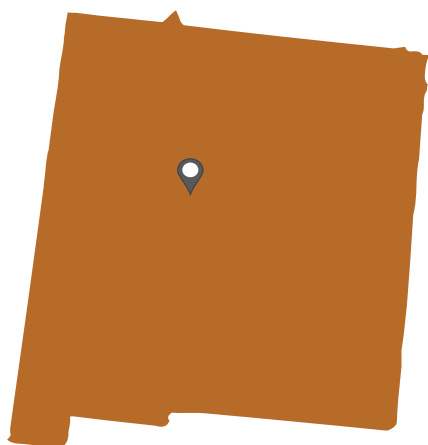


New Mexico



QUICK FACTS ON GÜLEN CHARTER SCHOOLS

NEW MEXICO



NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

1

KNOWN AS

Albuquerque School of Excellence

TOTAL ENROLLMENT

289

CHARTER VENDOR

Harmony Public Schools

TOTAL REVENUES

\$2,275,242

RELATED INSTITUTIONS

Harmony Public Schools, Riverwalk Education Foundation



Harmony D.C. Public School



Dove Science/Sky Foundation



Read Foundation/Memphis School of Excellence

Millenium Education Foundation/ Frontier Schools



Little Scholars of Arkansas

Pelican Educational Foundation/ Kenilworth Science



KEY PEOPLE



Sam Altunc



Unal Sakoglu



Mehmet Fatih Su



Arife B. Colak



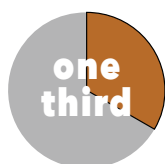
Mustafa Zengin

QUESTIONABLE FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Investigation into financial statements found that ASE did not follow its policies and procedures regarding cash disbursements. **20% of purchase orders tested were created after the expenditure was incurred, mostly for staff reimbursements.**

ENROLLMENT

ASE has not been successful to date with regards to its student enrollment. The school has fallen below projections, with approximately



of the expected enrollment of originally projected for that year.

H-1B VISA APPLICATIONS

18 H-1B

H-1B VISA APPLICATIONS 2001-2016

The cost of these applications is estimated to be **\$3,000 per application**, making the total for Harmony/ Cosmos **\$54,000.**

\$4.4 million

Rent paid by the ASE, **125% greater than the original value of the property.**

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

Quick Facts

- ▶ Region: Greater Texas
- ▶ School Names (known as): Albuquerque School of Excellence
- ▶ Total number of schools in state: 1
- ▶ Total student enrollment 2015-16: 289
- ▶ Charter Holder/Governing Board(s): Albuquerque School of Excellence Governing Council
 - ▷ Unlike most states, the school's governing board is not organized as a 501(c)(3) non profit organization;
 - ▷ The school was created by the Focus Foundation, now inactive
- ▶ Charter Management Services Vendor: Harmony Public Schools
- ▶ Regional Gülen Organization Oversight Entity: Harmony Public Schools
- ▶ Regional Sister Networks: Harmony Public Schools (TX); Riverwalk Education Foundation (TX); Harmony D.C. (Washington DC); Little Scholars of Arkansas (AR); Dove Science/Sky Foundation (OK); Pelican Educational Foundation/ Kenilworth Science (LA); Millennium Education Foundation/Frontier Schools (MO); Read Foundation/ Memphis School of Excellence (TN)
- ▶ Total Revenues for FY 2016: \$2,275,242¹
- ▶ New Mexico Network Founders:
 - ▷ **Sam Altunc:** Founder, President, Focus Foundation (NM); Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering, University of New Mexico (NM)²
 - ▷ **Unal Sakoglu:** Vice President, Focus Foundation (NM); Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of New Mexico (NM); Project Judge, I-SWEEEP, Harmony Public Schools' Science Fair competition (TX); Assistant Professor, University of Houston (TX)³
 - ▷ **Mehmet Fatih Su:** Vice President, Focus Foundation (NM); Ph.D. in Engineering⁴
 - ▷ **Mustafa Zengin:** Secretary, Focus Foundation (NM); Student of Computer Science, University of New Mexico (NM); Software Engineer, MilSoft Software Technologies (Turkey); Teaching Assistant, University of Delaware (DE).⁵
 - ▷ **Arife B. Colak:** Treasurer, Focus Foundation (NM); PhD in Industrial Engineering, Arizona State University (AZ); Instructor, Central New Mexico Community College (NM)⁶

¹ Total Revenue; the New Mexico State Public Education Department Financial Statements; vol III, pg. 132, Albuquerque School of Excellence Budgetary Basis, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/y9l8d57x> (last checked 5/26/2017).

