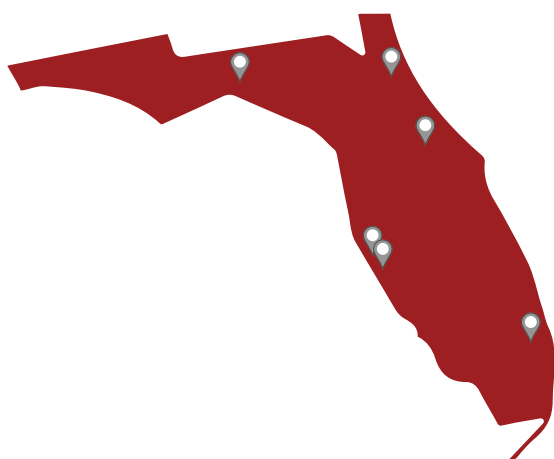


Florida



QUICK FACTS ON GÜLEN CHARTER SCHOOLS FLORIDA



NUMBER OF SCHOOLS **12**

KNOWN AS

Science Charter School, Broward Math and Science School, River City Science Academy, Discovery Academy of Science, School of Math & Science, New Springs Schools

TOTAL ENROLLMENT **4,525**

CHARTER VENDOR **Charter Educational Services & Resources**

TOTAL REVENUES **\$29,603,000**

RELATED INSTITUTIONS



GA Closed Network
Fulton Science

KEY PEOPLE



Yalcin Akin



Dogan Ozoglu



Eray Idil



Akif Aydin



Selcuk Buyukasarac



Renat Shaykhutdinov



Mehmet Taskan

REAL ESTATE

In Florida, by far the most egregious example of the Gülen Organization's real estate scheme concerns the acquisition of the River City Science Academy's 7555 and 7605 Beach Boulevard property in Jacksonville, FL. In 2010, Yazan Khatib purchased the 7555 property at a foreclosure auction for **\$100.00** through his company, River City Plaza LLC, which also employs Mehmet Taskan. Over the next three years, Khatib and Taskan often hired Taskan's own company, **Blue Ocean Construction, to perform the renovations.** In 2014, River City Science Academy took over the payment for the building permits for the property, despite not officially owning it yet. In 2015, River City Science Academy purchased the building from Khatib for **\$12,509,500** with the proceeds of bond financing.

2010 - 2015



Khatib & Taskan - River City Plaza, LLC; 7605 Beach Boulevard LLC

\$1,998,696 spent total
\$12,509,500 gained
\$10,510,804 net profit



Taskan - Blue Ocean Construction

\$1,916,130 profit



River City Science Academy

\$1,168,044 spent before owning either building
\$13,678,594 spent total
\$29,326,656 ultimate cost due to bond financing

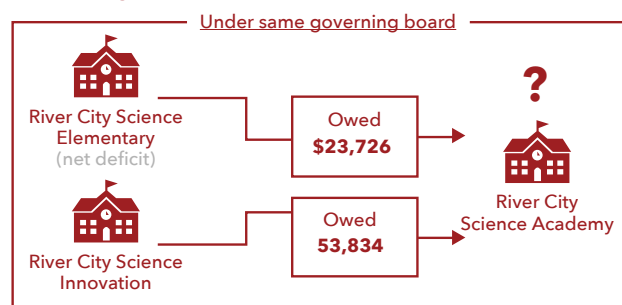
H-1B VISA APPLICATIONS

195 H-1B

H-1B VISA APPLICATIONS 2001-2016

INTER-ENTITY LENDING PRACTICES

Investigations suggest that charter schools within the Gülen Organization and their vendors engage in frequent inter-entity lending practices, **a known warning sign for money laundering.**



Shuffling funds between schools, particularly when River City Science Academy operated at a deficit net position for the same year, could be **indicative of a breach of fiduciary duty to the school.**

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

Quick Facts

- ▶ Region: Southeast
- ▶ School Names (known as):
 - ▷ Science Charter School
 - ▷ River City Science Academy
 - ▷ School of Math & Science
 - ▷ Broward Math and Science School
 - ▷ Discovery Academy of Science
 - ▷ New Springs Schools
- ▶ Total # of Schools in State: 12
- ▶ Total Student Enrollment 2015-16: 4,525¹
- ▶ Charter Holder/Governing Board(s):
 - ▷ Discovery Education Services, Inc.
 - Organized as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization
 - Oversees the Science Charter Schools (4 schools)
 - ▷ River City Education Services, Inc.
 - Organized as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization
 - Oversees the River City Science Academies (4 schools)
 - ▷ Stars Education, Inc.
 - Organized as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization
 - Oversees Tallahassee School of Math and Science (1 school)
 - ▷ Riverside Science, Inc.
 - Organized as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization
 - Oversees Broward Math and Science School (1 school)
 - ▷ Galaxy Education, Inc.
 - Organized as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization
- ▶ Oversees Discovery Academy of Science (1 school)
- ▶ New Springs, Inc.
 - Organized as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization
 - Oversees New Springs Schools (2 schools)
- ▶ Charter Management Services Vendor: Charter Educational Services & Resources
- ▶ Regional Gülen Organization Oversight Entity: Charter Educational Services & Resources
- ▶ Regional Sister Networks: GREEN (SC); Closed Network Fulton Science (GA).
- ▶ Total Revenues for the 2015-16 school year: \$29,603,000²
- ▶ Florida Network Founders:
 - ▷ **Yalcin Akin:** Founding Board Member, Stars Education Services, Inc. (FL); Board Member, New Springs, Inc. (FL); Board Member, Consultant, Sweetwater Education, Inc. (FL); Principal, Orlando Science Middle/High School (FL); Owner, Discovery Education Operations, LLC (FL); Owner, 2611 Technology LLC, (FL); Owner, Discovery Education Operations at Technology, LLC (FL); Owner, 941 John Young, LLC (FL); Executive Director, Orlando Science Schools.³

¹ Student enrollment and demographic information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mtzdnmw> (last checked 4/19/2017).

