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Tentative Dissertation Title: Transitionary Shifts in the Teaching of History: An Examination of Change and Adaptation in Two General Secondary Schools in Kazakhstan.

Research Summary

My dissertation research, presently in progress at the stage of data analysis and case study write-up after 10 months of data collection in Kazakhstan completed in August of this year, explores the terrain of educational policy and classroom practice in the subject area of history in Kazakhstan. I am investigating teachers’ responses to changes in the history program, governmental standards and instructions and new pedagogical initiatives that teachers are being asked to implement into their pedagogical practice. My dissertation will sketch changes in educational policy related to the teaching and content of history since 1986, and in addition, will present two school case studies of how history teachers and the schools within which they work have implemented the policies within the period of transition. In exploring the educational transition in Kazakhstan, I focus on the current de-russification process in the post-Soviet school reform project in Kazakhstan. Since independence in 1991, it has become clear that new emphasis has been placed on the question of Kazakh identity and the development of a national idea for the country. A crucial and powerful question that intersects with educational policy in the subject area of history is the to what extent a national idea is based within the context of a Kazakhstani dentity which takes in all citizens, or a Kazakh inspired identity that is ethnically based. History education is an excellent window from which to examine how states in transition approach the nation-building project and may also with careful analysis, reveal how educational policy works its way into the building of a new national identity for Kazakhstan.