

# Oklahoma





## QUICK FACTS ON GÜLEN CHARTER SCHOOLS

# OKLAHOMA



NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

4    

KNOWN AS

**Dove Science Academy**  
**Dove Science Elementary**  
**Dove School of Discovery Tulsa (Discovery School of Tulsa)**

TOTAL ENROLLMENT

**1,842**

CHARTER VENDOR

**Harmony Public Schools (also known as Cosmos Foundation)**

TOTAL REVENUES

**\$11,542,243**

RELATED INSTITUTIONS

 Harmony Public Schools  
Riverwalk Education Foundation

 Little Scholars of  
Arkansas/LISA Academy

 Read Foundation/Memphis  
School of Excellence

 Millennium Education  
Foundation/ Frontier Schools

 Pelican Educational Foundation/  
Kenilworth Science

 Albuquerque School of Excellence  
Harmony DC Public Schools/Harmony

### KEY PEOPLE



Zeynep Gunay



Halil Tas



Elvan Ceyhan



Ali Yavuz  
Zeybek

### FINANCIAL ISSUES



Audit findings reveal that the Sky Foundation made a **\$175,000 payment to Harmony Public Schools to sponsor a science fair competition that was not attended by any Dove Science Academy students.** The audit stated that the payment was "not a legitimate school purpose."

### REAL ESTATE

**\$1,192,442**



The audit also found that the Sky Foundation collected a total of \$1,192,442 more in lease payments from the Dove Charter Schools than was due on the lease agreements between 2012 to 2014.

### H-1B VISA APPLICATIONS

**306 H-1B**

**H-1B VISA APPLICATIONS  
2000 to 2016**

**\$3,000**

Per application

a cost of almost

**\$1 million**

Dove Science Academy and the Sky Foundation utilize the H-1B visa program to immigrate large numbers of individuals from Turkey who are affiliated with Gülen into the United States for employment in the schools.

Some Gülen schools in other states have paid for these costs using **public funds** and been required to reimburse the state.

All figures based on available data for  
2015-2016 academic year.

## Quick Facts

- ▶ Region: Greater Texas
- ▶ School Names (known as): Dove Science, Discovery School
- ▶ Total number of schools in state: 4
- ▶ Total student enrollment 2015-16: 1,842
- ▶ Charter Holder/Governing Board(s):
  - ▷ Dove Public Charter School Foundation (formerly Sky Foundation)<sup>1</sup>
    - Organized as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization
    - Oversees 4 charter schools
- ▶ Charter Management Services Vendor: Harmony Public Schools (formerly the Cosmos Foundation)<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Regional Gülen Organization Oversight Entity: Harmony Public Schools
- ▶ Regional Sister Networks: Harmony (TX); Schools of Science and Technology (TX); LISA (AR); Abramson/Kenilworth Science (LA); Frontier Schools (MO) (formerly Millenium [sic]); School of Excellence (TN); Albuquerque School of Excellence (NM) (formerly Focus Foundation); Harmony DC Public School (D.C.)
- ▶ Total Revenues for FY 2016: \$11,542,243<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Network Founders:
  - ▷ Zeynep Gunay: Founder/Director, Sky Foundation; M.S. Oklahoma State University; B.S., Ege University (Turkey).<sup>4</sup>
  - ▷ Halil Tas: Founder/Director, Sky Foundation; Superintendent, Dove Science Academy Tulsa; Area Superintendent, Harmony Public Schools; currently Professor and Chair of Department of Education, North American University (Gülen-affiliated university in TX); Ed.D., Oklahoma State University.<sup>5</sup>
  - ▷ Elvan Ceyhan: Founder/Director, Sky Foundation; M.S. Statistics, Oklahoma State University; B.S. Mathematics, Koc University (Turkey); current Visiting Associate Professor, University of Pittsburgh.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Sky Foundation became inactive in 2016 and a new governing board was registered called the Dove Public Charter School Foundation after the Oklahoma State Auditor disclosed financial improprieties by the Sky Foundation in an investigative report. See Dove Science Academy Investigative Report (Mar. 2016), Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kv3ade4> (last checked 6/13/2017); Dove Charter Public School Foundation, Oklahoma Secretary of State, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7wmjfwf> (last checked 7/15/2017).

<sup>2</sup> In 2012, the Cosmos Foundation, which did business as Harmony Public Schools, changed its name to Harmony Public Schools.

<sup>3</sup> Financial Statements and Independent Audits (June 30, 2016), Oklahoma State Auditor & Inspector, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/keou44v> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>4</sup> Sky Foundation Articles of Incorporation (Nov. 22, 1999), Oklahoma Secretary of State, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/toc3evf> (last checked 6/14/2017); Sky Foundation IRS Form 990 (2001 – 2004 & 2007 – 2009), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/z7xxxk6> (last checked 6/14/2017); Zeynep (Gunay) Unalan, List of Ph.D. recipients from Michigan State (2007-08), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mpqcvoj> (last checked 6/14/2017).

<sup>5</sup> Sky Foundation Articles of Incorporation (Nov. 22, 1999), Oklahoma Secretary of State, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/toc3evf> (last checked 6/14/2017); Sky Foundation IRS Form 990 (2001 – 2002 & 2007 – 2009), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/z7xxxk6> (last checked 6/14/2017); Parrish, Ashley, *Tulsa school superintendent finds first day frantic yet fun*, Tulsa World (18 August 2000), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/my4yshm> (last checked 6/13/2017); Martin, William. *Head of the Class*. Texas Monthly (August 2010), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mwmlcd3> (last checked 6/13/2017); Halil Tas, LinkedIn, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mbpwf7f> (last checked 6/14/2017).

<sup>6</sup> Sky Foundation Articles of Incorporation (Nov. 22, 1999), Oklahoma Secretary of State, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/toc3evf> (last checked 6/14/2017); Sky Foundation IRS Form 990 (2007 – 2009), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/z7xxxk6>

- ▷ Ali Yavuz Zeybek: Founder, Sky Foundation; Founder, Harmony Public Schools; CEO, Harmony

Science Academies (Houston and Austin, TX).<sup>7</sup>

## Overview

The Sky Foundation, the first Gülenist governing board in Oklahoma, formed in 1999.<sup>8</sup> It opened the Dove Science Academy in Tulsa in 2000, followed by the Dove Science Academy in Oklahoma City in 2001, an elementary school in Oklahoma City in 2008, and the Discovery School of Tulsa in 2009. Until 2016, the Sky Foundation, an organization “doing business as” the Dove Science Academy, operated the schools.<sup>9</sup> In 2016, the Sky Foundation became inactive and Dove Public Charter School Foundation assumed control of the Gülenist charter schools in Oklahoma.

The Dove Public Charter School Foundation, and formerly the Sky Foundation, has a close association with Harmony Public Schools (“Harmony”), the Gülen-affiliated charter

network in Texas. They share a common founder, Ali Yavuz Zeybek, and Harmony provides the Oklahoma schools with a range of management and administrative services. Harmony serves as the regional oversight entity and charter management services vendor for Gülen schools in the Greater Texas region, including Oklahoma, and Washington, D.C.