² Figures are taken from Fiscal Year 2016 audits for all schools currently in operation. Audits are available at: <http://tinyurl.com/m9ldgth> (last checked 6/15/2017).

³ Information taken from: Discovery Education Solutions Articles of Incorporation, available at <http://tinyurl.com/k44c5wz> (last checked 6/15/2017); 2611 Technology corporate filing, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lb3krmn> (last checked 6/15/2017); Discovery Education Properties filing, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/l9byptv> (last checked 46/15/2017); 949 John Young LLC filing, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ko5xomx> (last checked 6/15/2017); Article by Yalcin, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kb3cd22> (last checked 6/15/2017); New Springs corporate filings, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/krhhtmr> (last checked 6/15/2017).

- **Renat Shaykhutdinov:** Board Member, Palm Beach Science, Inc. (FL); Board President, Riverside Science, Inc. (FL); Presenter at multiple Gülen Conferences; Author of articles regarding Gülen and Education; Presenter for The Atlantic Institute.⁴
- **Akif Aydin:** Founding Board Member, River City Education Services, Inc. (FL); Director, Istanbul Cultural Center of Jacksonville (FL); Director, Amity Turkish Cultural Center (FL); Board Member, Green Charter School (SC); President of the Atlantic Institute of South Carolina (SC).⁵
- **Selcuk Buyukasarac:** Incorporator, Founding Board Member, River City Education Services, Inc. (FL); Public Relations Director, River City Science Academy (FL); Chief of Public Affairs and Government Relations, River City Science Academy (FL).⁶
- **Dogan Tozoglu:** Board President, Stars Education Services (FL); Board member, Consultant, Sweetwater Education, Inc. (FL); Founding Board member, Palm Beach Science Academy (FL)(attempt); Petitioner, Capital City Charter Science Academy (FL)(attempt); Executive Director, River City Science Academies (FL).⁷
- **Mehmet Taskan:** Incorporator, Discovery Education Services, Inc. (FL); Incorporator, Universal Education Services, Inc. (FL); Owner, Blue Ocean Construction (FL) (River City construction vendor); Employee, Khatib Development LLC (FL) – Gülenist Landlord entity.⁸

Overview

As of the 2016-2017 school year, Florida has 12 charter schools within the Gülen Organization. Unlike other states, Florida has numerous small Gülen charter networks across the state, ranging from one to four schools in size. While each of these networks is controlled by its own governing board, giving the appearance that these networks are separate, these networks share the same vendors, founders, and charter

management corporations and have connections throughout the Southeastern region of the Gülen Organization. Furthermore, based on student enrollment and financial resources controlled, our research indicates that Florida is one of the larger networks in the country.

Charter Educational Services & Resources (“CESR”) is the charter management organization

⁴ Information gathered from the Florida Secretary of State, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mh72fhf> (last checked 6/15/2017); Conference was held Nov. 3, 2007 in San Antonio, Texas, and the conference agenda is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/gt2vujs> (last checked 6/15/2017); Conference speaker list, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kj7v882> (last checked 6/15/2017); Conference presentation, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/klxu29d> (last checked 6/15/2017); Article listing (search name), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/m5cfaq5> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁵ Information taken from: Green charter board minutes, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lp4rppx> (last checked 6/15/2017); Green charter petition pg 18, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mb7sjmz> (last checked 6/15/2017); Article discussing Aydin and Amity, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7pql78> (last checked 6/15/2017); Article discussing Aydin and the Atlantic Institute, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/menn3mk> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁶ Information taken from: LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lqyzehu> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁷ Information taken from: LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kn2ykaj>; (last checked 6/15/2017); Stars Education corporate filings, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lfbv3fv> (last checked 6/15/2017); Palm Beach Science Academy Petition, pg 5 <http://tinyurl.com/nx6693g> (last checked 6/15/2017); 2013-14 Charter school report, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kd5c6bs> (last checked 6/15/2017); Sweetwater 2010 990 form, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/goj3zw3> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁸ Information taken from: Discovery Education Services, Articles of Incorporation available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ml8qjeh> (last checked 6/15/2017); Universal Education Services, corporate information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kwwpz7p> (last checked 6/15/2017); River City Plaza LLC corporate information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mc32ngh> (last checked 6/15/2017); Khatib Development corporate information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kczqg5u> (last checked 6/15/2017); Blue Ocean Corporate filings, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lb5e5bs> (last checked 6/15/2017).

responsible for the Southeastern region of the Gülen Organization charter network. CESR allegedly provides additional educational management services for the charter schools for a percentage fee of total school revenues. On average, the Florida Gülen charter schools serve 41.7% free and reduced lunch population vs. 58.7% state average; 5.8% students with disabilities vs. 13.2%

state average; 9.3% English language learners vs. 9.8% state average; 59.5% minority students vs. 60.5% state average; and 40.5% Caucasian students vs. 39.5% state average. As these numbers indicate, the Florida Gülen charter schools serve a significantly smaller percentage of vulnerable student populations, such as economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.