² Albuquerque School of Excellence charter application, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lofzrtp> (last checked 5/25/2017).

³ Information taken from: Albuquerque School of Excellence charter application, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lofzrtp> (last checked 5/25/2017); LinkedIn profile, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/klsj82t> (last checked 5/25/2017).

⁴ Albuquerque School of Excellence charter application, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lofzrtp> (last checked 5/25/2017).

⁵ Information taken from: Biographical information for the Governing Board; Albuquerque School of Excellence initial charter application, available at <https://tinyurl.com/lofzrtp> (last checked 5/25/2017); LinkedIn profile, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lkxdyym> (last checked 5/25/2017).

⁶ Biographical information for the Governing Board; Albuquerque School of Excellence initial charter application, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lofzrtp> (Last checked 5/25/2017).

Overview

The Albuquerque School of Excellence (ASE) opened in 2010 under the Focus Foundation, a New Mexico nonprofit organization, in partnership with the Harmony Public Schools in Texas. ASE is an example of Harmony's strategic efforts to expand its model, influence, and funding sources within the Greater Texas region. As with many Gülen schools, the founding Board members of the Focus Foundation and New Mexico network were university professors in STEM fields at the University of New Mexico. The Focus Foundation was never a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and it was later replaced by a seven-member Governing Council, also not tax-exempt. Like most Gülen-controlled charter schools, ASE's governing council is operated by a supermajority of board

members of Turkish national origin.

Harmony Public Schools (formerly known as the Cosmos Foundation) played a key role in the approval of ASE's charter application in 2009 and continues to be central to ASE's management and operations. Harmony Public Schools is the Gülen-affiliated charter network that currently operates 48 schools in Texas and acts as the regional oversight entity for Gülen schools in eight states, including New Mexico, referred throughout this report as the Greater Texas region of the Gülen Organization. ASE continues to contract with Harmony for many administrative and management services for a fee through a support services agreement that renews annually.

| School | Operation | Student Demographic Information ^{7 *} | Authorizer | Governing Board |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Albuquerque School of Excellence 13201 Lomas Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87112 | Grades 1-11 ⁸ 2010-present ⁹ | Enrollment: 289 44.6% White 7.3% African American 31.1% Hispanic 11.1% Asian 5.8% Native American/ Multiracial 9% SWD 5.2% ELL 59.2% FRL | New Mexico Public Education Commission ¹⁰ | Albuquerque School of Excellence Governing Council; Formerly the Focus Foundation (now inactive) ¹¹ |
| Closed/Abandoned Schools | | | | |
| None | | | | |
| Charter Petition Denials | | | | |
| None | | | | |
| Private Schools | | | | |
| None | | | | |

*ELL – English Language Learner; FRL – students eligible for free and reduced price lunch (economically disadvantages); SWD – Student with disabilities (special education)

⁷ Student Demographic data; New Mexico Education Department Albuquerque School of Excellence Charter School Report Card; 2015-2016, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/k5vyuy7> (last checked 5/23/2017).

⁸ Grades; the Albuquerque School of Excellence Website, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lhbxng7> (last checked 5/25/2017).

⁹ Operational information; the National Charter School Resource Center, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lt95euj> (last checked 5/25/2017).

¹⁰ New Mexico Public Education Commission, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycuugfj5> (last checked 6/6/17).

¹¹ Albuquerque School of Excellence charter application, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lofzrtp> (last checked 5/25/2017).

