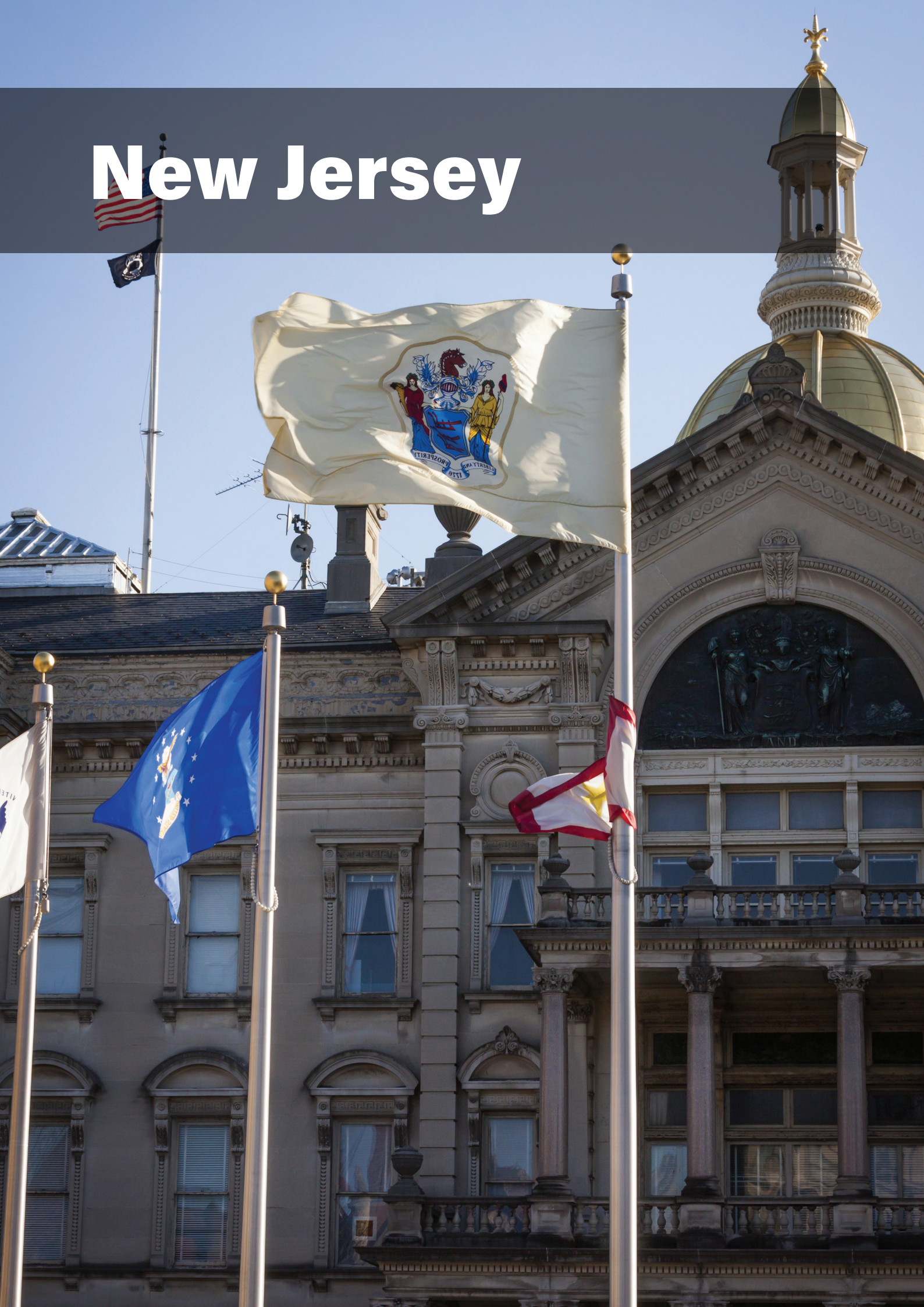


# New Jersey





# QUICK FACTS ON GÜLEN CHARTER SCHOOLS NEW JERSEY



NUMBER OF SCHOOLS       

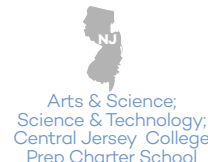
KNOWN AS **iLearn Schools**  
**Central Jersey College Prep**  
**Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School**  
**Paterson Charter School for Science and Tech.**

TOTAL ENROLLMENT **4,797**

CHARTER VENDOR **iLearn Schools**  
**Apple Educational Services; Ivy Learning**

TOTAL 2016 FY REVENUES **\$50,500,000**

RELATED INSTITUTIONS



## KEY PEOPLE



Osman Oztoprak



Candemir Toklu



Nihat Guvercin

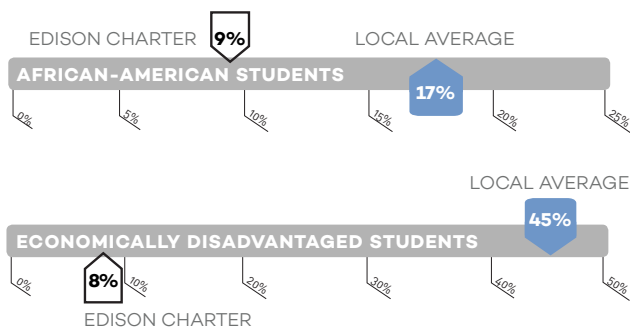


Deirdre Simon

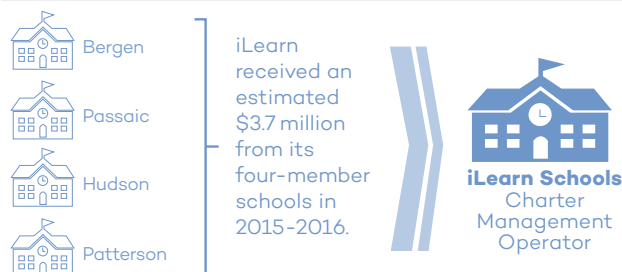


Leo McGuire

## VULNERABLE STUDENT POPULATIONS



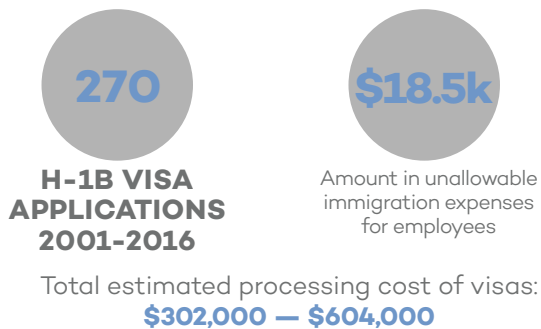
## HIGH ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS



## HOMOGENOUS PERSONNEL



## EXCESSIVE IMMIGRATION



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

## Quick Facts

---

- ▶ Region: Northeast
- ▶ School Names (known as):
  - ▷ iLearn Schools – Arts and Sciences (formerly North Jersey Arts and Sciences Charter Schools)
    - Bergen Arts and Science Charter School
    - Passaic Arts and Science Charter School
    - Paterson Arts and Science Charter School
    - Hudson Arts and Science Charter School
  - ▷ Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology
  - ▷ Central Jersey College Prep
  - ▷ Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School
- ▶ Total # of schools in state: 7 schools (12 campuses)
- ▶ Total student enrollment 2015-16: 4,797
- ▶ Charter Holder/Governing Board(s):
  - ▷ Each school has its own corporate Board of Directors and is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization with a 501 (c)(3) IRS status filed under the same name as each school
- ▶ Charter Management Services Vendor(s): Apple Educational Services/Ivy Learning; iLearn Schools - Arts and Sciences schools
- ▶ Regional Gülen Organization Oversight Entity: Apple Educational Services
- ▶ Regional Sister Networks: Hampden (MA); Pioneer (MA); Academy of Science (NY); Arts and Science (NJ); Science and Technology (NJ); Central Jersey College Prep Charter School (NJ); Young Scholars (PA); Vision Academy (PA).
- ▶ Total Revenues for FY 2016<sup>1</sup>: \$50.5 million
- ▶ Network Founders:
  - ▷ Osman Oztoprak: Founder, Bergen Arts and Science (NJ); CEO, Pioneer Academy, private Gülen-affiliated school (NJ) (Milkyway Education Center as parent organization); Principal, Teacher, Pioneer Academy (NJ); Director (paid), Alliance for Shared Values (NY), the umbrella organization for other Gülen-affiliated nonprofits that is openly aligned with Fethullah Gülen; Program Director, Apple Education Services (NJ).<sup>2</sup>
  - ▷ Candemir Toklu: Founder, Paterson Science and Technology (NJ); Founder, Thomas Edison EnergySmart (NJ); Area Director, Interfaith Dialog Center/Peace Islands Institute - Gülenist cultural organization (NJ).<sup>3</sup>
  - ▷ Nihat Guvercin: CEO, iLearn Schools – Gülenist vendor (NJ); Founder and School Leader of four of the five Arts

<sup>1</sup> Total revenue for each school from annual comprehensive financial report - June 30, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y96o4h6t> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>2</sup> Information taken from: Biographical information included in original Bergen Arts and Science Charter School charter application, received from NJ Department of Education through a 2017 FOIA request; LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ya97mjry> (last checked 6/16/2017); IRS Form 990 for Alliance for Shared Values, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7as3hhd> (last checked 6/16/2017); History of the Gülen Movement from Alliance for Shared Values, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yaqlsx28> (last checked 6/16/2017); Campaign Finance Report for Holt Victory Fund, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8f5pnvk> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>3</sup> Information taken from: Charter applications for Paterson Arts and Science Charter School and Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School charter applications, received from NJ Department of Education through a 2017 FOIA request; Documents from NJ Department of Treasury, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydc8tcf6> (last checked 6/16/2017); The Record/NorthJersey.com article, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lсны9ys> (last checked 6/16/2017).

- and Sciences/iLearn Charter Schools (including one to be opened) (NJ); Principal, Science Teacher, Harmony Public Schools (TX); School Director, Teacher, Researcher, Gulistan Education Institutions (Albania); Student, Middle Eastern Technical University (Turkey).<sup>4</sup>
- ▷ Deirdre Simon: Founder, Passaic Arts and Science Charter School (NJ); Founder, Paterson Arts and Science School (NJ); Founder, Hudson Arts and Science Charter School (NJ); Founder, Union Arts and Science Charter School (opening 2017) (NJ); Paid Consultant, iLearn Schools (NJ); Public School Administrator (NJ).<sup>5</sup>
- ▷ Leo McGuire: Founder, Arts and Sciences/iLearn charter schools (NJ); Paid Security Consultant, Arts and Sciences/iLearn charter schools (NJ); Sherrif, Bergen County (NJ); took Gülen-sponsored trip to Turkey in 2010 (NJ).<sup>6</sup>

## Overview

As of the 2016-2017 school year, New Jersey has 7 charter schools with 12 campuses currently in operation within the Gülen Organization, although some of the schools are currently seeking approval for expansion. Like the majority of charter schools within the Gülen Organization, the governing boards of the NJ charter schools are dominated by board members of Turkish national origin at 77% Turkish total, and school administrators of Turkish national origin, also 77%.<sup>7</sup>

The four Arts and Science schools currently in operation, as well as a fifth school slated to open in fall of 2017, are managed by iLearn Schools, formerly known as North Jersey Art and Sciences Charter Schools. Three other Gülen-affiliated

schools in New Jersey operate outside the iLearn network: Central Jersey College Prep, Thomas Edison EnergySmart, and Paterson Science and Technology. While these seven schools and their campuses are governed by individual governing boards incorporated as separate non-profit organizations, all seven schools utilize the same regional vendors owned and operated by affiliated Turkish individuals. One of these vendors, Apple Educational Services, is the educational services provider and regional oversight entity responsible for the Northeast region of the Gülen Organization. The NJ network contracts with Apple to provide educational management services for a fee paid from total school revenues.

<sup>4</sup> Information taken from: Annual report for each arts and science school; LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7tk8zyc> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>5</sup> Information taken from: Charter applications for each school received from NJ Department of Education through 2017 FOIA request; Paterson Arts and Science Board Minutes from May 31, 2014, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yd6q5kst> (last checked 6/16/2017); State Investigative Report; NJ Department of Education; October 2008; available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ya8dcntw> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>6</sup> Information taken from: Charter applications received from NJ Department of Education through 2017 FOIA request; Bergen Arts and Science Board Minutes from October 15, 2015, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yd872tme> (last checked 6/16/2017); Paterson Arts and Science Board Minutes from May, 21 2014, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yd6q5kst> (last checked 6/16/2017); Certificate of Formation for LPM Strategies, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydc8tcf6> (last checked 6/16/2017); The Record/NorthJersey.com article about state officials joining charter, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycmz89vr> (last checked 6/16/2017); EBRU TV interview with McGuire, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yacymamz> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>7</sup> These figures are taken from the IRS 990 tax documentation for each school for available years. The IRS 990 form for Hudson Arts and Sciences is not yet available because it is a new school.