School	Operation ⁷	Student Demographic Information *	Authorizer	Governing Board
Orlando Science Middle High Charter (0089) 2427 Lynx Lane Orlando, FL 32804	Grades 6-12 2008-Present	1.9% ELL 36% FRL 2.7% SWD 72.8% Minority 27.2% Caucasian	Orange County School Board	Discovery Education Services, Inc.
Orlando Science Elementary Charter (0200) 2611 Technology Drive Orlando, FL 32804	Grades K-5 2012-Present	6.9% ELL 39.2% FRL 3.3% SWD 69.6% Minority 30.4% Caucasian	Orange County School Board	Discovery Education Services, Inc.
Seminole Science Charter School (9236) 3580 N US Highway 17-92 Lake Mary, FL 32746	Grades K-8 2015-Present	2.9% ELL 39.2% FRL 6.6% SWD 54.9% Minority 45.1% Caucasian	Seminole County School Board	Discovery Education Services, Inc.
Osceola Science Charter School (0181) 2880 North Orange Blossom Trail Kissimmee, FL 34741	Grades K-8 2016-Present	29.3% ELL 57.7% FRL 0.9% SWD 79.6% Minority 20.4% Caucasian	Osceola County School Board	Discovery Education Services, Inc.
River City Science Elementary Academy (1291) 7450 Beach Blvd. Jacksonville, FL 32216	Grades K-5 2010-Present	11.6% ELL 0.8% FRL 3.5% SWD 42.2% Minority 57.8% Caucasian	Duval County School Board	River City Education Services, Inc.
River City Science Academy Innovation School (5441) 3251 Newell Blvd. Jacksonville, FL 32216	Grades K-6 2013-Present	6.2% ELL 17.6% FRL 5.3% SWD 50.1% Minority 49.9% Caucasian	Duval County School Board	River City Education Services, Inc.
River City Science Academy (1201) 3266 Southside Blvd Jacksonville, FL 32216	Grades 6-12 2007-Present	6.1% ELL 7.0% FRL** 6.8% SWD 42.4% Minority 57.6% Caucasian	Duval County School Board	River City Education Services, Inc.
River City Science Academy at Mandarin (5601) 10911 Old St. Augustine Rd. Jacksonville, FL	Grades K-8 2016-Present	8.5% ELL 37.6% FRL 9.6% SWD 47.6% Minority 52.4% Caucasian	Duval County School Board	River City Education Services, Inc.

School	Operation ⁷	Student Demographic Information *	Authorizer	Governing Board
Tallahassee School Of Math & Science (1425) Formerly Stars Middle School 3434 N Monroe St Tallahassee, FL 32303	Grades K-8 2015-Present	7.3% ELL 76.5% FRL*** 8.8% SWD 63.4% Minority 36.6% Caucasian	Leon County School Board	Stars Education, Inc.
Broward Math and Science School (5038) 6101 NW 31st Street Margate, FL 33063	Grades K-12 2014-Present	18.7% ELL 67.7% FRL 6.6% SWD 81.3% Minority 19.7% Caucasian	Broward County School Board	Riverside Science, Inc.
Discovery Academy Of Science Charter School (North & South campuses) (7331) 1380 Pinehurst Rd. Dunedin, FL 34698	Grades K-12 2013-Present	0.6% ELL 41.7% FRL 7.7% SWD 26.9% Minority 73.1% Caucasian	Pinellas County School Board	Galaxy Education, Inc.
New Springs Schools (6657) 2410 E Busch Blvd. Tampa, FL 33612	Grades K-8 Elementary 2010-Present Middle 2011-Present	12.1% ELL 79.4% FRL 7.3% SWD 83% Minority 17% Caucasian	Hillsborough County School Board	New Springs, Inc.

Closed Charter Schools and Attempted Charter School Applications

Riverside Science Academy 8200 South Palm Dr, Deerfield Beach, FL 33035	Denied 2009		Broward County School Board	Riverside Science, Inc.
Sweetwater Branch Academy (Elementary and Middle)	2010-2013 Closed	Elementary closed due to failing grades; middle due to financial insolvency	Alachua County School Board	Neosprings, Inc.
Palm Beach Science School	Approved 2011, Delayed 2013, Never Opened		Palm Beach County School Board	Palm Beach Science, Inc.
Atlantic Science Academy	Authorized 2005, never opened		Miami-Dade Schools	Sweetwater Education, Inc.
Miami-Dade Science Schools	Approved 2010, Delayed 2012, never opened		Miami-Dade Schools	Sweetwater Education, Inc.
Osceola Universal Charter School	Denied 2006		Osceola County School Board	Universal Education Services, Inc.
Capital City Charter Science Academy	Application with-drawn 2013		Leon County School Board	Stars Education Services, Inc.

* Student demographic information was taken from the 2015-2016 school year, with the exception of those schools opened in 2016. «ELL» indicates English Language Learners, «FRL» indicates students receiving free/reduced lunch, and «SWD» indicates students with disabilities.⁹

** River City Science Academy experienced a dramatic decrease in students eligible for free/reduced lunch between 2015-16 to 2016-17, from 48% to 7%. This decline should be investigated.

*** Tallahassee School of Math and science experienced a dramatic decrease in students eligible for free/reduced lunch between 2015-16 to 2016-17, from 76.5% to 58%. This decline should be investigated.

⁹ Student enrollment and demographic information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mtzdnmw> (last checked 4/19/2017).

A History of Strategic Ambiguity and Conflicting Interests

The Florida Gülen charter network consists of several smaller charter networks that appear to be unrelated on their face, but our research indicates that in reality they share the same founding board members, vendors, landlords, and employees. Furthermore, the Florida network shares significant overlap with Gülenists from the failed Georgia network.

The first educational foundation formed in Florida was Sweetwater Education, Inc., in 2003. Dr. Cengiz Alacaci incorporated the governing board, which went on to submit two charter applications for Gülenist charter schools in Miami. Both were approved, but neither opened.¹⁰ Sweetwater Education continues to exist today, though it serves no known purpose at this time. The second foundation to form was Stars Education Services Inc., founded by Yalcin Akin in 2004. Akin is one of the primary founders of the Florida Gülen network as he has been involved in at least four of the ten Gülenist networks (both attempted and established) in Florida, including Tampa, Miami, Tallahassee, and Orlando.