Two schools in Oklahoma City are authorized by the Oklahoma City Public Schools. Tulsa Public Schools originally authorized one school in Tulsa, but it did not renew the school’s contract due to issues with the school’s treatment of special needs students and discipline policy.<sup>10</sup> Langston University now authorizes the two Tulsa schools.

(last checked 6/14/2017); *see also* Rolland, Megan, *Charter schools’ international ties analyzed*, Tulsa World (May 1, 2011), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y88d8dtg> (last checked 6/13/2017); Elvan Ceyhan, ORCID, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8kqku6h> (last checked 6/15/2017); Elvan Ceyhan, LinkedIn, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/l7txhe7> (last checked 6/15/2017).

<sup>7</sup> Sky Foundation Articles of Incorporation (Nov. 22, 1999), Oklahoma Secretary of State, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/toc3evf> (last checked 6/14/2017); Harmony Science Academy Austin and Houston Charter Applications (Jan. 21, 2000), at p. 1, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/r9gvm2l> and <http://tinyurl.com/mhkeovf> (last checked 6/14/2017).

<sup>8</sup> Sky Foundation, Oklahoma Secretary of State, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yaawltj6> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>9</sup> Sky Foundation IRS Forms 990, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/z7xxxk6> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>10</sup> Eger, Andrea. *Board votes not to renew charter for Dove school*. Tulsa World (Oct. 27, 2009), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yd4rc8p6> (last checked 6/13/2017).

School	Operation	Student Demographic Information* 2015-2016 <sup>11</sup>	Authorizer	Governing Board
Discovery School of Tulsa 4821 S. 72nd E. Ave. Tulsa, OK 74145	K – 9 2009 - present	Enrollment: 466 18% ELL** 78% FRL 8% SWD 36% Hispanic 2% Native Am. 2% Asian/ Hawaiian/PI 27% Af. Amer. 29% White 4% Multiracial <i>**The ELL students at Discovery School of Tulsa and Dove Science Academy – Tulsa are combined to calculate the percentage of ELL students for both schools.</i>	Langston University	Dove Public Charter School Foundation (formerly the Sky Foundation)
Dove Science Academy – Tulsa 280 S. Memorial Dr. Tulsa, OK 74112	6-12 2000 - present	Enrollment: 590 18% ELL** 81% FRL 8% SWD 57.5% Hispanic 4% Native Am. 1% Asian/ Hawaiian/PI 10% Af. Amer. 21% White 6% Multiracial <i>**The number of ELL students at Discovery School of Tulsa and Dove Science Academy – Tulsa are combined to calculate the percentage of ELL students for both schools.</i>	Langston University (Tulsa Public Schools denied renewal of Dove Science in 2009)	Dove Public Charter School Foundation (formerly the Sky Foundation)
Dove Science Academy – OKC 919 NW 23rd St. Oklahoma City, OK 73106	6-12 2001 - present	Enrollment: 493 4% ELL 83% FRL 3% SWD 10% Anglo. 13% Af.Amer. 4% Asian 71% Hispanic 2% Native Amer.	Oklahoma City Public Schools	Dove Public Charter School Foundation (formerly the Sky Foundation)
Dove Science Academy Elementary 4901 N. Lincoln Blvd. Oklahoma City, OK 73105	K-5 2008 - present	Enrollment: 308 21% ELL 75% FRL 8% SWD 22% Anglo. 45% Af. Amer. 0% Asian 32% Hispanic 0% Native Amer.	Oklahoma City Public Schools	Dove Public Charter School Foundation (formerly the Sky Foundation)

\* ELL indicates English language learners; FRL indicates students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch; SWD indicates students with disabilities.

<sup>11</sup> ELL student data received from Oklahoma Department of Education via email on June 19, 2017, through open records request. Student Demographics, District Reports (2015-16), Okla. Dept. of Edu., available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycsrrp7y>

## A History of Strategic Ambiguity and Conflicting Interests

The Sky Foundation, formed in 1999, has close ties to other Gülen-connected organizations and individuals.<sup>12</sup> For example, Sharon Akdeniz served on the Sky Foundation Board. Her husband, Omer Akdeniz,<sup>13</sup> served as a spokesperson for the Tulsa chapter of the Dialogue Institute of the Southwest and the Raindrop Turkish House, organizations affiliated with the Gülen movement.<sup>14</sup> Halil Tas, a founder of the Dove schools, worked for Harmony Public Schools, a large Gülenist charter network in Texas that also serves as the regional oversight entity for the Greater Texas region. He is currently Chair of the Education Department Chair at North American University in Houston, a Gülen-affiliated university.<sup>15</sup> Birol Ozturk, a former president of the Sky Foundation Board, later became secretary of the governing board of the Syracuse Academy of Science Charter School in New York,<sup>16</sup> a Gülen-affiliated charter school.

The Sky Foundation opened Dove Science Academy – Tulsa (“DSA Tulsa”) in 2000, the Dove Science Academy – Oklahoma City (“DSA

– OKC”) in 2001. The Sky Foundation did not expand further for several years but eventually opened two new schools in 2008 and 2009. At that time, the Sky Foundation first opened Dove Science Academy Elementary (“DSA – Elementary”) and then the Discovery School of Tulsa (“Discovery School”). The Sky Foundation filed for matching trade names for all these schools: Dove Science Academy, Discovery School of Tulsa, and Dove Science Academy – Elementary.<sup>17</sup> The Sky Foundation also attempted to open the Dove School of Excellence Arkansas in 2009, although the attempt failed.<sup>18</sup>

In 2016, the Sky Foundation became inactive after a critical audit conducted by the Oklahoma State Auditor raised concerns about financial improprieties and exploitative real estate dealings on the part of the Sky Foundation.<sup>19</sup> Dove Public Charter School Foundation (“Dove Foundation”) formed in January 2016 to serve as a new parent organization for the Oklahoma charter schools.<sup>20</sup> There appears to be little difference between the two organizations as the schools’

(Discovery Schools of Tulsa, Okc Charter: Dove Science Acad, Okc Charter: Dove Science ES) (last checked 6/13/2017); Free and reduced-price lunch (FRL), Low Income Reports (2015 for Dove Science Academy – Oklahoma City and Elementary; 2016 for Discovery School of Tulsa and Dove Science Academy – Tulsa), Okla. Dept. of Edu., available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ms45ma4> (last checked 6/13/2017); School Site Totals with Ethnicity and Gender (2015-16), Okla. Dept. of Edu., available at <http://tinyurl.com/yc4ntuuv> (last checked 6/13/2017); FY 2016 Child Count/District Profiles/Determinations, Special Education Data and Reporting Part B, Okla. Dept. of Edu., available at <http://tinyurl.com/y8ekxf7v> (last checked 6/15/2017).