## List of Schools and Charter Applications Denied

School	Operations	Student Demographic Information*	Authorizer	Governing Board
<b><i>iLearn Schools</i></b>				
<b><i>Nihat Guvercin, CEO and School Leader</i></b>				
Bergen Arts and Science (3 campuses)	K-12  Opened: 2007	Enrollment: 1102 04% ELL* 49% FRL** 04% SWD*** 11% African American 38% Caucasian 42% Hispanic 08% Asian	New Jersey State Department of Education	Bergen Arts and Science Charter School
Elementary: 30 Madonna Pl Garfield, NJ 07026				
Middle: 200 MacArthur Avenue Garfield, NJ 07026				
High: 43 Maple Ave Hackensack, NJ 07601				
Central Office: 465 Boulevard Elmwood Park, NJ				
Passaic Arts and Science (3 campuses)	Grades K-10  Opened: 2011	Enrollment: 719 05% ELL 83% FRL 05% SWD 12% African American 04% Caucasian 80% Hispanic 03% Asian	New Jersey State Department of Education	Passaic Arts and Science Charter School
Primary (K – 2) 6 Wall St Passaic, NJ 07055				
Intermediate (3 – 5) 40 Tulip Dr Passaic, NJ 07055				
Middle High (6 – 10) 7 St. Francis Way Passaic, New Jersey 07055				
Paterson Arts and Science 151 East 33rd Street Paterson, NJ 07514	Grades K-8  Opened: 2013	Enrollment: 472 03% ELL 81% FRL 05% SWD 35% African American 03% Caucasian 59% Hispanic 03% Asian	New Jersey State Department of Education	Paterson Arts and Science Charter School

School	Operations	Student Demographic Information*	Authorizer	Governing Board
Hudson Arts and Science 131 Midland Ave, Kearny, NJ	Grades K-5  Opened: 2016	Enrollment: 357 05% ELL 59% FRL 06% SWD (data from 2016-17; Race/ethnicity N/A because no current data available)	New Jersey State Department of Education	Hudson Arts and Science Charter School
<b>Other Gülen-Affiliated Charter Schools</b>				
Central Jersey College Prep 17 Schoolhouse Road Somerset, NJ 08873	Grades K-1 Grades 6-12  Opened 2006	Enrollment: 421 0% ELL 28% FRL: 08% SWD 31% African American 13% Caucasian 19% Hispanic 34% Asian 3% Other	New Jersey State Department of Education	Central Jersey College Prep Charter School
Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology (2 campuses)  Elementary: 276 Wabash Avenue Paterson, NJ  High School: 196 West Railway Ave Paterson, NJ 07501	Grades K-12  Opened 2003	Enrollment: 974 02% ELL 86% FRL 10% SWD 36% African American 03% Caucasian 60% Hispanic <01% Asian and other	New Jersey State Department of Education	Paterson Charter Schools for Science and Technology
Thomas Edison Energy/ Smart 150 Pierce St Somerset, NJ 08873	Grades K-8  Opened 2011	Enrollment: 340 03% ELL 07% FRL 03% SWD 13% African American 15% Caucasian 03% Hispanic 68% Asian 01.5% Other		Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School
<b>New Schools</b>				
Union Arts and Science Charter School 705 Clinton St. Linden, NJ An iLearn campus	Grades K-2  Opening Fall 2017	Projected enrollment K - 2: 240  Phased in K - 5: Enrollment: 480	NJ State Dept of Education	
Passaic Arts and Science 43 Clifton Ave Clifton, NJ	Grades K-2  Opening Fall 2017		NJ State Dept of Education	

School	Operations	Student Demographic Information*	Authorizer	Governing Board
Central Jersey College Prep – New Brunswick campus	Opening 2018			
<b>Charter Petition/Application Denials and Closed Schools</b>				
Bergen Hope Charter Lyndhurst, NJ	2002 Did not open, Did not receive occupancy certificate from city			Osman Oztoprak, school head Feyz Egriboyun, school board trustees Cavik Oncul, school building owner
Camden Charter School of Achievement Camden City, NJ	2009 Denied <sup>7</sup>			Contact: Riza Ulker
Raritan Arts and Science Charter School Franklin Park, NJ	2009 Denied			Contact: Ms. Eylem Icin
New Century Charter Public School Parsippany – Troy Hills Township	2005 – 1st attempt Denied  2009 – 2nd Denied			Petitioner: Feyzullah Egriboyun Contact: (Mustafa) Kemal Aydin Note: Aydin is currently at Board member for Paterson Science/Technology
Northeastern Arts and Science Charter School	2011 Denied			Petitioners: charter holders of Bergen Arts and Science
Clifton Arts and Science	2011 Denied			Petitioners: charter holders of Bergen/Passaic Arts and Science
Wayne Science and Technology Charter School Wayne Township, NJ	2009 Denied			Nihat Guvercin, Contract Guvercin is currently the lead for iLearn Schools
Essex Arts and Science Charter School	2015 Denied			
Charter amendment: Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology	2015 Denied			

School	Operations	Student Demographic Information*	Authorizer	Governing Board
Albert Einstein EnergySmart Old Bridge, NJ	2017 Denied			
Nikola Tesla Energy/Smart Perth Amboy, NJ	2017 Denied			Petitioner: Raif Rustamov
<b>Private Schools</b>				
Pioneer Academy (formerly Pioneer Academy of Science – changed name in 2014) 164 Totowa Rd Wayne, NJ	PK - 12 Tuition-based: Domestic \$12,900 - \$17,900 International \$24,900 Boarding: \$12,900  Founded 1999	Enrollment: 274 (Boarding: 63)		Principal/Head of School: Tufan Aydin  2014 (Milkyway Education Center DBA Pioneer Science Academy)

\*ELL – English Language Learner; FRL – students eligible for free and reduced price lunch (economically disadvantages);

\*\*FRL: Students eligible for Free and Reduced price lunch (economically disadvantaged)

\*\*\*SWD – Student with disabilities (special education)

## A History of Strategic Ambiguity and Conflicting Interests

The New Jersey Gülen charter network is one of the oldest in the country, with the first school founded in 1999. Pioneer Academy, formerly known as Pioneer Academy of Science, was established by the Milkyway Education Foundation as a private, tuition-based school in Wayne, New Jersey the same year as Fethullah Gülen moved to the United States. The founders, employees, and board members of Milkyway and Pioneer have gone on to establish and work at other charter schools within the Gülen Organization across the country. Pioneer has applied for a significant number of H-1B visas (89)<sup>8</sup> through its parent organization, the Milkyway Education Center, thereby serving as an important entry way for new Turkish teachers into the United States.

After Pioneer's establishment, the first public charter school established in New Jersey that meets the markers for a Gülen Organization charter school is Paterson Charter School of Science and Technology, which opened in 2003. After that, the New Jersey network expanded significantly, with new charter schools opening and the formation of a Gülenist-controlled charter management organization ("CMO"), iLearn Schools.