Discovery Education Services was the third foundation to form, incorporated in 2005 by Mehmet Taskan, owner of Blue Construction. Blue Ocean Construction is the Gülenist construction vendor for the Southeastern region of the Gülen Organization.¹¹ A year later, Taskan formed Universal Education Services in Miami with one of his fellow Discovery board members, Mustafa Ince.¹² River City also formed in 2006 by Selcuk Buyuksarac. Among its founding board members was Akif Abdulbasit Aydin. Aydin has also worked as the director of the Amity Turkish Cultural Center and the Istanbul Cultural Center, both Gülenist cultural associations. Aydin later admitted to being a Gülenist during a radio

interview given after the attempted coup in 2016, discussed further below, and stated that teachers and administrators at River City Science Academy were also Gülenists.

While many of the foundations formed from 2003-2006, the first school to successfully open was River City Science Academy in 2007. Orlando Science Charter School opened a year later in 2008, and since then, eleven more schools opened. Only two have closed down so far—Sweetwater Branch Academy Elementary and Middle. The schools shut down due to poor academic performance and bad financial condition, classic markers for Gülen charter schools.

The Florida Gülen charter network is overseen by the regional charter management organization, Charter Educational Services & Resources ("CESR"). CESR was formerly known as the Grace Institute, but the company changed its branding after a series of damaging forensic audits conducted by a Georgia school district revealed it to be a sham corporation.¹³ The Fulton Science Academies in Georgia were investigated for periodic insolvency and other financial concerns in the 2012-2013 timeframe. The audits uncovered all the hallmarks of a Gülen charter network, including the use of a sham external charter management organization, the Grace Institute. The audit investigations revealed that Grace only had two employees—one of which was a paid administrator of the Fulton Science schools, and the other a part-time person to answer the phone. Despite the fact that the Fulton Science schools paid Grace significant fees each year, Grace did not in fact provide any services of value and constituted a conflict of interest due to their shared employee, Ali Ozer.

After the Fulton Science (GA) schools were non-renewed due to numerous issues, the

¹⁰ Sweetwater corporate filings, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kjq6hsb> (last checked 6/15/2017).

¹¹ Discovery Education Services, Articles of Incorporation available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ml8qjeh> (last checked 6/15/2017).

¹² Universal Education Services, corporate information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kwwpz7p> (last checked 6/15/2017).

¹³ For more information, see the Georgia profile.

Grace Institute changed its name to CESR and continued to provide “services” to its Florida customers from its Atlanta and Jacksonville offices.¹⁴ CESR was incorporated in Florida by Avni Cokavci, the former principal of Fulton Science Academy High School (formerly TEACH).¹⁵ Many of the H-1B teachers and employees utilized by

the Fulton Science (GA) schools were ultimately dispersed throughout the Florida Gülen charter schools, though the two networks shared employees prior to that, as well. For example, Murat Cetin, Principal of the Fulton Science elementary school, is currently Principal of the Osceola Science Charter School.¹⁶

A Sample of Board Member/Employee Overlap Across the Florida Network¹⁷

Elvan Aktas	Sweetwater Education 2005-07	River City Education Services 2013-Present		
Mehmet Taskan	Discovery Education Services 2005-12	Universal Education Services 2006-12		
Mustafa Ince	Discovery Education Services 2005-06	Universal Education Services 2006-12		
Yalcin Akin	Stars Education Services Inc. 2004-2014	Employed by Discovery Education Services, Inc. 2007-Present	Sweetwater Education Inc. (non-voting advisor) 2009-10	New Springs Inc. 2014-Present
Dogan Tozoglu	Stars Education Services, Inc. 2006-Present	Sweetwater Education Inc. (non-voting advisor) 2009-10	Palm Beach Science Inc. (only in petition 2010)	Employed by River City Education Services Inc. 2010-Present
Renat Shaykhutdinov	Riverside Science, Inc. 2008-Present	Palm Beach Science Inc. 2010-13		

Inter-Entity Lending Practices

Our investigation would suggest that charter schools within the Gülen Organization and their vendors engage in frequent inter-entity lending practices, ranging from school to school, from employees to the school, board members to the

school, and even from vendors to the school, a known warning sign for money laundering.¹⁸ In 2015-16, both River City Science Elementary and River City Science Innovation owed River City Science Academy money—\$23,726 and \$53,834

¹⁴ For an archived version of the Grace Schools website as of February 2010, listing member schools, see: <http://tinyurl.com/n2racps> (last checked 6/15/2017).

¹⁵ GA Department of Education report, listing TEACH information, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kgpv22v> (last checked 6/15/2017).

¹⁶ Information taken from: Orlando Science listing, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/k3ptbng> (last checked 6/15/2017); and LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lp6m7dy> (last checked 6/15/2017).

¹⁷ Information gathered from corporate filings for each of the Florida Gülen charter foundation boards.

¹⁸ The Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing Guidance to accompany the federal and international legislation list numerous unusual transactions made with little to no justification between affiliated entities as warning signs. See Guidance at <http://tinyurl.com/zb56xel> (last checked 6/15/2017).

respectively.¹⁹ All of the River City schools are under the same governing board, meaning the board owes fiduciary duties of care and loyalty to each of its schools. Shuffling funds between schools, particularly when River City Science Academy operated at a deficit net position for the same year, could be indicative of a breach of fiduciary duty to the school.