A History of Strategic Ambiguity and Conflicting Interests

Similar to Tennessee and other states within the Greater Texas region, Harmony Public Schools (formerly known as the Cosmos Foundation) played a key role in the approval of ASE's charter application in 2009 and continues to be central to ASE's management and operations. Harmony Public Schools is the Gülen-affiliated charter network that currently operates 48 schools in Texas and acts as the regional oversight entity for Gülen schools in eight states, including New Mexico, referred throughout this report as the Greater Texas region of the Gülen Organization. Soner Tarim, the Harmony CEO, was the lead presenter at ASE's 2009 charter application hearing before the New Mexico Public Education Commission.¹² Members of the Focus Foundation were also present at the hearing, but they did not answer substantive questions about the operation or financing of the school. In his testimony, Tarim told the Commission that the Cosmos Foundation (Harmony) "will play a critical role in the establishment" of ASE, including "human resources, student achievement, professional development, curriculum development, testing, technology support, facilities and school operation, and database management."¹³ He also stated that Harmony would help ASE replicate the Harmony model at the school. When questioned about an item in the budget called "other professional services" that showed an increase in cost each year, Mr. Tarim stated it would be paid to "we" as a "contract association to do accounting services,"¹⁴ which likely referred to the much broader list of functions that would be included in the support services agreement between ASE and Harmony.

ASE's school leadership are all veterans of Harmony Public Schools, having served in various positions in Texas before coming to Albuquerque, and many return to Harmony after several years as ASE. Our research indicates that this frequent transfer of key individuals ensures that the Harmony model is implemented and that Harmony's influence over the school and the ASE Governing Council is maintained. In addition, ASE continues to contract with Harmony for many administrative and management services for a fee through a support services agreement that renews annually.

Although the original support services agreement with Harmony from 2010 is not available, ASE Board minutes from an April 13, 2013 meeting show ASE Board approval to renew the services agreement.¹⁵ Starting in 2010, ASE paid Harmony a flat fee of \$45,000 per year.¹⁶ Harmony changed its billing structure in 2012 or 2013 and currently bills for its services at the rate of \$80 - \$120/hour, making it easy to upcharge ASE and exploit ASE's funds as Harmony needs by falsifying work hours. In addition, Harmony charges a licensing fee for its intellectual property software, ranging from \$15,000 - \$147,000 per school per year.¹⁷ ASE does not disclose the actual payments made to Harmony annually in public documents.

Harmony has similar agreements in place with seven other Gülen-affiliated charter school networks in the Greater Texas region, all of which are described in Harmony's bond documents.¹⁸ Like ASE, the original agreements for these other networks were also based on a

¹² Transcript for ASE Charter School Public Input Hearing, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8yy7vd2> (last checked 6/6/2017).

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ Id. p. 30-31

¹⁵ ASE Board minutes are no longer posted on its website. Minutes for April 13, 2013 were retrieved in 2016.

¹⁶ See Cosmos Foundation bond issue May 1, 2011; Official Statement P. B-2 & 3, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7pn3wbq> (last checked 5/19/17).

¹⁷ See Harmony bond issue Official Statement P. B-3, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7pn3wbq> (last checked 5/19/17).

¹⁸ See Cosmos Foundation bond issues for 2011 and 2012; Harmony bond issues 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017; Official Statements – Appendix B, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7pn3wbq> (last checked 5/19/17).

percent of all state funds received and changed to an hourly basis in 2013 as well:

- ▷ Riverwalk Education Foundation (TX) (5% of state funding)
- ▷ Millennium Education Foundation (MO) (3% of state funding)
- ▷ Sky Foundation/Dove Public Charter School Foundation (OK) (3% of state funding)
- ▷ Pelican Educational Foundation (LA) (5% of state funding)
- ▷ Read Foundation (TN) (3% of state funding)
- ▷ Little Scholars of Arkansas (LISA) (AR) (3% of state funding)
- ▷ Harmony DC Public Schools (Washington DC) (5% local/state funding)

We believe the fees paid to Harmony through these agreements yield significant benefits to the Gülen Organization. Harmony has created a steady revenue from public funds that can be expended without any fiscal restrictions, providing resources to expand its model within a state or in other states, 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 ASE. 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. The extensive support provided to ASE by Harmony, and the ASE administrative leadership that is almost exclusively from Harmony, positions Harmony to have extensive and undue influence over the operations of its client ASE that are not at arm's length.

ASE has not been successful to date with regards to its student enrollment. In fact, the school has fallen far below projections, with 289 students enrolled in 2015-2016,¹⁹ less than one-third of the expected enrollment of 917 originally projected for that year.²⁰ As a K-11 school, it is difficult to see how ASE can provide sufficient core academic and elective course options for high school students given the low enrollment. This is likely why the ASE New Mexico network has not grown beyond its initial school. In addition, little up-to-date information is posted on the school's website (the most recent school newsletter is from 2011).²¹ Governing Council members and Board minutes are not available on the site so public information about contracts and other operational information is very limited.