Nihat Guvercin, a veteran of the Harmony Public Schools network,<sup>9</sup> a Gülen-affiliated network of 48 schools in Texas, is the current CEO of iLearn Schools. iLearn emerged from the North Jersey Arts and Sciences Charter Schools that Guvercin apparently founded to serve as a base to expand the network and to provide technical support. Following a recommendation

<sup>8</sup> H-1B visas application can be reviewed by employer at MyVisaJobs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/25dq4lj> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>9</sup> LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7tk8zyc> (last checked 6/16/2017).



from Guvercin and the iLearn Schools Business Administrator to select iLearn as the CMO in 2015, the Board of Directors at each of the now iLearn-managed schools (Bergen, Passaic, Paterson, and Hudson) voted to approve iLearn as the CMO without a competitive bid, stating that the Board “exempted the contract for school management services from the requirements of public bidding as an extraordinary unspecifiable service.”<sup>10</sup> iLearn is paid 12% of all public funds received from each member school.<sup>11</sup> It is significant to note that the original charter application for these schools specifically stated that the schools would not use the services of a CMO, and yet when they did, they did so without a bid or a competitive process with built-in accountability to stakeholders.<sup>12</sup>

Documents show that iLearn was paid an estimated \$3.7 million from its four member schools in 2015-2016. This total is based on documented payments to iLearn from two of the schools and similar budget line item amounts for the other schools.<sup>13</sup> For example, at Bergen Arts and Sciences, iLearn is paid \$1,564,351 annually (\$130,363 per month) which equates to \$118 per student per month and \$1,420 per student per year.<sup>14</sup> These represent extremely high administrative costs, and are discussed further below.

iLearn is responsible for services such as recruitment and marketing for students and staff, securing the school facilities, developing and implementing school curricula, managing

human resources, handling regulatory reporting, implementing technology, and other administrative services.<sup>15</sup> Charter renewal applications for these schools describe the model that iLearn promotes at its schools and the “partnership” between the schools. Teachers at the member schools are often transferred in significant numbers to staff new schools so that the model can be replicated. In addition, individuals of Turkish national origin are often hired mid-year to serve as substitute teachers or tutors at these schools: four at Bergen in February 2016; six at Bergen and other schools in October 2016; and six at Paterson Arts and Science in October 2016.<sup>16</sup> According to a Georgia whistleblower who was an administrator in the Fulton Science schools there, the same practice occurred in the Georgia Gülen-affiliated schools and we believe was used as a way to acclimate new H-1B teachers from Turkey to the United States while they learned English and prepared to take paid positions at the schools.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the fact that iLearn only manages four of the currently operating seven Gülen-affiliated charter schools in New Jersey, all seven schools contract with many of the same Turkish-operated vendors, including Apple Educational Services and Technotime Business Solutions. According to whistleblower testimony, Apple Educational Services serves as the regional oversight entity for the Northeast region of the Gülen Organization. As the profiles of this region discuss, Apple contracts with all of the schools throughout the

<sup>10</sup> Board vote to approve iLearn as CMO; Board Minutes, Paterson Arts and Science 5.28.15; available at <http://tinyurl.com/yd6q5kst> (last checked 6/18/2017).

<sup>11</sup> Id.

<sup>12</sup> Name change from North Jersey Arts and Sciences Charter Schools to iLearn Schools, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yct48nor> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>13</sup> From Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports for Bergen, Passaic, and Paterson Arts and Science with projected total from Hudson that opened in 2016 so no financial report for prior year; line item; Purchases of Prof/Tech Services under Administration in Expenditures from the General Fund: Bergen (\$1,564,351), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yczp2pa3> (last checked 6/16/2017); Patterson (\$620,456), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydh5eajh> (last checked 6/16/2017); Passaic (\$1,202,275), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7dzqomh> (last checked 6/16/2017); Hudson projected (\$403,200).

<sup>14</sup> The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for Bergen Arts and Science shows that iLearn receives 12% of all funds from Bergen (\$1,564,351 in 2015-16), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yczp2pa3> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>15</sup> Union Arts and Science charter application; Section 2, Page 50; received from the NJ Dept. of Education through a 2017 FOIA request.

<sup>16</sup> Bergen board minutes from February 18, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8daptax> (last checked 6/16/2017); 10.20.16; Paterson Arts and Science from October 20, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8b8af65> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>17</sup> See Georgia profile and whistleblower testimony accounts in the Appendix I to this report.

region. In New Jersey specifically, six of the seven Gülen schools also contract with the same person to serve as the non-voting Board Treasurer and School Business Manager, with the exception being Thomas Edison EnergySmart.<sup>18</sup> All seven schools contract with the same auditor,<sup>19</sup> Barre & Company, which also prepares tax returns for Apple Educational Services.

The seven New Jersey schools have almost 5,000 students currently enrolled. The New Jersey schools generally are approved as a primary school and expand by grade level to serve middle and high school students through the amendment process or as part of their charter renewal application. In March 2017, the New Jersey Department of Education approved an expansion of 2,535 new seats at five of these schools:<sup>20</sup>

- ▶ Two schools received approval for charter expansion as part of their five-year charter renewal application:
  - ▷ Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology: +516 students (1,068 to 1,584)
  - ▷ Paterson Arts and Science Charter School: +357 students (540 to 897 to add high school grades)
- ▶ Three schools were approved for expansion through the amendment process:
  - ▷ Central Jersey College Prep: +840 students (from 480 for K-2 and 6 -12 to 1,320 for grades K-12) – including a new campus in New Brunswick
  - ▷ Hudson Arts and Science: +661 students (from 360 for K-5 to 1,021 for K-8)
  - ▷ Passaic Arts and Science: +161 students (from capacity of 860 for K – 10 to 1,021 for K – 12)

The significant expansions will give a green light for some schools to add a campus, including Paterson Science and Technology school.

The New Jersey network has made a very aggressive move to expand new schools rapidly. They have filed at least 12 applications for new schools in the last 15 years that were denied by the New Jersey Department of Education (see chart above). Many of these applications faced stiff opposition from local school districts and community members. Two of these community efforts to oppose the Gülen-affiliated schools are described in this report, including reported evidence of fraud on the part of iLearn in gathering signatures on a petition in support of the proposed new iLearn school.<sup>21</sup>

## Founders are Paid Employees and Contractors of iLearn Schools

Three people are the same founding Board members for four of the five iLearn schools in New Jersey (including the 5<sup>th</sup> school to open in fall 2017). In addition, all three are paid employees or contractors of iLearn and stand to benefit financially if additional schools are approved. Leo McGuire has been listed as a founding member of two recent iLearn schools that were approved (Hudson and Union) while at the same time he is listed as the District Safety Coordinator for the Paterson Arts and Science Board Meeting minutes and his company has a security contract with at least one iLearn school.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Example of school contract with Treasurer, Paterson Arts and Science Board Minutes; 5.21.14; available at <http://tinyurl.com/yd6q5kst>; LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycsfmjfg> (last checked 6/16/2017); Auditor's Management Reports, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycdp39wy> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>19</sup> Auditor's Management Reports, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycdp39wy> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>20</sup> Patterson Times article on charter expansion, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycxugmc3> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>21</sup> The Record/NorthJersey.com article about alleged fraud in school applications, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lxtd23b> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>22</sup> Paterson Arts and Science Board minutes 5.21.14; retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/yd6q5kst>.

