Project Title: A Study of Provincial-level Implementation of Citizenship Education Policy in China

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Abstract: This project will investigate the process by which Chinese provincial educational administrators plan the implementation of central government-formulated policy guidelines on citizenship education in a societal context of educational decentralization and flexible policy implementation. Through documentary analysis and interviews with provincial educational administrators this project will examine what central guidelines advise about citizenship education, how provincial-level implementation plans are formulated, the extent to which administrators perceive discretion in implementation, and to what extent there is variation in citizenship education implementation among different provinces. The research highlights and aims to provide a deeper understanding of the question of where the limits of educational decentralization lie when the question of national social and ideological cohesion is at issue.

Objectives: To answer the following questions:
Stage 1 (January to June 2006)
- What do central government policy guidelines advise about implementing citizenship education?

Stage 2 (July 2006 to December 2007)
- What is the process by which provincial-level administrators formulate plans to implement centrally-formulated citizenship education policy guidelines and what are the products of this process?
- In what ways is there diversity in the implementation process and product among provinces?

Project Duration: 1/1/2006 to 31/12/2007

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework: (preferably in Figures)

The Communist Party of China and the State Council
Some Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving the Development of Ideology and Morals among Minors
(Stage 1)

Provincial/Municipal Education Department
(Gansu, Jiangsu, Shanghai)
(Stage 2)

City/County Education Bureaus

Schools
Research Methods & Activities:
- Documentary survey and analysis
- Interviews with Provincial Education Department administrators

Highlights of Major Findings:
At the Central policy level (Stage 1):
- Broadening of citizenship education discussions beyond patriotism
- Increasing attention to the individual
- Increasing attention to issues of legality, rights, interests, and civic consciousness

At the Provincial level of implementation (initial findings from Stage 2):
- Prescriptions for implementation
- Detailed directives and guidelines on implementation
- Descriptions of implementation

Research Outputs and Other Publications:

The project will:
- Answer scholars’ calls for more research into policy implementation issues at the provincial level and inter-provincial variation
- Expand on existing research into Chinese citizenship education
- Contribute to the body of knowledge and debate about central-local relations and policy implementation at the place where the ideological interests of the state meet with demands for autonomy of the locality.