Financial Issues

Like the vast majority of Gülen-controlled charter schools, ASE has been found to engage in poor financial practices that practically serve to obscure the true use of public funds. The 2015-2016 Financial Statements - Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs for ASE conducted by the New Mexico Public Education

Departments included one finding that required corrective action: ASE did not follow its policies and procedures regarding cash disbursements. 20% of purchase orders tested were created after the expenditure was incurred, mostly for staff reimbursements.²²

¹⁹ ASE Report Card from New Mexico Public Education Department, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/k5vyuy7> (last checked 6/6/17).

²⁰ See ASE projected student enrollment in 2009 charter application p. 4, available at <http://tinyurl.com/lofzrtp> (last checked 6/6/17).

²¹ School Newsletter, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/y8ya9xx3> (last checked 5/26/2017).

²² Albuquerque School of Excellence Financial Statements 2016, State of New Mexico Public Education Department; Vol II and III, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y844zdk5> (last checked 6/6/2017).

Bond Financing

ASE is utilizing Harmony Public Schools' real estate arm, Charter School Solutions (CSS), to borrow money on its behalf through a bond issue used to purchase, renovate, and equip the ASE school facility at 13201 Lomas Blvd NE in Albuquerque.²³ As part of this transaction, CSS purchased the school building in June 2016 for \$3.9 million.²⁴ CSS will own the ASE building and lease the school building back to ASE, repaying the bond debt from the rental payments made by ASE. The rental agreement with CSS is a "triple net" lease, which means that in addition to the monthly lease payments, ASE will pay all costs for insurance premiums, taxes, utility charges, maintenance, upkeep, repairs, and operations.²⁵ Importantly, even when ASE repays the bonds in full, it will not own the building.

The bond to CSS was issued on June 1, 2016 through the Industrial Development Authority of the County of La Paz, Arizona for a total of \$8,210,000 to be repaid over 30 years. Rental payments from ASE will start at \$661,141 annually, \$55,000 per month, and increase by a percentage each year. These lease payments are inflated and represent 125% of the actual bond debt for the building. This means that over the life of the bond, ASE will pay CSS \$4,475,458 more than what is owed on the bond – an extra \$150,000 annually. As a result, CSS will receive substantially more from ASE than what the bond issue requires and privately own the building publicly financed by New Mexico tax dollars.²⁶

Harmony Public Schools appears to have created CSS in 2015 as its third-party real estate arm to purchase property and construct or renovate charter schools that are in the Greater Texas regional network. The CSS Board is composed of individuals affiliated with Harmony, including a former Harmony Board member, Harmony's legal counsel, and the former President of the Sky Foundation in Oklahoma, the Gülen organization that operates four Gülen schools in Oklahoma.²⁷ The Sky Foundation was the subject of a 2016 Oklahoma state audit that found it had misused state funds, paying itself more than \$3 million in excessive rental payments from the schools it managed to fund its own operations.²⁸

CSS has also borrowed \$43.2 million in bonds for the purchase and renovation of five schools operated by Harmony in Texas.²⁹ Like ASE in New Mexico, the Texas schools will pay \$18 million more than what is owed over the life of the bond – a total of \$650,000 extra every year. CSS will receive combined revenue of \$780,000 annually from excess lease payments made by the schools in Texas and New Mexico.

CSS corporate documents state that CSS will use the excess rental payments to fund its own operations and programs and to expand the Harmony model to other states.³⁰ One characterization of this scenario is that CSS is charging public charter schools a hidden tax that will take taxpayer dollars and divert them to CSS for its own operations rather than directing these funds to educational services for students.

²³ Charter School Solutions bond issue for Albuquerque School of Excellence, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yary29pl> (last checked 6/5/17).

²⁴ Release of mortgage to CSS/purchase price; Bernalillo County Clerk, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y745bcea> (last checked 6/6/17).

²⁵ Charter School Solutions bond issue for Albuquerque School of Excellence- Official Statement; lease agreement on p. E-3-2 (#7), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yary29pl> (last checked 6/5/17).

²⁶ See Charter School Solutions bond issue for Albuquerque School of Excellence - Official Statement payment schedule on p.3 and debt service on p. 1, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yary29pl> (last checked 6/5/17).