Dierdre Simon is listed as a founder of four iLearn schools (Passaic, Paterson, Hudson, and Union). She has a consulting contract with at least one iLearn school for curriculum services totaling \$25,000/year.<sup>23</sup> Simon did not disclose this contract on the Information Form she completed as part of the application process for the Hudson school. She answered “no” to the question whether she was “otherwise associated” with an organization that is partnering with the Hudson Arts and Science Charter

School. The Hudson charter application clearly states that the school is “born of a partnership between Bergen, Passaic, and Paterson Arts & Science charter schools (section 1, page 1).<sup>24</sup> In addition, Simon was the subject of an investigative report by the New Jersey Department of Education in 2008 which found that she had violated regulations by accepting payment as a consultant for an iLearn school while still employed with a local school district.<sup>25</sup>

## Financial Issues and Educational Compliance Concerns

---

### Payment of Immigration Costs by Schools is Illegal

The Special Investigative Unit of the Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance at the New Jersey Department of Education conducted a limited review of immigration and employment issues at the Central Jersey College Prep Charter School in May 2010. A red flag was raised from the Office of Charter Schools when 21 staff members were terminated or resigned from the school after the 2008-2009 school year. The employees did not come forward with complaints regarding wrongful termination, however, so that concern was not pursued. The department did find that the school regularly made payments to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service for legal expenses related to immigration, totaling \$18,500 over three years. The Department found this practice to be unallowable, and in the course of the investigation, the employees of the schools whose immigration fees and legal expenses had been paid by the school reimbursed the school for these expenses. The Department found that

the school should not be using public funds to pay immigration fees and associated legal costs for its employees.<sup>26</sup>

The use of public funds to pay immigration fees and related legal services has been discovered at other Gülen-affiliated schools across the United States who also hire many foreign teachers, primarily of Turkish national origin. There should be further investigation into this practice in New Jersey to determine whether other Gülen-affiliated schools in the state also paid for these immigration-related expenses since it appears to be a standard practice across the Gülen Organization. If the schools did pay for these immigration costs, then it should be investigated to see whether this practice continues and if reimbursement was made to the state after the Department ruled it illegal. Public documents show that the seven Gülen-affiliated schools in New Jersey have submitted 150 H1-B visa requests from 2002 – 2016<sup>27</sup> with an estimated cost of \$450,000 to process.

---

<sup>23</sup> Paterson Arts and Science Board minutes on 5.21.14; retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/yd6q5kst>.

<sup>24</sup> Hudson Arts and Science charter application; received from NJ Dept of Education through a FOIA request 2017; partnership statement in section 1, page 1; Simon Information Form completed by Simon – Exhibit 1A,

<sup>25</sup> Fraudulent Timekeeping by Employee, OFAC Case #1606, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ya8dcntw> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>26</sup> Immigration and Employment Issues. Central Jersey College Prep; OFAC Case #INV-112-09; New Jersey Department of Education; May 2010; received through FOIA request 2017.

<sup>27</sup> H-1B visas application can be reviewed by employer at MyVisaJobs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/6ajwfey> (last checked 6/16/2017).

## State monitoring reports - Special Education and Title I

Monitoring reports conducted by the New Jersey Department of Education at four schools documented concerns about the use of federal Title I and IDEA special education funds.<sup>28</sup> Title I funds provide additional support for economically disadvantaged students, and IDEA funds support students with special needs. The documented misuse of federal Title I funds by these schools included:

- ▶ Using funds to pay for inappropriate staff positions;
- ▶ Using funds to pay for a program that requires students to pay a participation fee;
- ▶ Failure to inform parents about Title I opportunities for their children or to involve them in planning for how the funds will be used, as required by federal law;
- ▶ Failure to expend program funds at all, thereby not providing services to students in need; and
- ▶ Failure to provide information to parents in languages other than English, even in a school where parents speak at least five different languages.

The findings regarding use of IDEA (Special Education) funds were of particular concern because we believe they demonstrate serious systematic problems with the way services are delivered to students with disabilities. The monitoring reports documented that services were not provided in a timely manner; all stakeholders at the school were not involved in the student's education plan, and services were not coordinated.

Although a complete review of all prior NJDOE audits at every school was not conducted as

part of this research, a random sample of audits revealed that similar issues related to special education services were identified as early as 2009 – 2010 by the New Jersey Department of Education at these schools, but actions required to correct the problems were not routinely taken or continued.

## Findings - Special Education:

- ▶ Failure to respond to a request for student evaluation for services within the prescribed time frame (20 days). Note: Twenty days is a full month of instructional time in which students who may need services to ensure academic progress remain unserved.
- ▶ Failure to coordinate with the student's classroom teacher;
- ▶ Failure to inform and involve all required participants in meetings regarding students eligible or referred for special education services;
- ▶ Failure to document the impact on students and the classroom when students are removed from the general education setting; and
- ▶ Failure to provide students eligible for special graduation with notice of required components.

In addition, it is significant to note that the monitoring reports also included findings that schools were not issuing a purchase order prior to goods being purchased or services rendered. These concerns regarding violations of standard purchasing procedures are common to other Gülen-affiliated schools where audits have documented that they lead to abuses that favor a limited number of preferred vendors.

<sup>28</sup> Monitoring Reports from Bergen Arts and Science, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mn7tdyx> (last checked 6/16/2017); Monitoring Reports from Passaic Arts and Science, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/myypsku> (last checked 6/16/2017); Monitoring Reports from Paterson Science and Technology, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mkudfut> (last checked 6/16/2017).



## Financial Statements

Annual Financial Statements are prepared by external auditors and submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education. A review of the 2016 audit for each of the seven Gülen-affiliated schools revealed concerning financial issues. For example, the 2016 annual audit for two schools showed significant annual deficits – with expenditures exceeding revenue by millions of dollars. The Bergen Arts and Science Charter School, the lead school in the iLearn Schools charter network, showed a combined net position of -\$3,481,336 for 2016 and -\$2,166,484 for 2015, with a decrease in the school's fund balance of \$890,649 in 2016 and \$174,362 in 2015.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, in July 2016, the Board of the Bergen Arts and Science Charter School accepted a no-interest loan from iLearn Schools, its paid CMO vendor, to “cover short-term debts or transactions in need bases”<sup>30</sup> for the arts and sciences schools in the iLearn network. There was no information about the total amount of the loan, the need for the loan, or the dates of repayment. Loans from paid vendors to their customer charter schools is common to other Gülen schools around the country, and raises serious concerns about conflicts of interest and the independence of the Boards. This type of financial arrangement with vendors clearly compromises the independence of the Board as it makes contracting decisions with the CMO. Given the high fees paid annually to the CMO, a review of the iLearn charter management organization is relevant.

In addition, the Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology had a combined net

position of -\$1,905,122 for 2016, -\$1,567,254 for 2015, and a \$500,530 decrease in its fund balance in 2016.<sup>31</sup>

## Instructional vs. administrative expenses

An additional area of concern for these schools is the percent of all funds spent on instruction vs. administration. Paterson Science and Technology spent less than 40 percent on instruction and 26 percent on administration in 2016. Passaic Arts and Science spent 41 percent on instruction and 33.5 percent on administration; and Bergen spent 41 percent on instruction and 35 percent on administration.<sup>32</sup> With high fees paid, totalling an estimated \$3.7 million paid annually to the CMO, a more thorough review of how funds are being expended is in order.

