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“EDUCATION AND UPBRINGING IN NEW UZBEKISTAN: THE FOUNDATION OF A THIRD RENAISSANCE”

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Abstract

This article analyzes profound changes in the general secondary education system driven by globalization and scientific progress—especially the implementation of the new subject “Pedagogy” to instill national and universal values in youth. Special attention is given to the 2022–2026 Development Strategy adopted by the President of Uzbekistan and the new Law on Education. It highlights the concept of the “Pedagogy” subject, educational standards, step-by-step competency requirements, and its role in training a well-rounded younger generation.

Keywords: New Uzbekistan, development strategy, pedagogy subject, spiritual advancement, educational reform, Third Renaissance, presidential schools, modern education, status of teachers, education concept, youth policy, ideological immunity, national values

Educational and scientific-technological advances, along with emerging climate and health threats, coupled with democratic reforms, are transforming both the material and structural foundation of secondary education. Thus, a society’s future—its cultural, moral, and intellectual potential—is determined by how advanced its education system is. Therefore, learning from global best practices and scientifically applying them has always been essential to improving education and upbringing. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle said, “A society’s fate is decided by the upbringing of its youth.” Despite being said centuries ago, this insight remains timely, underscoring humanity’s enduring need for quality education and moral formation. In the globalized world, preparing competitive specialists who meet modern demands has become a key priority for every developed nation.



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On January 28, 2022, the President of Uzbekistan issued a decree launching the 2022–2026 Development Strategy, providing a solid legal foundation for elevating all sectors of the country. The Strategy lays out seven priority directions and 100 specific goals to enhance Uzbekistan’s economic, socio-political, scientific, and spiritual spheres. Notably, the fifth direction, **“Ensuring spiritual development and elevating the sector to a new level,”** emphasizes fostering humanitarian and humanitarianist principles, transforming society through cultural enlightenment. The strategy positions schools as true centers of moral and cultural renewal, proclaiming: **“The Third Renaissance begins at the school desk.”**

Preserving and promoting Uzbekistan’s national values and spiritual heritage is identified as a key state policy. It also stresses cultivating legal culture and raising legal awareness among citizens, aligned with the nation’s rich historical legacy, cultural heritage, and spiritual values.

The world's most forward-looking countries focus on science and education to ensure prosperity and well-being. Today, Uzbekistan has over 10,000 general schools and more than 38,000 preschool institutions, serving approximately 8.7 million students and 700,000 educators.

Over the past seven years, a total of 216 trillion UZs has been invested in education, with 19.5 trillion UZs allocated to strengthen infrastructure. As a result, 6,000 schools and 3,500 kindergartens have been reconstructed or built anew, creating additional 800,000 school and 535,000 kindergarten places.

The number of private schools has grown from 27 to 500, and non-state preschools from 250 to 30,000. Fourteen Presidential schools and nine “creative” schools have been established, offering modern STEM textbooks. The evaluation system used in Presidential schools is now adopted in 500 general schools nationwide.

A new system of selecting talented youth has produced 122 medals for Uzbek students at international academic Olympiads in the 2023–2024 academic year. University enrollment from secondary education has quadrupled in the past seven years, with 310,000 students admitted in 2023–2024—almost half of whom are female.

Every achievement and discovery is rooted in the teacher’s dedication and compassion. For the first time in our history, the **Law on the Status of the Teacher**



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has been adopted and explicitly included in the Constitution. The President remarked:

“Education is the most urgent among all fields, the school is the most important, and teaching is the most noble profession... We entrust our greatest treasure—our children—to teachers.”

Comprehensive reforms are underway across all sectors, including radical changes to the education system. As stated, “**New Uzbekistan begins at the school gate.**” Current priorities include researching the history of general secondary education, innovating solutions to existing problems, and improving the quality and effectiveness of instruction to form a fully developed generation.

The new **Law on Education** is expected to open a new horizon for the field. It introduces over 200 amendments and additions—optimizing about 120 existing provisions—and establishes over 50 new directly enforceable norms. State-level governance of education now prohibits forced labor for educational staff, protecting 37,000 pedagogues’ rights. The law also allows remote and inclusive education, encourages joint faculties and training centers with foreign institutions, and supports teacher autonomy in curriculum, teaching methods, and pedagogical forms.