²⁷ See corporate documents for Charter School Solutions; Texas Secretary of State SOS Direct, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/7oy8w> (last checked 6/5/17).

²⁸ Investigative report on Dove Schools in Oklahoma, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kv3ade4> (last checked 6.5.17).

²⁹ CSS bond issue for Harmony Public Schools, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9xs5rdd> (last checked 6.5.17).

³⁰ See corporate documents for Charter School Solutions, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/7oy8w> (last checked 6/5/17).

Real Estate

ASE leases its school facility from Charter School Solutions, a nonprofit organization that is the third-party real estate arm of Harmony Public Schools in Texas (see description in bond section in this report). CSS purchased the building as part of an \$8.2 million bond issue and serves as ASE's landlord. ASE pays CSS rental payments of \$661,141 annually, \$55,000 per month, and increase by a percentage each year. These

lease payments are inflated and represent 125% of the actual bond debt for the building. Over the life of the bond, ASE will pay CSS \$4,475,458 more than what is owed on the bond – an extra \$150,000 annually.³¹ Once the bond is repaid, ASE will still not own the school building. The renovation of the building paid by bond revenue was completed in March 2017.³²

Excessive Use of H-1B Visa Program

Like other Gülen organization charter networks, ASE and Harmony Public 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 2010 to 2016, ASE alone filed a total of 7 H-1B visa applications.³³ The cost of these applications is estimated to be \$3,000 per application, for a total of \$21,000 expended public funds. Harmony, which is much larger, filed for over 2,558 H-1B visas since 2005.³⁴

While Gülenist administrators claim that the international visas are necessary to fill shortages for math and science teachers, positions are also filled for a wide range of positions, including: middle school teachers, assistant principals, and instructional coordinators.³⁵

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

Leonard D'Arrigo, the New Mexico network used D'Arrigo, a New York-based attorney, to file numerous H-1B applications.³⁶ D'Arrigo also filed applications for these clients:

- ▷ Cosmos Foundation (TX)
- ▷ Little Scholars of Arkansas (AR)
- ▷ Raindrop Foundation
- ▷ Central Jersey College Prep Charter School (NJ)
- ▷ Syracuse Academy of Science Charter School (NY)
- ▷ Millennium Education Foundation/ Frontier Schools (MO)
- ▷ Rochester Academy Charter School (NY)
- ▷ Dove/Sky Foundation (OK)
- ▷ Bergen Arts and Science Charter School (NY)
- ▷ Albuquerque School of Excellence (NM)
- ▷ Truebright Science Academy Charter School (PA)

³¹ Charter School Solutions bond issue for Albuquerque School of Excellence, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yary29pl> (last checked 6.5.17).

³² ABQ Staff; Charter school finishes renovations, available from <http://tinyurl.com/y9dfsvzd> (last checked 6/6/17).

³³ H-1B visas applications from the Albuquerque School of Excellence, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yanhkndl> (Albuquerque School of Excellence) (7) (last checked 7/16/2017).

³⁴ See Texas state profile.

³⁵ H-1B visas application occupations, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/l6hoo4v> (last checked 5/25/2017)

³⁶ Leonard D'Arrigo H-1-B visas filed, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/kcb3kjq> (last checked 5/24/2017).

Notable Turkish Vendors

Harmony Public Schools: ASE has contracted with Harmony through a support services agreement to provide a range of management and administrative services to the school for a fee. The agreement is renewed annually. Previously, ASE paid Harmony a flat fee of \$45,000 per year.³⁷ Harmony changed its billing structure in 2012 or 2013 and currently bills for its services at the rate of \$80 - \$120/hour. In addition, Harmony

now charges a licensing fee for its intellectual property software from \$15,000 - \$147,000 per school per year.³⁸ ASE does not disclose the actual payments made to Harmony annually in public documents.

Because minutes from the ASE Governing Council are not available publicly, other vendors and contractors cannot be identified.