<sup>12</sup> Sky Foundation IRS Forms 990, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/z7xxxk6> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>13</sup> Sherman, Bill. *Tulsa Couple undertake pilgrimage to Mecca*, Tulsa World (Dec. 12, 2009), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/le89f8k> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>14</sup> Sherman, Bill. *Tulsa Couple undertake pilgrimage to Mecca*, Tulsa World (Dec. 12, 2009), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/le89f8k> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>15</sup> Martin, William. *Head of the Class*. Texas Monthly (Aug. 2010), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mwmlcd3> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>16</sup> Sky Foundation IRS Forms 990 (2006), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/z7xxxk6> (last checked 6/13/2017); Syracuse Academy IRS Form 990 (2010), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybopm98s> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>17</sup> Dove Science Academy Investigative Report (Mar. 2016), Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kv3ade4> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>18</sup> Minutes (Nov. 9-10, 2009), State Board of Education, Arkansas Department of Education, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/n2nvb23> (last checked 7/19/2017); Brett Bennett, *State Board Denies Request for Dove School*, Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette (Nov. 10, 2009), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/nxdmnm0> (last checked 6/15/2017).

<sup>19</sup> Dove Science Academy Investigative Report (Mar. 2016), Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kv3ade4> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>20</sup> Financial Statement (June 30, 2016), Dove Science Elementary, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ya4sdcxs> (last checked 6/13/2017).



web sites describe the Dove Foundation and Sky Foundation nearly identically. The school web sites state that they are “run” by the new Dove Foundation, although DSA – Tulsa’s website states it is still run by the Sky Foundation.<sup>21</sup> The schools’ websites even describe both the Dove Foundation and Sky Foundation as “established in Stillwater, Oklahoma in 1999,” even though the Dove Foundation was not created until 2016.<sup>22</sup> Dove Schools, Inc., a second organization created in 2016, states its purpose is “operation of a nonprofit charter school in Oklahoma.”<sup>23</sup> It possesses two trade names: “Discovery School of Tulsa” and “Dove School of Discovery Tulsa.”<sup>24</sup>

The two new organizations have two board members in common. One of these individuals previously served on the Sky Foundation Board and as vice principal at one of the Dove schools.<sup>25</sup> Because of the overlapping corporate names, trade names, and school names, it is unclear how these two new organizations will work together to operate the Dove schools. The shifting names and corporate entities also presumably helped the schools and entities mitigate any negative coverage associated with the negative state audit.

Oklahoma City Public Schools, authorizer of the Dove Science Academies in OKC, has stepped up its oversight following release of the state audit. It requires the transfer of all assets associated with Dove schools to the new Dove Public Charter School Foundation; an attempted

renegotiation of the rent agreements that were the subject of the state audit; and creation of a separate bank account for state funds spent at Dove schools.<sup>26</sup>

The Oklahoma schools pay Harmony an annual fee to provide a range of management and administrative services through a long-term, on-going support services agreement. There is no evidence to show that this agreement was competitively bid or that other organizations had an opportunity to apply for the contract. Harmony’s services allegedly include: school start-up, facility management, financial consulting, professional leadership, technology and database support, student admissions, marketing and employee recruiting, curriculum and assessment, student development, external and science fair organizations, and academic and non-academic performance services.

Beginning in 2010, the Oklahoma schools paid Harmony three percent of all state education funding to provide those services. Harmony changed its billing structure in 2012 or 2013 and currently bills for its services at the rate of \$80 - \$120 per hour. In addition, Harmony now charges a licensing fee for its intellectual property software, charging schools between \$15,000 - \$147,000 per year.<sup>27</sup> Harmony has similar support services agreements and licensing fees in place with seven other Gülen-affiliated charter school networks in the Greater Texas region.<sup>28</sup> The charter schools and networks, including

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., DSA - OKC, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7qhl6xz> (last checked 6/14/2017); DSA - Tulsa, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybezslkf> (last checked 7/17/2017).

<sup>22</sup> Oklahoma Secretary of State, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7wmjfwx> (last checked 6/14/2017); compare DSA – OKC (describing the Dove Foundation as “dedicated to high quality education,” “established in Stillwater, Oklahoma 1999,” and founded by “educators from distinguished universities such as the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University”), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7qhl6xz> (last checked 6/14/2017); with DSA – Tulsa (describing the Sky Foundation with identical phrases), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybezslkf> (last checked 7/17/2017).

<sup>23</sup> Articles of Incorporation, Dove Schools received through email request; Oklahoma Secretary of State, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycj4jlvk> (last checked 6/14/2017).

<sup>24</sup> Oklahoma Secretary of State, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/26zmdqe> (last checked 6/14/2017).

<sup>25</sup> Dmitriy Ognev, LinkedIn, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8edjerw> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>26</sup> See 2016 Charter School Contract for Dove Academies in OKC (June 1, 2016), Appendix B, received through 2017 open records request to Oklahoma City Public Schools.

<sup>27</sup> Official Statement, Appendix B, Harmony Public Schools Bond Issue (July 2, 2014), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybboyse6> (2014) (last checked 5/19/17).

<sup>28</sup> See Official Statements, Appendix B, Cosmos Foundation Bond Issues for 2011 and 2012, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yavbe95f> (2012), <http://tinyurl.com/ya9wo9ya> (2011), and <http://tinyurl.com/ydcvya5n> (2011); Official

the Oklahoma charter schools, do not generally disclose these payments to Harmony in public documents. For that reason, these transactions are not always transparent, and there is potentially little accountability regarding the use of the funds and Harmony's delivery of services.

The fees paid to Harmony through these agreements appear to yield significant benefits to Harmony. Based on our research, we believe that Harmony has created a steady revenue stream from public funds from Gülen charter schools in other states that can be expended without fiscal restrictions, providing funds to expand the Harmony model, which in turn increases overall student enrollment as well as its annual fees. It is difficult to identify the actual payments made by these charter schools and networks to Harmony through public documents, including the payments made by the Dove Science Academies, because the payments are not generally disclosed on public documents. These transactions are not transparent, and as a result, there is little accountability regarding how the funds are

used, whether they fulfill the stated purposes in the support services agreement, and how well the services are delivered.

In addition to the support services agreement which ties the Dove Academies to Harmony, teachers and administrative staff also move frequently among the Gülen-affiliated schools in the region, especially from Gülen charter schools in Oklahoma and Arkansas to Harmony Public Schools in Texas. Some of the individuals that have worked with multiple Gülen Organization schools are listed in this report. We believe this frequent shift of employees among the Gülen Organization schools creates a ready pool of trusted Turkish administrative staff who faithfully execute the Gülen Organization's system and model.

The findings from the 2016 state audit described below are more troubling given the close relationship that exists between Harmony Public Schools and the Sky Foundation/Dove Science schools.