## Gift to iLearn CEO

Nihat Guvercin, the CEO of iLearn and paid school leader for the four iLearn schools, reported a gift or item of value from Adem Kalac, a “friend,” on his 2014 Personal Disclosure Statement submitted to the School Ethics Commission of the New Jersey Department of Education.<sup>33</sup> The department requires disclosure of any “fee/honorarium or gift/reimbursement or prepaid expenses having an aggregate amount exceeding \$250 from any single source excluding relatives.” The value and description of the item received from Kalac are unknown. Kalac is currently linked to a company called Mediapex, Inc<sup>34</sup>, and previously, he was the President of

<sup>29</sup> Bergen 2016 Annual Financial Report, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydgc9u3c> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>30</sup> Minutes from the Bergen Arts and Science Board meeting from May 19, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8daptax> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>31</sup> Patterson 2016 Annual Financial Report, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9kg2g8o> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>32</sup> 2016 Annual Financial Reports for: Passaic Arts and Science, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7dzqomh> (last checked 6/16/2017); Paterson Science and Technology, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9kg2g8o> (last checked 6/16/2017); Bergen Arts and Science, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydgc9u3c> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>33</sup> 2014 Personal Disclosure Statement for Nihat Guvercin, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybe4wqrd> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>34</sup> Adem Kalac linked to Mediapex, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yb7k8b6x> (last checked 6/16/2017).

EBRU-TV,<sup>35</sup> which is affiliated with the Gülen movement.<sup>36</sup> Kalac and his companies should be reviewed to see whether they receive paid business from Guvercin or the iLearn schools.

Regardless of the potential for conflict of interest, this gift indicates yet another affiliation between the New Jersey charter network with the Gülen Organization.

## Bond Financing

Apple Educational Services, acting through its wholly-owned subsidiary Railway Avenue Properties, borrowed a total of \$30 million in 2012 through bonds issued by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority<sup>37</sup> to purchase two facilities that were leased to the Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology:<sup>38</sup>

- ▶ Bond 1: \$18,055,000 for West Railway Ave. (High School)
- ▶ Bond 2: \$11,945,000 for 276 Wabash (Elementary School)

Over the life of the bond, Paterson will repay \$12 million to Railway Avenue Properties in excess of the bond debt.<sup>39</sup> This pattern of a third party real estate arm of a Gülen-affiliated organization charging excessive rent is described in the Real Estate section.

Standard and Poor's (S & P) Ratings downgraded its outlook on these two bond issues from stable to negative in 2016 because of a decline in cash on hand which violated the terms of the bond and required the hiring of an external management consultant, possible expansion plans which could result in additional debt or lease expenses, as well as a "complicated debt structure involving a third-party borrower." <sup>40</sup>

In addition, according to an in-depth report from the Record/NorthJersey.com., Milkyway Education Center received an aid package from the New Jersey Economic Development in 2006 for renovations associated with a building it purchased in 2005 and rented to the Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology.

## Real Estate

An insider real estate deal that involved Apple Educational Services, a contractor for Gülen-affiliated schools in New Jersey, and the Milkyway Education Center/Pioneer Academy, the landlord for the Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology, is typical of real estate transactions conducted by Gülen schools in other states that create affiliated but separate real estate organizations to purchase

property and rent to the schools at excessive fees.

In these deals, a third-party organization is created by individuals affiliated with the schools or the schools' CMO, which then purchases a property that it rents to the charter school. The purchase of the property is often done through the issuance of a bond secured by the schools' public revenues. The third-party organization pays the bond debt

<sup>35</sup> Kalac quote in Cision/PR Newswire, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9txh8u2> (last checked 6/16/2017); Also – Kalac sponsored H-1B visa applications as President of EBRU, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yd95kfxxy> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>36</sup> Gülen Movement website; available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7zg5p3l> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>37</sup> New Jersey Economic Development Authority 2012 Projects, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycztayaqv> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>38</sup> 2012 Bond Official Statements, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yavwlk94> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>39</sup> Id, (p. 20).

<sup>40</sup> Standard & Poor's Ratings Credit Profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8o7g3en> (last checked 6/16/2017).

with the schools' public funds, thereby financing the organization's private acquisition of publicly financed property. What is particularly concerning is that the organization, despite its affiliation with the school, charges rent that is significantly higher than the actual bond debt or mortgage payment.<sup>41</sup> Even when the mortgage or the bonds are repaid in full, the schools still do not own the school building – so they must continue to pay rent using public funds, and often paying for the school building many times over. This arrangement provides a steady revenue stream to these third-party organizations. Many of these lease arrangements are “triple net leases” in which the charter schools also pay the full cost of all real estate taxes, building insurance, and maintenance on the property (the three “nets”) as well as any normal fees such as utilities. Audits conducted in Oklahoma and New York by state agencies have been critical of these real estate transactions, raising concerns that they were not conducted at “arms’ length” and that there was no legitimate reason to continue paying rent to an affiliated entity once the property cost was fully paid.<sup>42</sup>

The Record/NorthJersey.com conducted an in-depth investigative report on similar real estate transactions in New Jersey orchestrated by Apple Educational Services and its subsidiary Railway Avenue Properties.<sup>43</sup> Railway borrowed \$28,500,000 in bonds through the New Jersey Economic Development Authority in 2012 for the purchase of properties that house the Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology at two different locations (elementary school and high school).<sup>44</sup> Railway/Apple now serves as the

landlord for Paterson and receives annual rental payments that are over \$400,000 more than the debt service.<sup>45</sup> Over the 30-year bond, taxpayers will repay the bond debt plus an additional \$12 million to Railway/Apple, but despite this extensive investment of public funds, the school properties will always be privately owned.

In addition to being the school's landlord, Apple is also a vendor for the Patterson Charter School for Science and Technology with on-going contracts for technology services.<sup>46</sup> Because the school is leasing a building from its vendor, it raises questions about the independence of Board decision-making on these contracts, and whether the Board is selecting vendors that are in the public interest.

Furthermore, the real estate transactions concerning the Paterson properties demonstrate financial connections between the private Pioneer Academy and its governing entity, Milkyway Education Foundation and Railway/Apple. Railway/Apple purchased the Paterson buildings in 2012 from the Milkyway Education Center. From 2005-2012, Milkyway served as Paterson's landlord.<sup>47</sup> According to reports in The Record/NorthJersey.com, Milky Way made a net gain of \$4.7 million on its sale of the property to Railway, as reported on its tax return in 2013.<sup>48</sup> Thus, Milkyway received significant rents paid for with public funds from Paterson before making a \$4.7 million profit that was then paid for, again, with public funds through the bond issuances Paterson is now covering.

<sup>41</sup> The Record/NorthJersey.com article, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mkoky53> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>42</sup> Oklahoma State Auditor Investigative Report on Dove Science Academy, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kv3ade4> (last checked 6/16/2017); Buffalo Academy of Science Audit, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybx7s4ev> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>43</sup> The Record/NorthJersey.com article, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mkoky53> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>44</sup> Bond Official Statements (2) (p. 1), available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y85c3dd9> (last checked 6/16/2017), Search: New Jersey Economic Development Authority (Railway bonds on second to last page)

<sup>45</sup> Id, (p. 20 – compare rent paid for Wabash property to bond debt service).