Broad democratic reforms and initiatives mark the beginning of a **New Awakening—the Foundation of a Third Renaissance** in Uzbekistan. Historically, as a key point on the Silk Road, this land was a cradle of ancient civilization and culture. Our rich heritage—ancient inscriptions, architectural monuments, rare manuscripts—reflects a three-thousand-year legacy of statehood.

In Central Asia, between the 9th–12th centuries, the first Renaissance blossomed, producing scholars such as Muhammad al-Khwarizmi, Ahmad Fergani, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, Avicenna, and Mahmud al-Zamakhshari, whose discoveries shaped all of humanity. Today, Uzbekistan is renewing this legacy, starting from its schools.

To recognize and foster gifted students, **Presidential schools** have been established under rigorous legal frameworks: the Muhammad al-Khwarizmi ICT-focused school, the Mirzo Ulugbek Specialized RTC, the Astronomy & Aeronautics campus, and schools named for prominent figures like Abdullah Oripov, Erkin Vohidov, Muhammad Rizo, Zulfia, Ibroriy Yusupov, and Avicenna. Specialized state schools in mathematics, chemistry, biology, and computer science have been expanded.



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Our leadership views these reforms as vital to moving “From National Revival to National Advancement.” Nonetheless, systemic challenges remain that hinder the effectiveness of moral and educational transformation.

Over the past three to four years, the President has consistently emphasized constructing a modern and thoughtful education and upbringing system, updating teaching methods, standards, textbooks, embracing foreign best practices, and rooting moral education in national traditions. In a meeting on August 23, 2019, regarding development of public education and youth moral elevation, he mandated introducing the unified **“Pedagogy”** subject starting in the 2020–2021 academic year, integrating subjects like “Ethics,” “Patriotic Feeling,” “National Independence Ideology,” “Foundations of Spirituality,” and “History of World Religions.” The Cabinet approved this via Resolution No. 1059 on December 31, 2019.

A working group—comprising educators, historians, theologians, psychologists, and experienced teachers—developed the Pedagogy concept, national standards, curricula, and began textbook creation. The subject aims to morally and physically develop youth, instill active civic competencies, and merge national and universal values from grades 1–11. It is grounded in constitutional, legislative, and international legal documents, including the UN’s Youth–2030 Strategy and key children’s rights conventions, marking a significant departure from previous frameworks.

The concept integrates international best practices (UNESCO, Japan’s Tokkatsu, Singapore’s Character & Citizenship Education, Australia’s National Values Framework, UAE’s Moral Education, and UK’s character strengths), aligned with national values. It also incorporates elective courses like Healthy Generation, Road Safety, Life Safety Basics, Health Studies, Legal Education, Environmental Education, Media Literacy, Economics, and Tax Lessons—underscoring the inseparability of moral culture from education.

When harmonized with education, moral upbringing drives economic, social, and spiritual prosperity. The ultimate goal of Pedagogy is to cultivate a modern, balanced generation—virtuous, knowledgeable, physically fit, civically engaged, able to defend viewpoints, and aligned with national and universal values. This ideology was noted by the President on December 27, 2019:



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“We will definitely build New Uzbekistan together with youth. 2020 will be a turning point in youth-oriented state policy.”

In January 2017, Presidential Decree F-4789 authorized a commission on printing and distributing books, promoting reading, and fostering literacy—setting a legal foundation for educational modernization.

Schools also play a role in building **ideological immunity**: free admissions to museums for students and parents support this goal. Globally today, “New Uzbekistan” is increasingly recognized. This **Third Renaissance** is rooted in school education.

Uzbekistan today is not the same as yesterday, nor is our nation. The fate of our children’s education and upbringing has ascended to the level of national strategy. New textbooks serve not just academic purposes but also help cultivate ideological resilience and strong moral values. They present our historic land as the home of the First and Second Renaissance luminaries—Avicenna, al-Khwarizmi, al-Biruni, Ulugbek, Navoi—and the Jadid reformers and national heroes who fought for independence. They also honor modern-day champions—Olympiad winners and athletes who raise the flag and anthem of Uzbekistan worldwide.

Including these narratives in textbooks fosters national pride and patriotism, encouraging every graduate to strive unceasingly toward great ideals.

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