## Financial Issues

The Oklahoma State Auditor released an audit of DSA – Elementary, DSA – OKC, and the Discovery School in March 2016 conducted at the request of the Oklahoma State Department of Education.<sup>29</sup> In addition to disclosure of a questionable lease agreement between the Sky Foundation and DSA – OKC, the audit discloses that the Sky Foundation paid Harmony \$175,000 to sponsor an out-of-state event that no Dove or

Discovery students attended. The Auditor found this to be “an apparent violation of both the school's charter and the Oklahoma Constitution,” and the expense was not “not a legitimate school purpose.”<sup>30</sup> This transfer of funds between two Gülen-affiliated charter school networks demonstrates how the entities inappropriately shift public funds between related organizations under the guise of legitimate expenses.

Statements, Appendix B, Harmony Public Schools Bond Issues for 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybboyse6> (2014), <http://tinyurl.com/y7on943p> (2014), <http://tinyurl.com/yddvl2lq> (2014), <http://tinyurl.com/y96ht3fg> (2015), <http://tinyurl.com/y8ajh2v8> (2016), <http://tinyurl.com/y9xs5rdd> (2016), <http://tinyurl.com/ybjw932j> (2016), <http://tinyurl.com/y8gduwl7> (2017) (last checked 5/19/17).

<sup>29</sup> Dove Science Academy Investigative Report (Mar. 2016), Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kv3ade4> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*



## Bond Financing

At the time of publication, no records of bonds issued on behalf of the Oklahoma charter schools could be found.

Oklahoma however, is included in Charter School Solutions' ("CSS") territory for the construction of charter schools. Harmony apparently created CSS in 2015 as a third-party real estate arm to purchase property, construct schools, and renovate schools in a 10-state region, including Oklahoma, where Harmony serves as the regional Gülen organization oversight entity and a charter management services vendor.<sup>31</sup> In other states, CSS issues bonds to purchase property for charter schools and then serves as the landlord for charter schools, charging inflated rents that are more than what is owed on the bonds. The schools then make rental payments to CSS using public funds. For example, CSS issued a \$44 million bond for

Harmony in April 2016<sup>32</sup> and an \$8 million bond for the Albuquerque School of Excellence in June 2016.<sup>33</sup> CSS charges these two affiliated charter networks \$750,000 per year more than the debt on the bonds, for a total of \$22.5 million over the life of the bonds. When the bonds have been repaid in full, the schools will be owned by CSS and not the charter schools. The Oklahoma State Auditor has already questioned a similar leasing arrangement between DSA - OKC and the Sky Foundation.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, Bilal Erturk, the president of the Sky Foundation at the time of CSS's creation, served on the original governing board for CSS, further demonstrating the close connection between the Sky Foundation/Dove Academies and Harmony.<sup>35</sup> In light of the Oklahoma State Auditor's finding and the Sky Foundation's connections to CSS, CSS's activities in Oklahoma should be closely monitored.

## Real Estate

The Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector's 2016 audit conducted by the Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector also found that DSA - OKC paid the Sky Foundation approximately \$3,182,000 in lease payments more than the original purchase price of its school property.<sup>36</sup> Since the Sky Foundation and the Dove schools functioned as one and the same entity, the auditor could find no legitimate purpose for charging lease payments above and beyond the purchase

price of the facility. The audit found that the Sky Foundation's only income was public funds received through lease agreements with their own schools and stated, "It appears that the schools were supporting Sky instead of Sky supporting the schools" in contradiction to their stated non-profit purpose.<sup>37</sup> The limited scope of the audit did not allow the auditor to track the ultimate recipients of the excess lease payments, but the auditor indicated some of the money

<sup>31</sup> See Corporate Documents, Charter School Solutions, Texas Secretary of State, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/7oy8w> (last checked 6/5/2017)

<sup>32</sup> Official Statement, Charter Schools Solution Bond Issue for Harmony Public Schools (Apr. 27, 2016), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9xs5rdd> (last checked 6/5/2017).

<sup>33</sup> Official Statement, Charter Schools Solution Bond Issue for Albuquerque School of Excellence (June 1, 2016), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yary29pl> (last checked 6/5/2017).

<sup>34</sup> Dove Science Academy Investigative Report (Mar. 2016), Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kv3ade4> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>35</sup> Articles of Incorporation, Charter School Solutions, Texas Secretary of State, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/mfxbjyr> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>36</sup> Dove Science Academy Investigative Report (Mar. 2016), Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kv3ade4> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>37</sup> *Id.*

may have been spent inappropriately.<sup>38</sup> Annual rents for DSA – OKC and DSA – Elementary decreased 23% between 2015 and 2016, near the time that the Oklahoma State Auditor criticized the Oklahoma charter schools' real estate transactions.<sup>39</sup>

The Sky Foundation owned the DSA – OKC property and leased the remaining three properties from outside vendors. It then subleased the three properties to the Dove and Discovery schools. The Sky Foundation received more than \$50,000 every month from the schools in excess of its lease payments to the landlords for no apparent purpose other than making profit off of its own schools. In total, the Sky Foundation collected a total of \$1,192,442 more in lease payments from the Oklahoma charter schools than the Sky Foundation owed on its leases from third parties.<sup>40</sup> The audit concluded that since the Sky Foundation and charter schools were the same legal entity, the lease agreements are a transfer of funds to themselves, essentially "a redirection of funds from the school bank accounts to the Sky Foundation's bank accounts."<sup>41</sup>

The auditors also recommended further investigation of another real estate transaction involving the Sky Foundation. In 2008, the Sky Foundation purchased a building for \$780,000 and sold it to Yuksel Alp Aslandogan, Harmony affiliate and vendor and Gülen's official spokesperson, for \$1,025,000 in 2010. The audit states that the funds used to purchase the building and the profit received in the sale of the building "should be satisfactorily accounted for."<sup>42</sup> Aslandogan sold the building to the Raindrop Foundation, a Gülenist cultural organization, four months later for only \$650,000. The difference in Aslandogan's purchase and sale prices raised questions about whether Aslandogan paid the Sky Foundation an intentionally inflated price to move money to the Sky Foundation. Aslandogan currently serves as the President of the Alliance for Shared Values in New York, an umbrella organization for several key Gülen organizations, and as the spokesperson for Fethullah Gülen. Aslandogan was also the landlord for the first Harmony school in Texas and sold the building to the school for a profit of \$2 million to himself.<sup>43</sup>

## Excessive Use of the H-1B Visa Program

Like other Gülen organization charter networks, the Oklahoma Gülen charter schools utilize the H-1B visa program to immigrate large numbers of individuals from Turkey who are affiliated with Gülen into the United States for employment in the schools. From 2000 to 2016, the Oklahoma schools filed 305 H-1B visa applications,<sup>44</sup> an extraordinarily high number for a

charter network with only 1,800 students.

While the Gülen Organization typically states that the visas are only to fill shortages for math and science teachers, these applications were filed for such positions as: law clerk, assistant principal, principals, English teachers, superintendents, Turkish and foreign language teachers,

<sup>38</sup> Randy Ellis, *State Audit questions charter schools' site lease payments*, The Oklahoman (Mar. 17, 2016), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/mlazgpf> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>39</sup> *Compare* Financial Statements (2015 – 2016), DSA – OKC and DSA – Elementary (E-005 and E-013), Oklahoma State Auditor and Investigator, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/keou44v> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>40</sup> Dove Science Academy Investigative Report (Mar. 2016), Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kv3ade4> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>41</sup> *Id.*

<sup>42</sup> *Id.*

<sup>43</sup> See the Texas state profile.