<sup>46</sup> Paterson Science and Technology Board Minutes from May 29, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybttmx8> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>47</sup> Board approval of lease with Milkyway; Board minutes; Paterson Science and Technology; January 31, 2004; <http://tinyurl.com/yd6q5kst> (last checked 6/18/2017).

<sup>48</sup> IRS Form 990 for Milkyway Education Center, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/nm7vfgk> (last checked 6/16/2017); The Record/NorthJersey.com article, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mkoky53> (last checked 6/16/2017).

The Record/NorthJersey.com article summarized this real estate transition as follows:

- ▶ 2005 – Milkyway Education Center purchased a building in Paterson on Lehigh Avenue for \$2.5 million to be used by the Paterson charter school.
- ▶ 2006 – New Jersey Economic Development Authority issued \$5.4 million in tax-free bonds to renovate the Lehigh property for Paterson.<sup>49</sup>
- ▶ Milkyway served as the landlord for the Paterson school at a cost of \$1 million annually.
- ▶ 2012 – Milkyway sold the Lehigh property to Apple Educational Services for \$10.5 million – part of larger deal financed by the state that included \$30 million in bonds to Railway.
- ▶ Milkyway reported a net gain of \$4.7 million on its tax return in 2013.
- ▶ 2012 – present – Paterson now leases the same property from Apple/Railway, plus the property on Wabash, paying \$2.4 million in rental payments annually.
- ▶ Paterson will pay Apple/Railway \$400,000 more in excessive rental payments than the cost of the bonds every year, a total of \$12 million more over the life of the bond.
- ▶ Paterson will not own the building once the bonds are repaid.
- ▶ 2014 – Milkyway moved the private Pioneer Academy from Clifton to Wayne using funds acquired from the sale of the Lehigh campus.
- ▶ At the end of its lease with Milkyway, and when the Railway bonds are repaid, the Paterson charter school will still not own its school buildings.

## iLearn school properties

A records search of other school properties in New Jersey shows that the iLearn schools are often leased from former Catholic church schools.<sup>50</sup>

## Excessive Use of H1-B Visa Program

The seven Gülen-affiliated charter schools in New Jersey and their affiliated nonprofit organizations (Apple, Milkyway, Pioneer) have applied for 279 H1-B visas since the early 2000s, including 94 in the last five years alone.<sup>51</sup> The schools accounted for 150 visa applications, with 129 applications made by their affiliated nonprofits. At a conservative cost estimate of \$3,000 for each visa request, the charter schools paid an estimated \$450,000 in costs associated with the H-1B visas. As described in the Financial Abuse section, an investigative report from the NJ

State Department of Education required Central Jersey College Prep to repay over \$18,000 for visa expenses from 2007 – 2009, but there is no record that other schools repaid the costs of visas.

Although the schools state that the rationale for these visa applications is that they cannot find qualified teachers within New Jersey to teach its STEM curriculum, the H-1B applications were actually filed not only for math and science teachers, but also for positions such as science project coordinators, Turkish

<sup>49</sup> New Jersey Economic Development Authority, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yb72sqj2> (last checked 6/16/2017); Paterson Tax Assessor, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yc78gclj> (last checked 6/16/2017); Official Statement, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yavwlk94> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>50</sup> Assessment Records Search, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y96q5nfb> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>51</sup> H-1B visas application can be reviewed by employer at MyVisaJobs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/6ajwfey> (last checked 6/16/2017).



language teachers, IT systems administrators, business/financial analysts, instructional technology coordinators, elementary special education teachers, and computer science teachers.

Both the charter schools and the nonprofit organizations use the same small group of immigration attorneys to file the H-1B visa applications that are used by other Gülen-affiliated entities across the United States, further demonstrating the existence of a network.

- ▶ **Remzi Kulen:** The New Jersey network used Kulen, a New York-based attorney, to file numerous H-1B applications.<sup>52</sup> Kulen also filed applications for:
  - ▷ Hampden/Pioneer (MA)
  - ▷ Apple Educational Services, Inc. (Northeast)
  - ▷ Technotime Business Solutions, LLC (NJ)
  - ▷ Ace It Education (MA)
  - ▷ Boston Dialogue Foundation, Inc (MA)
  - ▷ Wellspring Cultural and Educational Foundation, Inc. (CT)
  - ▷ Maryland American Turkish Inhabitants, Inc. (MD)
  - ▷ Concept Schools (OH, IL, MO, IN, MI, MN)
  - ▷ Horizon Science (OH, IL)
  - ▷ Noble Academy (OH)
  - ▷ Gateway (MO)
  - ▷ Pioneer (MA)
  - ▷ Niagara Foundation (IL)
  - ▷ Lehigh Dialogue Center (PA)
  - ▷ Red Rose Intercultural and Educational Foundation (PA)
  - ▷ Young Scholars (PA)
  - ▷ Truebright (PA)
  - ▷ Golden Generation Worship & Retreat Center (PA)
  - ▷ Blue Ocean Construction (FL)
  - ▷ Academy of Science, Syracuse, Buffalo (NY)

- ▷ Brooklyn Amity School (NY)
- ▷ Peace Islands Institute (NY)
- ▷ Rochester Academy Charter School (NY)
- ▷ Arts and Science, Bergen, Passaic (NJ)
- ▷ Central Jersey College Prep Charter School (NY)
- ▷ Milkyway Education Center, Inc. (NJ)
- ▷ Beehive (UT)

- ▶ **Seth Leech:** The New Jersey schools used Leech, a New York-based attorney, to file numerous H-1B applications.<sup>53</sup> Leech also filed applications for:

- ▷ Little Scholars (AR)
- ▷ Hampden/Pioneer (MA)
- ▷ Wellspring Cultural & Educational Foundation, Inc. (CT)
- ▷ Pioneer (MA)
- ▷ Hampden (MA)
- ▷ Academy of Science, Syracuse, Buffalo, Utica (NY)
- ▷ Rochester Academy Charter School (NY)
- ▷ Central Jersey College Prep charter School (NJ)
- ▷ Paterson Science and Technology; Central Jersey College Prep Charter School (NJ)
- ▷ Arts and Science, Passaic (NJ)
- ▷ Truebright (PA)
- ▷ Young Scholars (PA)

- ▶ **Leonard D'arrigo:** The New Jersey schools used D'arrigo, a New York-based attorney, to file numerous H-1B applications.<sup>54</sup> D'arrigo also filed applications for:
  - ▷ Little Scholars (AR)
  - ▷ Cosmos Foundation, Inc. (TX)
  - ▷ Hampden/Pioneer (MA)
  - ▷ Central Jersey College Prep Charter School (NJ)
  - ▷ Millenium Education Foundation (now Frontier) (MO)
  - ▷ Hampden (MA)

<sup>52</sup> List of entities represented by Remzi Kulen, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/gptwx5x> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>53</sup> List of entities represented by Seth Leech, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/zlc7eql> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>54</sup> List of entities represented by Leonard D'arrigo, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kcb3kjq> (last checked 6/16/2017).