Similarly indicative of the poor financial conditions seen throughout charter networks in the Gülen Organization, Broward Math and Science borrowed \$19,500 from its principal Ali Gumus in

2015-16, who earned \$60,000 that year in salary, to cover operating costs. The school also borrowed \$83,000 from one-to-two unnamed board members in the same year as well as \$15,000 from an unnamed individual. This is not the first time Broward Math and Science has taken out loans—its principal loaned it \$27,000 the year before, and board member and Florida founder, Renat Shaykhutdinov loaned it \$14,800 prior to that.²⁰

Tallahassee School of Math and Science also received a significant loan \$45,000 from its board member, Zeki Akdemir in 2014.²¹

Real Estate

Our interpretation of the evidence suggests that one of the most significant profit centers for the Gülen Organization is through real estate. This property financing scheme has been replicated throughout the country—in fact, Vahap Uysal, a board member of Concept Schools,²² 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.²³ Gülenists throughout the country attended and presented, including the Greater Texas region's founder Alp Aslandogan,²⁴ as well as Florida's own Renat Shaykhutdinov, board member for Broward Math and Science and Petitioner for the failed Palm Beach Science School.

Like other vendor relationships, the Gülen Organization profits off of requiring its charter schools to rent or buy property from Gülenists,

usually at exorbitant prices. Our research leads to the conclusion that the Gülenists generally provide kickbacks to the overall Gülen Organization in return for the business, all at the expense of the charter school's public funds. The scheme extends to the use of affiliated Gülenist construction companies to renovate the charter schools' properties, who appear to overcharge and underperform with impunity.

In Florida, by far the most egregious example of the Gülen Organization's real estate scheme concerns the acquisition of the River City Science Academy's 7555 and 7605 Beach Boulevard property in Jacksonville, FL. In 2010, Yazan Khatib purchased the 7555 property at a foreclosure auction for \$100.00 through his company, River City Plaza LLC, which also employs Mehmet Taskan.²⁵ Over the next three years, Khatib and Taskan procured numerous building permits for construction

¹⁹ See 2016 audits for each school.

²⁰ Information taken from the 2014-15 audit, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/jzyfbul> (last checked 6/15/2017); and 990 tax documentation.

²¹ See the 2014 990 form for Stars Education, Inc.

²² See Concept Schools 990 tax form, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/h5yvjl> (last checked 6/15/2017).

²³ Conference was held Nov. 3, 2007 in San Antonio, Texas, and the conference agenda is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/gt2vujs> (last checked 6/15/2017).

²⁴ See Texas profile for more information about Alp Aslandogan.

²⁵ Foreclosure information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mzxg2u7> (last checked 6/15/2017); Property history available at: <http://tinyurl.com/leqctfa> (last checked 6/15/2017); and River City Plaza LLC corporate information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mc32ngh> (last checked 6/15/2017); Khatib Development corporate information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kczqg5u> (last checked 6/15/2017).

and renovation to update the property for River City Science Academy mentioned by name as early as 2011. Khatib spent \$1,583,500 in construction and acquisition costs on the 7555 property.²⁶ Khatib and Taskan often hired Taskan's own company, Blue Ocean Construction, to perform the renovations. In 2014, River City Science Academy took over the payment for the building permits for the property, despite not officially owning it yet. In 2015, River City Science Academy purchased the building from Khatib for \$12,509,500 with the proceeds of bond financing, discussed below.

The \$12.5 million purchase also included the 7605 property next door, which Khatib purchased in 2012 for \$340,000.²⁷ From 2012-2014, this property was renovated to include a gym constructed by Blue Ocean Construction.²⁸ While Khatib technically owned the 7605 property until 2015, River City Science Academy paid for the majority of the construction costs from 2012-14. A brief rundown of the parties' costs and profits regarding the 7555 property ("7555") and the 7605 property ("7605") is as follows:

Year	Khatib & Taskan - River City Plaza, LLC; 7605 Beach Boulevard LLC	Taskan - Blue Ocean Construction	River City Science Academy
2010	- \$100 to purchase 7555 building - \$115,000 for roof repair		
2011	-\$910,000 for "improvements" for 7555 -\$73,500 plumbing for 7555 -\$15,000 wiring for 7555 -\$25,000 electrical for 7555 -\$55,000 sprinkler system for 7555 -\$50,000 sprinkler system for 7555 -\$155,000 duct work for 7555 -\$800 tree removal for 7555 -\$14,500 fence for 7555 -\$8,500 canopies for 7555 -\$1,200 fence lighting for 7555	+\$910,000 "improvements" paid by Khatib in cash for 7555 +\$14,500 fence for 7555 +\$8,500 canopies for 7555	-\$2,000 for 7555 tree removal
2012	-\$340,000 purchase for 7605 -\$89,000 electrical for 7555 -\$6,000 sprinklers for 7555 -\$5,000 electrical for 7555 -\$24,500 drains for 7555		
2013	-\$8,500 site prep for 7555 -\$8,500 site work for 7555	+\$8,500 site work for 7555	
2014	-\$2,380 demo building for 7605 -\$85,500 landscaping for 7605	+ 2,380 demo building for 7605 +\$964,595 gym construction for 7605	-\$30,949 LED sign for 7555 paid in cash -\$98,000 duct work for 7605 -\$8,000 security for 7605 -\$16,000 sprinkler for 7605 -\$9,000 electrical for 7605 -\$33,500 drains for 7605 -\$6,000 sprinkler for 7605 -\$964,595 gym construction for 7605 in cash

²⁶ This figure is the \$100 sale price plus the aggregate total of fees listed in the permits, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mv7k7au> (last checked 6/15/2017).

²⁷ Property history, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kusft9s> (last checked 6/15/2017).

²⁸ All information regarding the construction costs is available through searching the building permit database, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mv7k7au> (last checked 6/15/2017).