<sup>44</sup> H-1B Visa applications from MyVisaJobs are available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yd9ymqm2> (Sky Foundation) (21); <http://tinyurl.com/y7qrldp8> (Dove Science Academy-Tulsa) (22); <http://tinyurl.com/y85zfslx> (Dove Science Academy) (198); <http://tinyurl.com/ydhqcftf> (Dove Science Academy-Oklahoma City) (52); <http://tinyurl.com/ydysgp66> (Discovery School of Tulsa) (12) (last checked 7/14/2017).

budget analysts, education administrators, dean of students, accountants, social studies teachers, educational consultants, English as a second language teachers, high school counselors, secondary art teachers, and business managers.<sup>45</sup>

The Oklahoma charter schools use the same limited number of attorneys to file and process their H-1B visa applications as other known Gülen Organization charter networks, vendors, and cultural associations, indicating once again the existence of an overall network.

- ▶ Yalcin Karadag: The Oklahoma charter schools used Karadag, a Houston-based attorney, to file applications. Karadag also filed applications for:
  - ▷ Cosmos Foundation, Inc.
  - ▷ Pelican Educational Foundation
  - ▷ LISA Academy
  - ▷ Riverwalk Foundation
  - ▷ Millennium Education Foundation<sup>46</sup>
- ▶ Tina Nguyen: The Oklahoma charter schools used Nguyen, a Houston-based attorney, to file applications. Nguyen also filed applications for:
  - ▷ Pelican Educational Foundation

- ▷ Dove Science Academy
- ▷ Little Scholars of Arkansas
- ▷ Millennium Education Foundation
- ▷ Harmony Public Schools/Cosmos Foundation<sup>47</sup>

- ▶ Garrett White: The Oklahoma schools used White, a Houston-based attorney, to file numerous H-1B applications. White also filed applications for:
  - ▷ Memphis School of Excellence/ Read Foundation (TN)
  - ▷ Harmony Public Schools/ Cosmos Foundation
  - ▷ Riverwalk Education Foundation (TX)
  - ▷ Pelican Educational Foundation (LA)
  - ▷ Little Scholars of Arkansas (AR)
  - ▷ Raindrop Foundation
  - ▷ Millennium Foundation (MO)
  - ▷ Texas Gulf Foundation (TX)
  - ▷ Helix Design and Production
  - ▷ Solidarity Contracting
  - ▷ Brighten Technologies
  - ▷ Target Design and Management
  - ▷ Institute of Interfaith Dialog for World Peace
  - ▷ Nur International<sup>48</sup>

## Notable Turkish Vendors

- ▶ Harmony Public Schools ("Harmony"): The Oklahoma schools contract with Harmony for a range of management and administrative services through a support services agreement under which the schools pay \$80 - \$120 per hour. They also pay Harmony licensing fees for use of intellectual property. The Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector has questioned the payment of fees to Harmony.

In 2013 and 2014, the Sky Foundation paid Harmony a total of \$175,000 for sponsorship applications for a science fair competition. No students from the Gülenist charter schools in Oklahoma attended the competitions, and the payments did not appear to have a legitimate school purpose.<sup>49</sup>

- ▶ Atlas Texas Construction and Trading

<sup>45</sup> Jobs in Tech, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yc5vmlhj> (Sky Foundation), <http://tinyurl.com/y87gj48y> (Dove Science Academy) (last checked 6/14/2017).

<sup>46</sup> Yalcin Karadag, Jobs in Tech, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yckgzf2c> (last checked 5/20/17).

<sup>47</sup> Tina Nguyen, Jobs in Tech, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mh29kbe> (last checked 5/20/17).

<sup>48</sup> Garrett White, Jobs in Tech; available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lg5f2aq> (last checked 5/24/2017).

<sup>49</sup> Dove Science Academy Investigative Report (Mar. 2016), Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kv3ade4> (last checked 6/13/2017).



("Atlas Construction"): Atlas Construction's parent organization, Atlas Group (Turkey), lists the construction of a gymnasium at DSA – OKC as one of its projects in the United States.<sup>50</sup> Atlas Construction is a preferred vendor for Gülen schools in the Greater Texas area. It had over \$12 million in construction projects with Harmony and other projects at schools in Arkansas and Washington, D.C.<sup>51</sup> Atlas Construction has also been accused of attempting to bribe public officials in Louisiana. While Louisiana investigated one of the state's Gülenist charter schools, an employee conducting the investigation informed law enforcement authorities that Inci Akpınar, Vice President of Atlas Construction,

offered him a \$25,000 bribe to "help fix the problem" at the school.<sup>52</sup> When he responded that it would be a conflict of interest for a state official to accept money from the school, Akpınar told him that he would "only need to advise them."<sup>53</sup> Akpınar participated in a meeting with the state official and representatives of Harmony at Abramson just before she made the bribery offer.

Other vendors are not identified because minutes from the Sky Foundation Board of Directors meetings that might include Board decisions about vendor contracts are not available to the public online.

## Scandals, Investigations, & Notable Activities

As part of a 2009 investigation into DSA – Tulsa, Tulsa Public Schools identified areas of non-compliance and deficiencies regarding services to students with special needs.<sup>54</sup> These findings mirror other reports and investigations of Gülen schools in other states, including an in-depth report from the U.S. Dept. of Education's Office of Civil Rights regarding Harmony in Texas.<sup>55</sup>

In particular, Tulsa Public Schools stated that it appeared that DSA-Tulsa "plug[ged] all special needs students into one system rather than making individualized decisions." The District also cited DSA – Tulsa for failing to make individualized decisions for special education students to minimize the cost of special education staff,

stating, "Given the small number of special education staff members at Dove, the documentation also suggests that this service delivery method is being overused so that Dove stays within caseload requirements with existing special education personnel rather than having to take on additional staff to serve its special needs students through a continuum of services."

Other concerns listed in the letter regarding Dove's services to students with disabilities included:

- Failure to meet federal Individualized Education Plan (IEP) review timelines;

<sup>50</sup> See Projects, Atlas Group, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yc3ns92z> (last checked 6/15/2017).

<sup>51</sup> See the Arkansas and D.C. profiles.

<sup>52</sup> Vanacore, Andrew. *Abramson charter group's ties to Gülen movement come to surface*. New Orleans Time-Picayune (22 July 2017), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/3l2cnxs> (last checked 5/25/17).

<sup>53</sup> *Id.*

<sup>54</sup> Letter from Rosenstein, Fist, Ringold law firm dated June 9, 2009 received through open records request; Memo to the Tulsa Board of Education from Chairman of the Charter School Committee received through open records request.

