level local government model in Hai Phong. These measures are closely interconnected, supporting each other, and forming a cohesive system that will improve the quality of the principal team, contributing to the sustainable development of primary education in the city during the new phase.

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