Year	Khatib & Taskan - River City Plaza, LLC; 7605 Beach Boulevard LLC	Taskan - Blue Ocean Construction	River City Science Academy
2015	-\$2,858 sign for 7605 -\$2,858 sign for 7605 +\$12,509,500 for sale of 7555 and 7605 to River City Science Academy	+\$7655 gym canopy for 7605	-\$12,509,500 purchase 7555 and 7605 -\$50 LED sign bulbs -\$30,949 LED sign for 7555 -\$1000 lighting for 7605
Total	= \$1,998,696 spent total = \$12,509,500 gained = \$10,510,804 net profit	= \$1,916,130 profit	= \$1,168,044 spent before owning either building = \$13,678,594 spent total = \$29,326,656 ultimate cost due to bond financing

As the chart demonstrates, both Khatib and Taskan profited extensively off of these property transactions with River City Science Academy. Ultimately, River City Science Academy will spend \$29.3 million due to the bond debt it incurred to pay Khatib's \$12.5 million price. Taskan was listed as both the property owner and the contractor on numerous building permits as he routinely hired his own company Blue Ocean Construction for work on behalf of Khatib and River City Science Academy. Both Khatib and Taskan have connections throughout the Gülen Organization. Khatib sits on the board of directors for the Atlantic Institute of Jacksonville, a Gülenist cultural association which hosts dialogue dinners and trips to Turkey for local politicians. Khatib's company Pelham Oaks Plaza LLC is also the landlord for a Gülenist charter school in South Carolina, GREEN Charter School.²⁹ Taskan's Blue Ocean Construction is the preferred construction vendor for the Southeastern region of the Gülen Organization. Blue Ocean continues to do numerous jobs for Gülenist charter schools throughout Florida and the Southeastern region. Blue Ocean also uses the same H-1B attorneys as the rest of the Gülen Organization.³⁰

Taskan also has other concerning connections

to the Florida schools—he served on the founding board of Discovery Education Services, which oversees Orlando Science, Osceola Science, and Seminole Science.³¹ He also incorporated Universal Education Services with many of the same individuals from Discovery, which submitted an application for a Gülenist charter school in Osceola that was not approved.³² As is common with Gülenist vendors, Taskan served first as a school creator that he then later profited as a vendor.

The other schools that are implicated in the Gülen Organization's real estate scheme are Seminole Science and Tallahassee Math and Science. The schools rent their properties from 5M Associates and 3434 Monroe Holdings respectively, both of which are owned by Naeem Haider.³³ Haider sits on the board for the Atlantic Institute alongside Yazan Khatib in Jacksonville. The rent information is only available for the year 2015-2016, which was the first year each school began renting from Haider. Seminole Science paid between \$178,000- \$215,000 that year, and Tallahassee Math and Science paid \$210,000-\$240,235.³⁴ Using Ohio as a comparator, the rent prices should be closely scrutinized for later years as the Gülenist landlord entities in Ohio doubled, tripled, and in one case, quadrupled rent each year.³⁵

²⁹ GREEN charter school minutes, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lwuodat> (last checked 6/15/2017).

³⁰ Blue Ocean uses Attorney Remzi Kulen, see Abuse of the H-1B Program section.

³¹ Discovery Education Services Articles of Incorporation, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ml8qjeh> (last checked 6/15/2017).

³² Universal Education Services, corporate information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kwwpz7p> (last checked 6/15/2017).

³³ Corporate information for 5M Associates, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/k3a6pt2> (last checked 6/15/2017); 3434 Monroe Holdings, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ld38apf> (last checked 6/15/2017).

³⁴ Figures taken from the 2016 audits and 2016 accountability reports for each school, which for some reason, list different amounts for leases paid, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/m9ldgth> (last checked 6/15/2017).

³⁵ See Ohio profile for more detail.

Orlando Science also rents an outdoor recreation area from Discovery Education Properties at Technology, LLC, a related party under common control. In 2015-16, it paid itself \$78,000

in rent.³⁶ Executive Director Yalcin Akin is listed as the owner of this related for-profit entity. More information is needed to determine whether this is an appropriate relationship.

Bond Financing

To date, the River City Science Academy governing board is the only Florida network that has secured bond financing. In 2015, the board received three bond issuances in the cumulative amount of \$14.4 million from the Capital Trust Agency.³⁷ The bonds financed the acquisition of the properties owned by River City Plaza, LLC, discussed above in the real estate section. According to the bond statement, the River City board entered into a purchase agreement with Khatib of River City Plaza

on October 24, 2014,³⁸ although the sale was not finalized until 2015. An appraisal conducted in 2015 stated the value of the property as \$12 million, but notably, this included the gym, which River City Science Academy had just paid \$1 million to renovate. The amounts paid by River City Science Academy were not credited to the purchase price, however, further underscoring the bad deal the schools received compared to the profit of the Gülenist landlord entity.

Excessive use of the H-1B Visa Program

Like other Gülen Organization charter networks, the Florida Gülen charter schools utilize the H-1B visa program to immigrate large numbers of Turkish Gülenists into the United States for employment in the schools and network. The Florida network filed at least 195 H-1B applications from 2001-2016, while CESR itself filed 8 H-1B applications during the same period.³⁹ While the Gülen Organization typically states that these H-1Bs are only to fill shortage areas for math and science teachers, these applications were filed for such positions as: principal, curriculum coordinator, business operations specialist, instructional coordinator, business manager, and Science Olympiad coordinators.

Stars Education Services has recently been sued for employment discrimination as of December 2016.⁴⁰

Florida's Gülen charter schools use the same immigration attorneys to file and process their H-1B applications as other known Gülen Organization charter networks, vendors, and cultural associations, indicating once again the existence of an overall network. For example:

- **Cherie Cookorinis:** the Florida network (including: Discovery, River City, New Springs, Neosprings, Stars Education, Galaxy) used Cookorinis, a Georgia-based

³⁶ See 2016 audit, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/m9ldgth> (last checked 6/15/2017).