<sup>55</sup> *U.S. Education Department Reaches Agreement with Texas' Harmony Public Schools to Ensure Equal Access for English Language Learner Students and Students with Disabilities*, U.S. Dept. of Education (Nov. 26, 2014), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/k3ent6w> (last checked 7/15/2017); see also Consolidated Monitoring Reports, New Jersey Dept. of Education, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/mn7tdyx> (Bergen Arts and Science Charter School) (Mar. 31, 2016), <https://tinyurl.com/myypsku> (Passaic Arts and Science) (May 20, 2015), <https://tinyurl.com/mkudfut> (Paterson Science and Technology) (Apr. 2015) (last checked 5/20/2017).

- ▶ Inability to locate IEPs for 46% of students supposedly receiving special education services;
- ▶ Errors in the content of IEPs;
- ▶ Failure to re-evaluate student within the required deadlines; and
- ▶ Insufficient staff to meet the needs of special education students.

Tulsa Public Schools also investigated DSA – Tulsa in 2009 for problems related to the school’s discipline policy following the rape of an eleven-year-old female by an older student.<sup>56</sup> Tulsa Public Schools’ letter denying DSA – Tulsa’s renewal application stated that the school’s disciplinary policies did not comply with state law

and contained many deficiencies.<sup>57</sup> Because Harmony purportedly provides DSA – Tulsa with administrative and management services, the deficiencies discovered in DSA – Tulsa’s disciplinary policies raises concerns about the quality of Harmony’s services.

Similar issues with disciplinary policies and procedures arose in Louisiana. There, one school lacked clear policies and procedures and did not adhere to the existing policies to ensure the health and safety of students. In Louisiana, the Abramson Science and Technology Charter School closed in 2011 following an in-depth investigation by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education that uncovered misconduct by the administration and multiple incidents that threatened the health, safety and welfare of the students.<sup>58</sup>

## Gülenist Cultural and Business Organizations Active in Oklahoma

- ▶ Raindrop Foundation: Raindrop Foundation is a Houston-based organization that sponsors Raindrop Turkish Houses in Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and New Mexico.<sup>59</sup> There are two Raindrop Turkish houses in Oklahoma: Oklahoma City and Tulsa.<sup>60</sup> The Raindrop Foundation promotes Turkish culture through language and cooking classes, festivals and local

events with special guests. It also sponsors annual “dialogue” trips to Turkey for community members and leaders.<sup>61</sup> In Oklahoma City, the Raindrop Turkish House purchased its building from Yuksel Alp Aslandogan, a prominent leader of the Gülen movement, for a price much lower than what he paid to purchase it from the Sky Foundation. The Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector questioned this transaction and recommended further

<sup>56</sup> Eger, Andrea, *Board votes not to renew charter for Dove school*; Tulsa World (Oct. 27, 2009), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yd4rc8p6> (last checked 6/13/2017). Marshall, Nicole, *Teen Charged in Rape of 11-year-old*; Tulsa World (Dec. 18, 2008), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9dourj5> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>57</sup> Problems with the discipline policy at DSA – Tulsa is included in a memorandum from the Chair of the Charter School Committee dated October 26, 2009, to the Board of Education. Memo received through a 2017 open records request to Tulsa Public Schools.

<sup>58</sup> Recommendation to revoke charter from Acting State Superintendent made to BESE on August 3, 2011. Document received from the Louisiana Dept. of Education through 2017 open records request; Vanacore, Andrew, *Abramson Charter in eastern New Orleans shut down amid TP investigation into startling misconduct*, New Orleans Times-Picayune (July 15, 2011), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y99fzhj8> (last checked 5/1/2017).

<sup>59</sup> About Raindrop Turkish House, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mbf9jd6> (last checked 6/6/2017).

<sup>60</sup> Raindrop Turkish House, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yaqn2g7b> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>61</sup> About Raindrop Turkish House, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mbf9jd6> (last checked 6/6/2017).

investigation.<sup>62</sup> The Raindrop Foundation was involved in trips to Turkey for former Governor Brad Henry and former Attorney General Drew Edmondson.<sup>63</sup>

- The Dialogue Institute of the Southwest: The Houston-based Dialogue Institute of the Southwest hosts forums, conferences, dinners, and cultural exchange “dialogue” trips to Turkey.<sup>64</sup> The Dialogue Institute has branches in both Oklahoma City and Tulsa, and operates in Texas, Kansas, Mississippi, Arkansas and New Mexico.<sup>65</sup> The Dialogue Institute is a member organization of the Alliance for Shared Values, the umbrella organization for six Gülenist groups around the United States.<sup>66</sup>
- Turquoise Council for Americans and Eurasians (“TCAE”): The Raindrop

Foundation is a member of TCAE,<sup>67</sup> which is in turn a member of the Turkic American Alliance.<sup>68</sup> TCAE is active in Texas and neighboring states. It hosts awards dinners, forums on various topics, and other community and cultural events, and sponsors trips to Turkey and other countries and for local elected officials and leaders.<sup>69</sup> TCAE helped organize a trip for ten members of Congress in 2013 to Baku, Azerbaijan. The Office of Congressional Ethics later investigated the trip when it learned that SOCAR, the state-owned oil company of Azerbaijan, secretly paid for the trip.<sup>70</sup> At the time of the trip, Kemal Oksuz, a founder of a Harmony construction vendor named Target Design and Management (“TDM Construction”), served as TCAE’s director.<sup>71</sup> TDM Construction has received over \$55 million in contracts from Harmony.<sup>72</sup>

## Friends of Gülen Spotlight

Numerous Oklahoma elected officials have taken trips to Turkey or Azerbaijan sponsored by Gülen-affiliated organizations.

U.S. Representative Jim Bridenstine participated in a ten-member Congressional trip in 2013 to Baku, Azerbaijan, organized by TCAE. The Office of Congressional Ethics investigated

the trip when it learned SOCAR, the state-owned oil company of Azerbaijan, secretly paid for the trip.<sup>73</sup> The members of Congress did not know that SOCAR funded the trip and sought pre-trip approval from the House Ethics Committee. In the year before the trip, “SOCAR and several large energy companies sought exemptions for a \$28 billion natural gas pipeline project in

<sup>62</sup> Dove Science Academy Investigative Report (Mar. 2016), Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kv3ade4> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>63</sup> ‘Friend of a friend’ landed Bridenstine in ethics probe over free trip, The Oklahoman (Nov. 18, 2015), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/n2ar7ag> (last checked 5/20/2017); Raindrop Turkish House Welcomes Attorney General Drew Edmondson, Raindrop Foundation (Nov. 19, 2008), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/n2dc3jn> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>64</sup> Dialogue Institute of the Southwest, Alliance for Shared Values, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybg3psok> (last checked 6/6/2017).

<sup>65</sup> Branches, Dialogue Institute of the Southwest, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycldegejx> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>66</sup> Members, Alliance for Shared Values, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybg3psok> (last checked 6/6/2017).

<sup>67</sup> Component Members, TCAE, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8axv2ok> (available at 7/15/2017).

<sup>68</sup> Turkic American Alliance Members, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycy89wv2> (last checked 6/18/17).