Scandals, Investigations, & Notable Activities

ASE has experienced two incidents in the last three years that reflect negatively on its screening process for teachers, on the school's administrative procedures for identifying and addressing bullying incidents at the school that put children at risk, and on the teacher's lack of classroom management skills that allowed such an incident to occur. In one incident, a former ASE teacher was arrested for possession and distribution of child pornography. Although the school stated that there were no "red flags" or complaints reported while the teacher was employed at the school, the school failed to address whether it would conduct an in-depth investigation following the arrest.³⁹

In the second incident, a student at ASE targeted another student using offensive racial slurs in the classroom.⁴⁰ The school official present

when the incident occurred did not contact the parents of the children involved to inform them about the incident. Another student captured the lengthy incident on video and posted it on social media in January of 2014. Another parent of a student in the classroom saw the video and reported it to the assistant principal in February. School officials did not act because "it was not seen as a bullying incident," and later admitted that they hadn't watched the video at that time.⁴¹ The parent of the targeted student only heard of the incident from another parent in April of 2014, who had also viewed the video on social media. School officials finally agreed that the incident was bullying. Despite failure to take action against the actual bully, ASE leadership had already disciplined the student who filmed the incident and posted it on social media.⁴²

³⁷ See Cosmos Foundation bond issue May 1, 2011, Official Statement P. B-2 & 3, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7pn3wbq> (last checked 5/19/17).

³⁸ See Harmony bond issue July 2, 2014, Official Statement P. B-3, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7pn3wbq> (last checked 5/19/17).

³⁹ See news story on teacher arrest; Former state-run charter school teacher arrested on child p porn charges; KRQE News 13; August 18, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yb7jgrye> (last checked 6/5/17).

⁴⁰ See news story on racist incident; Parent upset after son called 'N' word in class; KRQE News 13; (April 1, 2014), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/l7557c6> (last checked 5/25/2017) (last checked 6/5/17).

⁴¹ Id.

⁴² Id.

Gülenist Cultural and Business Organizations Active in State

Turkish cultural organizations play a central role in the Gülen landscape, serving as the external face to the community that obscures the true activities of the organization. They are generally nonprofit organizations with governing boards often composed largely of individuals of Turkish national origin and other community members. The organizations provide a platform for community involvement, hosting events where local leaders who can benefit the organization are honored, convening forums and conferences, and sponsoring expense-paid trips to Turkey that promote the Gülen Movement. In addition, funds collected through the various Gülen charter school schemes – vendor contracts, excessive rents, and teacher tuzuk payments – can be channeled through the organizations to pay for programs that will enhance the façade of legitimacy.

- **Raindrop Turkish House - Albuquerque:** Like Turkish cultural centers in other states across the country, the Raindrop Turkish House in Albuquerque 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.⁴³ The Raindrop Turkish Houses are branches of the non-profit/tax-exempt Rain Drop Foundation based in Houston that sponsors 20 Raindrop Turkish Houses in cities across eight states including Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Tennessee, and New Mexico.⁴⁴

- **Turquoise Council of Americans and Eurasians:** The Turquoise Council of Americans and Eurasians (TCAE) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in Houston, Texas which serves as an umbrella organization for Turkic-American Associations primarily in Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Washington D.C. and New Mexico.⁴⁵ TCAE hosts events and sponsors trips to Turkey and other affiliated countries to promote its economic, political, and social interests with elected officials and community leaders. TCAE was one of the organizations that sponsored expense-paid trips to Turkey for elected officials in New Mexico including the Congressional trip to Azerbaijan that was later investigated by the Office of Congressional Ethics when it was revealed that the trip had been secretly paid for by SOCAR, the state-owned oil company of Azerbaijan.⁴⁶
- **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.⁴⁷ However, while there is an evident Dialogue presence in New Mexico, its website is currently inaccessible, and thus more information about its Albuquerque activities is unavailable.⁴⁸ The Dialogue Institute is a member organization of the Alliance for Shared Values (Alliance), the umbrella organization for six Gülen groups around the United States that are openly aligned with the Gülen Movement.⁴⁹

⁴³ About Raindrop Turkish House, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mbf9jd6> and <http://tinyurl.com/y7shzona> (last checked 6/6/2017).

⁴⁴ Id.

⁴⁵ About the Turquoise Council of Americans and Eurasians available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9bcezdz> (last checked 6/6/2017).

⁴⁶ Higham, Scott; Rich, Steven; Crites, Alice; 10 members of Congress took trip secretly funded by foreign government; Washington Post; (13 May 2015). Available from <http://tinyurl.com/yc7lk4la> (last checked 5/29/17).