³⁷ Bond statements available at: <http://tinyurl.com/meh94uv> (last checked 6/15/2017).

³⁸ Bond official statement, pg 10, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/k5pb7cf> (last checked 6/15/2017).

³⁹ See MyVisaJobs.com for each governing board's information, 1) Discovery Education Services 61 H-1Bs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kcf2laf> (last checked 6/15/2017); 2) River City Education Services 80 H-1Bs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lb6kgyk> (last checked 6/15/2017); 3) Stars Education Services 18 H-1Bs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/m6wme9m> (last checked 6/15/2017); 4) Riverside Science 3 H-1Bs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mc3zfaf> (last checked 6/15/2017); 5) Galaxy Education, 5 H-1Bs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/k5q5v44> (last checked 6/15/2017); 6) New Springs Inc. 19 H-1Bs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kaz429x> (last checked 6/15/2017); 7) Sweetwater Education 2 H-1Bs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/n5zdb2n> (last checked 6/15/2017); 8) Neosprings, Inc. 12 H-1Bs available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ldvrs52> (last checked 6/15/2017) and <http://tinyurl.com/kr6w82w> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁴⁰ Court docket, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/m244vxw> (last checked 6/15/2017).

attorney to file numerous H-1B applications.⁴¹ Cookorinis also filed applications for:

- ▷ Fulton Science (GA)
- ▷ Chesapeake Lighthouse Foundation (MD)
- ▷ Triad Math and Science (NC)
- ▷ Charter Educational Services & Resources (GA, FL)
- ▷ Grace Institute (GA, FL)

- ▶ **Remzi Kulen:** the Florida network used Kulen, a New York-based attorney, to file numerous H-1B applications.⁴² Kulen also filed applications for:

- ▷ Orlando Culture & Dialog Center (FL)
- ▷ Blue Ocean Construction (FL)
- ▷ Fulton Science (GA)
- ▷ Charter Educational Services & Resources (GA, FL)
- ▷ Concept Schools (OH, IL, IN, MI, MN)
- ▷ Pioneer (MA)
- ▷ Niagara Foundation (IL)
- ▷ Young Scholars (PA)
- ▷ Gülen's home, the Golden Generation Workshop Center (PA)
- ▷ Academy of Science, Syracuse, Buffalo (NY)
- ▷ Arts & Science, Bergen, Passaic (NJ)

Scandals and Notable Events

River City Science Academy and Tallahassee Math and Science Academy both received significant media attention in the aftermath of the attempted coup in Turkey in 2016. River City's Executive Director Dogan Tozoglu wrote a letter to Jacksonville's mayor stating that the schools had no direct affiliation with Gülen or involvement with the coup.⁴³ Also, Akif Aydin, a founding board member of River City Education Services, gave a forty-minute radio interview during which he spoke extensively of the Gülen Movement, Gülen charter schools, and Gülen's suspected role in the attempted coup.⁴⁴ Though Aydin was interviewed due to his involvement with River City Science Academy, he spoke openly and on behalf of Gülen charter schools throughout the country. Some of his more interesting comments were as follows:

- ▶ Aydin stated that there was "no doubt" that the charter schools often referred to as Gülen charter schools were founded by Turkish individuals inspired by Gülen. He himself is a follower of Gülen.
- ▶ If the Turkish teachers on H-1B visas choose to donate their money from their salaries, that's a personal choice, much

like donating to a local church.

- ▷ Commentary: What's fascinating about this remark from Aydin was that the interviewer had not brought up the tuzuk payments at all during the interview. Aydin offered this justification apropos of nothing. Whistleblower testimony from several former Gülenist employees makes it clear that these payments are not optional.

- ▶ Aydin referred to the concerns against Gülen charter schools around the country for overpayments to Gülenist vendors as "slandering," which had never been proven.
- ▷ Commentary: Again, Aydin was defending Gülen charter schools nationally, rather than discussing his own school River City Science Academy.
- ▶ Aydin stated that, to his knowledge, the teachers hired on H-1B visas were only for hard-to-fill math and science positions around the country in schools founded by Turkish individuals inspired by Gülen.
- ▷ Commentary: This is in direct contradiction to the H-1B applications

⁴¹ List of entities represented by Cherie Cookorinis, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/m4e6cgl> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁴² List of entities represented by Remzi Kulen, available at <http://tinyurl.com/gptwx5x> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁴³ Tozoglu letter, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mtmr65g> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁴⁴ Aydin interview, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/j2a7b8q> (last checked 6/15/2017).

themselves, which demonstrate the positions hired are for positions that help the Gülen Organization maintain financial control and secrecy

over the use of school funds, such as accountants, business managers, and administrators.

Notable Turkish Vendors

Charter Educational Services & Resources “CESR”, formerly known as Grace Institute: CESR is a smaller-scale charter management organization that oversees the Southeastern region of the Gülen Organization, including the Florida networks and the failed Fulton Science (GA) network. CESR is incorporated by former Fulton Science (GA) administrator, Avni Cokavci, and receives a per-head amount in fees from each of its customer charter schools, allegedly for curricular support, professional development, and student information management systems. In Florida, River City Science schools, Tallahassee School of Math and Science, Orlando Science Schools, Seminole Science, Broward Math and Science, Osceola Science, New Springs Schools, Discovery Academy of Science all use CESR for student information services, as well as Fulton Science private school (GA) and Green Charter School (SC).⁴⁵

Blue Ocean Construction: Blue Ocean Construction is the preferred construction vendor for the Southeastern region. Like its charter customers, Blue Ocean also depends on the H-1B program. Numerous schools throughout the Florida Gülen charter network and the Southeastern region have utilized Blue Ocean for construction work. Mehmet Taskan, the owner of Blue Construction, also incorporated two Gülenist charter boards in Florida, Discovery Education Services and Universal Education Services.⁴⁶

E-Rate Funding: Several of the Florida networks have received federal E-Rate funds, but the information regarding the vendors chosen is unavailable. In light of the alleged E-Rate funding fraud that is under investigation by federal authorities throughout the Gülen Organization, the vendors chosen by the Florida networks should be examined to determine whether they are controlled by related Gülenist parties.