<sup>69</sup> TCAE About Us, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yannxyqc> (last checked 6/18/17).

<sup>70</sup> Scott Higham, Steven Rich & Alice Crites, *10 members of Congress took trip secretly funded by foreign government*, Washington Post (May 13, 2015), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7pegxo9> (last checked 5/29/2017).

<sup>71</sup> TDM Construction, Texas Secretary of State; available at: <http://tinyurl.com/r7iw> (last checked 2016).

<sup>72</sup> Harmony IRS Form 990s (2009 – 2014), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/hu9wqcl> (last checked 6/15/17).

<sup>73</sup> Scott Higham, Steven Rich & Alice Crites, *10 members of Congress took trip secretly funded by foreign government*, Washington Post (May 13, 2015), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7pegxo9> (last checked 5/29/17).



the Caspian Sea from U.S. economic sanctions being imposed on Iran.”<sup>74</sup>

Shortly after returning from the conference, U.S. Rep. Bridenstine sponsored legislation to require the Department of Defense to report on the strategic importance of natural gas interests near the Caspian Sea and the value of building a pipeline out of the region.<sup>75</sup> U.S. Rep. Bridenstine also reportedly accepted \$25,000 in campaign contributions at events organized by Kemal Oksuz, the Chairman of TCAE.<sup>76</sup> Oksuz was also affiliated with Target Design and Management, a Houston-based construction company that had over \$51 million in contracts between 2009

– 2014 from Harmony Public Schools, the Gülen-affiliated charter network in Texas.<sup>77</sup>

- ▶ Other elected officials who participated in expense paid trips to Turkey include<sup>78</sup>:
- ▶ Former Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry;
- ▶ Former U.S. Representative John Sullivan;
- ▶ Former Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson; and
- ▶ Phil Cotten, Norman Chief of Police (2006).

## Gülen Connections: Individuals Caught in the Gülen Organization Web

It is common for the Gülen Organization charter networks within a region to shuffle their Turkish H-1B visa teachers from school to school, as well as between regions. This is just a small number of individuals with these overlapping ties throughout the region, which further demonstrates the region’s interconnections. Notably, this shuffling only occurs with Turkish employees.

- ▶ Zekeriya Yuksel: Superintendent,

Harmony (TX); former Executive Director, DSA – Tulsa.<sup>79</sup>

- ▶ Kaan Camuz: Chief Communications and Outreach Officer/Director of External Relations, Harmony (TX); former Superintendent, Dove charter schools.<sup>80</sup>
- ▶ Birol Furat: Principal, DSA - Tulsa; Principal, LISA Academy (AR).<sup>81</sup>

<sup>74</sup> *Id.*

<sup>75</sup> Choma, Russ, *Lawmakers who traveled to Azerbaijan urged action benefiting state oil company that funded trip*, Open Secrets (May 26, 2015), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lun344a> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>76</sup> *Id.*; see also *Friend of a friend’ landed Bridenstine in ethics probe over free trip*, The Oklahoman (Nov. 18, 2015), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/n2ar7ag> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>77</sup>

<sup>78</sup> *Friend of a friend’ landed Bridenstine in ethics probe over free trip*, The Oklahoman (Nov. 18, 2015), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/n2ar7ag> (last checked 5/20/2017); *Raindrop Turkish House Welcomes Attorney General Drew Edmondson*, Raindrop Foundation (Nov. 19, 2008), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/n2dc3jn> (last checked 5/20/2017); Brianna Bailey, *Police Chief talks Turkey at Interfaith Dinner*, The Norman Transcript (Oct. 6, 2006), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lmr9ugy> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>79</sup> Zekeriya Yuksel, LinkedIn, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/mn9ablv> (last checked 5/20/2017); Sara Plummer, *Dove Faces challenges as charter school*, Tulsa World (Dec. 28, 2015), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/n84kjwl> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>80</sup> Kaan Camuz; LinkedIn, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kbe2svl> (last checked 5/20/2017); see also Megan Rolland, *Schools’ backers say Islamic ties pose no threat*, The Oklahoman (May 1, 2011), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/k4ubmjl> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>81</sup> Sky Foundation IRS 990 Forms (2002 – 2003), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/z7xxxk6> (last checked 5/22/2017); see also Turkish Cultural Center, New York State Assembly Transcript (May 18, 2011), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/l8osue2> (last checked 5/20/2017); LISA Academy, Buzzfile Information Profile, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/mv5ukf4> (last checked 5/20/2017); LEA Supervisors by District, (Sep. 14, 2004), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kcq2afa> (last checked 5/20/2017).

- ▶ Yalcin Akyildiz: Principal, DSA – OKC; former Principal, Harmony (TX); Regional Superintendent, Harmony (TX); currently CFO, Harmony (TX).<sup>82</sup>
- ▶ John Can Topuz: VP of Academic Affairs, North American University; Curriculum Consultant, Sky Foundation (paid \$52,836 in 2006).<sup>83</sup>
- ▶ Bilal Erturk: President, Sky Foundation; Founder/Officer, Charter School Solutions (real estate organization for Greater Texas region).<sup>84</sup>
- ▶ Sharon Akdeniz: Director, Sky Foundation; married to Omer Akdeniz, the spokesperson for the Dialogue Institute of the Southwest in Tulsa and the Raindrop Turkish House.<sup>85</sup>
- ▶ Cuneyt Akdemir: Director of Leadership Development/Area Superintendent, Harmony (TX); Superintendent/Principal, LISA Academy (AR); IT Manager/Computer Science Teacher, Dove Science Academy; B.S., Middle East Technical University.<sup>86</sup>
- ▶ Birol Ozturk: President, Sky Foundation (OK); Secretary of Board, Syracuse Academy of Science (NY).<sup>87</sup>
- ▶ Hakan Yagci: Treasurer, Sky Foundation; CEO, Charter School Solutions; former Budget Director/Principal, Harmony (TX); former Marketing Manager, Design Textile; B.S., Bogazici University (Turkey).<sup>88</sup>
- ▶ Mustafa Guvercin: Principal/COO/Assistant Principal/Teacher, DSA – OKC; Superintendent, Abramson Science and Technology Charter School (LA); Math Teacher/Assistant Superintendent, Harmony (TX); Executive Director, Bluebonnet Learning Center; former Teacher, UFUK Educational Foundation and UB International School in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.<sup>89</sup>
- ▶ Fevzi Simsek: Former Contact Person, DSA – Tulsa; current Cluster Superintendent, Harmony (TX); former Superintendent/CAO/CEO, Harmony (TX); former Principal, Harmony (TX).<sup>90</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Harmony Public Schools Request for Sealed Furniture Bids (2013-2014), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9evm3lr> (last checked 7/16/2017); Yalcin Akyildiz, LinkedIn, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yd3m9ft4> (last checked 7/16/2017); Harmony Public Schools IRS 990 Forms (2011-2012), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/hu9wqcl> (last checked 6/5/17).