⁴⁷ Information about the Dialogue Institute of the Southwest, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybg3psok> (last checked 6/6/2017).

⁴⁸ Dialogue Institute of the Southwest website unavailable, from: <http://tinyurl.com/y6vln2rh> (last checked 6/6/2017).

⁴⁹ Dialogue Institute of the Southwest on the Alliance for Shared Values website, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ybg3psok> (last checked 6/6/2017).

Friends of Gülen Spotlight

Elected officials participate in expense-paid trips to Turkey and other aligned countries that were organized by Gülen-affiliated organizations. For example:

U.S. Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM) traveled on an all-expense paid 10-member Congressional trip in 2013 to Baku, Azerbaijan that was later investigated by the Office of Congressional Ethics when it was revealed that the trip had been secretly paid for by SOCAR, the state-owned oil company of Azerbaijan.⁵⁰ The members of Congress were not aware that SOCAR had funded the trip and had sought pre-trip approval from the House Ethics Committee. The Washington Post reported that during the previous year, "SOCAR and several large energy companies sought exemptions for a \$28 billion natural gas pipeline project in the Caspian Sea from U.S. economic sanctions

being imposed on Iran."⁵¹

Other New Mexico state officials accepted trips to Turkey at the invitation of the Raindrop Turkish House and Turquoise Council of Americans and Eurasians, including:

- ▷ Former Senator Dede Feldman⁵²
- ▷ Senator Eric Griego⁵³
- ▷ Former Senator Tim Jennings⁵⁴
- ▷ Senator Cisco McSorley⁵⁵
- ▷ Senator George Munoz⁵⁶
- ▷ Senator Jerry Ortiz y Pino⁵⁷
- ▷ Representative Debbie Rodella⁵⁸

A group of 13 New Mexico senators, including Senators Pino, Griego, Jennings, McSorley, and Munoz introduced a memorial resolution to the Senate in 2011 honoring the Raindrop Turkish House and the Turquoise Council of Americans and Eurasians.⁵⁹

Individuals Caught in the Gülen Organization Web

It is common for the charter networks within a region to shuffle their Turkish H-1B visa employees, both teachers and administrators, from school to school and state to state in very different types of jobs. The individuals listed below are examples of the overlap of employees among schools, further demonstrating the interconnections and affiliation between the Gülen charter networks and organizations.

- **Soner Tarim:** CEO, Harmony Public Schools (TX); Lead presenter at charter presentation, Albuquerque School of Excellence (NM).⁶⁰
- **Ahmet Cetinkaya:** Principal, Albuquerque School of Excellence (NM); Principal, Harmony Science Academy Beaumont (TX); Director of Accountability, Harmony Public Schools (TX).⁶¹

⁵⁰ Higham, Scott; Rich, Steven; Crites, Alice; 10 members of Congress took trip secretly funded by foreign government; Washington Post; (13 May 2015), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yc7lk4la> (last checked 5/29/17).

⁵¹ Id.

⁵² Center for Public Integrity; Scores of state lawmakers took trips subsidized by controversial Turkish opposition movement; (9 February 2017), available at: <https://tinyurl.com/lzd8zsl> (last checked 5/31/2017).

⁵³ Id.

⁵⁴ Id.

⁵⁵ Id.

⁵⁶ Id.

⁵⁷ Id.

⁵⁸ Id.

⁵⁹ 2011 Senate Memorial honoring Raindrop House and TCAE, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yagsjx3j> (last checked 6/6/17).

⁶⁰ Information taken from: Tarim biography on Harmony website, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7ypegdj> (last checked 6/6/17); Presentation by Soner Tarim to the New Mexico Public Education Commission, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8yy7vd2> (last checked 6/6/17).

⁶¹ Information taken from: Heinz, Hailey, Texas Charter School Chain's Resources Used at Local, but Unrelated, Campus

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⁶² Information taken from: New Mexico public education department school directory, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yapw3o3u> (last checked 5/26/2017); Harmony Public Schools request for sealed proposals, 2013-2014 furniture procurement, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/y9evm3lr> (last checked 5/26/17); Texas Education Agency Alternative Appraisal Report for 2010, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/y98pl85j> (last checked 5/26/2017); Harmony School of Science Austin Brochure, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yay4gmbv> (last checked 6/6/2017).

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