Gülenist Cultural Foundations

The Atlantic Institute: The Atlantic Institute has branches throughout the Southeast region. It promotes Gülen’s teachings⁴⁷ and inter-faith dialogue, and two of the Florida Network’s landlords are currently listed on its governing board, Naeem Haider and Yazan Khatib.⁴⁸ Additionally, it hosts dialogue dinners and trips to Turkey for

local politicians.

Istanbul Cultural Center: The Istanbul Cultural Center has branches throughout Florida. It hosts Gülenist inter-faith dialogue dinners and trips to Turkey.⁴⁹ River City Science founding board member Akif Aydin is the former director of the Center.

⁴⁵ All of the following school websites contain the language “Powered by Charter Educational Services & Resources,” evidencing the tie between CESR’s Gülenist charter school customers, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/l54sqwb> (last checked 6/15/2017), <http://tinyurl.com/mm9s22a> (last checked 6/15/2017), <http://tinyurl.com/kofnlk4> (last checked 6/15/2017), <http://tinyurl.com/krpfzqs> (last checked 6/15/2017), <http://tinyurl.com/k35qx8y> (last checked 6/15/2017), <http://tinyurl.com/lke2m4c> (last checked 6/15/2017), <http://tinyurl.com/m2vxrfu> (last checked 6/15/2017), <http://tinyurl.com/lv23dcd> (last checked 6/15/2017), <http://tinyurl.com/kxth73j> (last checked 6/15/2017), <http://tinyurl.com/l78cxd3> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁴⁶ Discovery Education Services Articles of Incorporation, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ml8qjeh> (last checked 6/15/2017); Universal Education Services, corporate information available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kwwpz7p> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁴⁷ Fethullah Gülen bio on Atlantic Institute’s website, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mvjxmo9> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁴⁸ Board of directors, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lxe4vvq> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁴⁹ Istanbul Cultural Center website, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/jvsrwnv> (last checked 6/15/2017).

Amity Turkish Cultural Center: The Center is a Gülenist cultural center operated by Akif Aydın, founding board member of River City

Science Academy. It provides Gülenist cultural outreach, dialogue dinners, and trips to Turkey.⁵⁰

Individuals Caught in the Gülen Organization Web

It is quite 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.

- ▶ **Emre Akbaba:** Science Teacher, Fulton Science Academy High School/TEACH (GA); River City Science Principal, New Spring Science Elementary and Middle School (FL); Principal, Discovery Academy of Science (FL).⁵¹
- ▶ **Serkan Gunpinar:** Board Member, Minnesota Math and Science Academy (MN); Founding Board President, Sirius Foundation, Inc. - Gülenist cultural association (FL); Board Member, New Springs, Inc. (FL).⁵²
- ▶ **Yunus Aksu:** Substitute teacher, Noble Academy Cleveland (OH); Principal,

Seminole Science Charter School (FL); Principal, New Springs Schools (FL).⁵³

- ▶ **Murat Cetin:** Principal, Fulton Sunshine Academy (GA); Principal, Osceola Science Charter School (FL).⁵⁴
- ▶ **Alaaddin Akgul:** Science Coach & Gifted Education Consultant, CESR (Southeastern); Dean, River City Science Academy (FL); Principal, River City Science Elementary (FL); Regional Director, Science Olympiad (FL); Principal, River City Science Mandarin (FL).⁵⁵
- ▶ **Ali Gumus:** Founder and Superintendent, LISA Academy (AR); Principal, Memphis School of Excellence (TN); Presenter, Harmony Public Schools Conference (TX); Principal, Broward Math and Science (FL).⁵⁶
- ▶ **Ozan Sipahioglu:** Principal, River City Science Academy (FL); Pacific Technology School Orangeville (Magnolia CA).⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Corporate information, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/l6dgujm> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁵¹ Information taken from: Pinellas charter schools, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/m2q4z2l> (last checked 6/15/2017); Bio, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/m473l24> (last checked 6/15/2017); Newsletter, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lmz6yvs> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁵² Information taken from: MMSA 990 forms, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kz4nkqg> (last checked 6/15/2017); Florida Corporate Documents available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mmj67c7> (last checked 6/15/2017); Florida Corporate Documents available at: <http://tinyurl.com/l56cxns> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁵³ Information taken from: Principal newsletter, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mquljva> (last checked 6/15/2017); School listing, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/k3ptbng> (last checked 6/15/2017); Employee credential search OH, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/j7bxyhk> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁵⁴ Information taken from: Orlando Science listing, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/k3ptbng> (last checked 6/15/2017); and LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lp6m7dy> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁵⁵ Information taken from: LinkedIn Profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/l59zuqz> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁵⁶ Information taken from: School listing, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/jwszpod> (last checked 6/15/2017); LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lm6oldk> (last checked 6/15/2017); Harmony schedule, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/l5g7p6f> (last checked 6/15/2017); LISA Academy information, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/jwg9ups> (last checked 6/15/2017); Article re: Gumus, Harmony, and Gülen, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/k6l7y44> (last checked 6/15/2017).

⁵⁷ Information taken from: Charter newsletter, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ksox4ns>; Bond statement at A-8, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/k5pb7cf> (last checked 6/15/2017);

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