<sup>83</sup> John C. Topuz, LinkedIn, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7opyfxn> (last checked 6/14/2017); Sky Foundation IRS 990 Form (2006), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/z7xxxk6> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>84</sup> Sky Foundation IRS 990 Form (2013), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/z7xxxk6> (last checked 6/13/2017); Bilal Erturk, Corporation Wiki, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7vy3kdk> (last checked 7/12/2017).

<sup>85</sup> Bill Sherman, *Tulsa Couple undertake pilgrimage to Mecca Tulsa World*, Tulsa World (Dec. 12, 2009), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/le89f8k> (last checked 6/13/17); Bill Sherman, *Embattled Turkish cleric's influence felt in Tulsa*, Tulsa World (Dec. 20, 2014), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/l7wk249> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>86</sup> Cuneyt Akdemir, LinkedIn, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kgo8qgh> (last checked 5/20/2017).

<sup>87</sup> Sky Foundation IRS Form 990 (2006), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/z7xxxk6> (last checked 6/13/2017); Syracuse Academy IRS Form 990 (2010), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybopm98s> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>88</sup> Sky Foundation IRS Form 990 (2006), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/z7xxxk6> (last checked 6/13/2017); Design Build Services for School Construction Projects, Texas Bid Network, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybgg9fxs> (last checked 6/14/2017); Hakan Yagci, Rocket Reach, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycgntmj6> (last checked 6/14/2017).

<sup>89</sup> Charter applications for Abramson Science and Technology, Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives at Tulane University, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/24t7emn> (last checked 6/15/2017); Pelican IRS 990 Form (2007), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8rdjx9> (last checked 7/14/2017); Harmony IRS 990 Form (2005), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/hu9wqcl> (last checked 7/14/2017); Bluebonnet Learning Center Letter to Parents (Apr. 22, 2010), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybmt35k5> (last checked 6/14/2017); Abramson Charter Application, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycybxeeb> (last checked 7/16/2017).

<sup>90</sup> Dove Science Academy, My Visa Jobs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7v9prvt> (last checked 6/16/2017); Superintendent Salary Reports, Texas Education Agency (last updated Apr. 5, 2017), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ya87d7zw> (accessed by searching by Harmony district numbers: 015828, 071806, 101846, 101858, 101862, 161807, and 227816); Texas Education

- ▶ Umit Alpaslan: Superintendent, Dove charter schools; Cluster Superintendent/School Director, Harmony (TX).<sup>91</sup>
- ▶ Vahap Uysal: Founder, Harmony (formerly Cosmos Foundation) (TX); former Oklahoma Area Representative, Turquoise Council of Americans and Eurasians; current faculty advisor, Turquoise University Club (part of the Turkish American Society, Chicago); Board member, Concept Schools (Midwestern Region); wrote and presented an article entitled “Gülen Movement and School Financing” at the Third Annual Conference on Islam in the Contemporary World: The Fethullah Gülen Movement in Thought and Practice.<sup>92</sup>

## Notable Press Coverage and Research Regarding the Oklahoma Gülenist Network

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- ▶ Felder, Ben. *Oklahoma’s schools struggle with plans, unsure of state funding cuts.* The Oklahoman – NewsOK (26 March 2017).<sup>93</sup>
- ▶ Ellis, Randy. *Oklahoma schools accused of squandering millions on bond fees.* The Oklahoman – NewsOK (01 November 2016).<sup>94</sup>
- ▶ Farley, Tim. *Dove Charter Schools, foundation under scrutiny for financial irregularities.* Red Dirt Report (23 March 2016).<sup>95</sup>
- ▶ Habib, Nour. *State audit of Dove Science Academy charter school questions operating foundation’s management.* Tulsa World (18 March 2016).<sup>96</sup>
- ▶ Ellis, Randy. *State audit questions charter schools’ site lease payments.* The Oklahoman – NewsOK (17 March 2016).<sup>97</sup>
- ▶ Casteel, Chris. *‘Friend of a friend’ landed Oklahoma congressman in ethics probe over free trip.* The Oklahoman (18 October 2015).<sup>98</sup>
- ▶ Rolland, Megan. *Oklahoma charter schools hire math, science teachers from overseas.* The Oklahoman – News OK (24 May 2011).<sup>99</sup>
- ▶ Rolland, Megan. *Schools’ backers say Islamic ties pose no threat.* The Oklahoman

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Agency Teacher Master List for 2015-2016, received through open records request to Texas Education Agency.

<sup>91</sup> Dove Science Elementary (School No. E-013), Financial Statement (June 30, 2016), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ya4sdcxsx> (last checked 6/13/2017); Umit Alpaslan, LinkedIn, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybjfa48s> (last checked 6/13/2017); Harmony Science Academy – El Paso Letter to Parents, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9w24yxf> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>92</sup> Harmony Science Academy Charter Application (Jan. 21, 2000), Texas Education Agency, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/r9gym2l> (last checked 6/15/2017); *Raindrop Turkish House Oklahoma City Chapter Host Azerbaijan Ambassador Elin Suleymanov*, Raindrop Foundation, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yb2qxojd> (last checked 6/15/2017); Turquoise University Club, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7oolwkv> (last checked 6/15/2017); *Third Annual Conference on Islam in the Contemporary World: The Fethullah Gülen Movement in Thought and Practice*, Agenda (Nov. 3, 2007), <http://tinyurl.com/gt2vujs> (last checked 10/31/2016).

<sup>93</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yddclz99> (last checked 7/14/2017).

<sup>94</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7ktvues> (last checked 7/14/2017).

<sup>95</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9cde99t> (last checked 7/14/2017).

<sup>96</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8r6bjl3> (last checked 7/14/2017).

<sup>97</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mlazgpf> (last checked 7/14/2017).

<sup>98</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9n6uzbu> (last checked 7/14/2017).

<sup>99</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9l7ypr5> (last checked 7/14/2017).



- NewsOK (1 May 2011).<sup>100</sup>

- ▶ Rolland, Megan. *Dove Science Academy in OKC celebrates 10 years of success*. The Oklahoman – NewsOK (28 March 2011).<sup>101</sup>
- ▶ Eger, Andrea. *Dove School Contract renewed*. Tulsa World (20 January 2010).<sup>102</sup>
- ▶ Eger, Andrea. *Board votes not to renew*

*charter for Dove School*. Tulsa World (27 October 2009).<sup>103</sup>

- ▶ Eger, Andrea. *Tulsa board ends charter with Dove Science Academy*. Tulsa World (26 October 2009).<sup>104</sup>
- ▶ Griffin, Andrew W. *Dove Science Academy: A charter school striving for excellence*. Red Dirt Report (18 September 2009).<sup>105</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y97tud7x> (last checked 7/14/2017).

<sup>101</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybsqyygc> (last checked 7/14/2017).

<sup>102</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7v73d7r> (last checked 7/14/2017).

<sup>103</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yd4rc8p6> (last checked 6/13/2017).

<sup>104</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y73hobgh> (last checked 7/14/2017).

<sup>105</sup> Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8dtbksz> (last checked 7/14/2017).