- ▷ Academy of Science, Syracuse (NY)
- ▷ Rochester Academy Charter School (NY)
- ▷ Arts and Science, Bergen (NJ)
- ▷ Lehigh Dialogue Center (PA)
- ▷ Truebright (PA)
- ▷ Young Scholars (PA)

## Scandals, Investigations, & Notable Activities

Problems have been identified in the application process for new Gülen-affiliated schools in New Jersey with allegations of fraud at one school.

### Old Bridge Albert Einstein EnergySmart Charter

The Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School filed an application to open an affiliate school in Old Bridge, NJ called the Albert Einstein EnergySmart Charter School for grades K – 2. Over 200 community members attended a public forum in January 2017 to oppose the new school.<sup>55</sup> District school officials believed that if the state approved the charter, it would “drain millions of dollars from our budget causing Old Bridge to lose many of its programs.”<sup>56</sup> The new school projected enrollment of 360 students by 2020 at a cost of \$3.6 million to the district.

The officials seeking to open the Albert Einstein charter school cited incorrect performance data in an attempt to demonstrate that the community needed an alternative to the existing traditional public school.<sup>57</sup> However, the Superintendent of the Old Bridge district told the community members that the officials of the proposed school “are trying to establish a need that was either fraudulently or irresponsibly put in there.”<sup>58</sup> When

questioned about the validity of community support cited for the application, Oguz Yildiz, the lead person for the proposed charter school, stated that “we walked the streets of Old Bridge and spoke to whoever we passed. Those we spoke with were in favor of a charter school.”<sup>59</sup>

The NJDOE denied the application for the Albert Einstein school in March 2017.<sup>60</sup>

### Linden - Union Arts and Science Charter

The application for the proposed Union Arts and Science Charter School Linden, NJ included a petition with signatures supposedly in support of the new charter school.<sup>61</sup> However, Linden school officials conducted a door-to-door survey of the people whose signatures appeared on the petition and found “that a majority of the signatures were bogus, ‘either forged or were completely fictitious.’ In many cases, the person who answered the door said that they didn’t know the person who had signed the petition.”<sup>62</sup> The Record/NorthJersey.com conducted a spot check of the petitions and found “one was signed with the name and address of a woman who a widely used commercial database shows died in 2007.”<sup>63</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Information about the application for the Albert Einstein EnergySmart Charter School and the community forum, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y6uusras> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>56</sup> Id.

<sup>57</sup> Id.

<sup>58</sup> Id.

<sup>59</sup> Id.

<sup>60</sup> CentralJersey.com article about denial of Albert Einstein EnergySmart Charter, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7765vmh> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>61</sup> The Record/NorthJersey.com article on evidence of fraudulent signatures on petition for the Union Arts and Science Charter, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8deu6ow> (last checked 6/16/2017).

<sup>62</sup> Id.

<sup>63</sup> Id.

In light of this evidence, Linden officials submitted an affidavit to the New Jersey Department of Education and asked for the charter approval to be rescinded. The Record quoted Linden Superintendent of Schools Danny Robertozzi, “I believe there’s a shady business going on with this particular charter school application, and I think that if there’s shady business going on here, that there was other shady business going on in their other applications.”<sup>64</sup> The apparently fraudulent signatures called the community support for the charter school into question.

In addition, Linden school officials also reported other ethics concerns about the Union Arts and Science application.<sup>65</sup> Three of the five founders of the school are paid employees or contractors of iLearn Schools, the parent organization of the new charter, or by charters operated by iLearn, creating a clear conflict of interest because these founders stand to benefit financially from the expansion of the iLearn schools.<sup>66</sup> One paid operative is a security consultant to iLearn schools; another is a curriculum consultant; and the third is the CEO of iLearn. The Linden school officials cite state law that prohibits representatives of a private entity (iLearn) from constituting a majority of the trustees of the school. The founders are called “founding Board members” in the charter application. In another questionable action, the director of the state charter office who supposedly investigated the letter and affidavit from the Linden school district about the fraudulent petition left the New Jersey Department of Education to work for iLearn as the chief strategy officer shortly after approving the iLearn application.<sup>67</sup>

## **Federal Civil Rights Complaint Filed**

The Latino Coalition of New Jersey and the Franklin Community Advocates Revitalizing our

Education System filed a federal civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice in February 2017 against the Thomas Edison EnergySmart School and the Central Jersey College Prep Charter School. The groups provided documentation that the student enrollment at these two schools are not representative of the local township population with a significantly smaller percent of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, Hispanic students, African American students, and economically disadvantaged students, and a larger percent of Asian American students. These statistics demonstrate that students who face greater academic challenges are disproportionately enrolled in the township schools.<sup>68</sup>

For example:

- ▶ The African American population in the township is 26.5 percent, compared to 13% of students at Thomas Edison;
- ▶ The Hispanic population is 12.9%, but only 4% at Thomas Edison; Asian-American students represent 67% of students at Thomas Edison, but only 17% in the township schools;
- ▶ Only 8% of students at Thomas Edison are economically disadvantaged (qualify for free and reduced price lunch), compared to 45% of students in the township, almost 6 times greater than the Edison school.
- ▶ Students with disabilities at the two schools represent 7% as compared to 16% at township schools; and
- ▶ Central Jersey did not admit any English Language Learners in 2014-15, compared to 5.6% enrolled in township schools.

<sup>64</sup> Id.

<sup>65</sup> Id.

<sup>66</sup> Id.

<sup>67</sup> Id.

<sup>68</sup> NJ.com article on civil rights complaint, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y96jul46> (last checked 6/16/2017).

## Notable Turkish Vendors

The inter-connected web among Gülen-affiliated business interests, cultural organizations, and charter schools is complex and ever-changing as individuals move around these organizations over time in mutually beneficial roles. Awarding lucrative contracts from publicly supported charter schools to businesses that are operated by individuals of Turkish national origin who have clearly identified positions with cultural organizations that are aligned with Gülen is a common practice in many states, including New Jersey. It defies logic to think that these individuals, businesses, and organization are not connected and organized through a common, unifying thread, even though they may be legally separate entities.

The contracts between the schools and their affiliated vendors are often difficult to uncover because they are often not identified in any public record, and companies may be operating under an assumed name. Many of the Gülen schools do not post their vendors, contracts, or Board minutes that document when contracts are approved on their web site, so there is little transparency regarding these transactions. In addition, research into Gülen-affiliated schools has shown that the process for awarding contracts is often a closed-loop decision making process, with approvals made by committees, including the Board, composed of a majority of individuals with Gülen ties.

An example of how this connected web can work to benefit the Gülen organization are the financial transactions with the company Technotime Business Solutions that has numerous

contracts with Gülen-affiliated schools in New Jersey. The company's leadership is directly connected to other Gülen-affiliated organizations and businesses including Peace Islands Institute, Apple Educational Services, the Council of Turkic American Associations, and the Milkyway Education Center/Pioneer Academy. The Technotime contracts were identified in the minutes of school board meetings, but that search was limited because two of the New Jersey Gülen schools do not make their board minutes publicly available.

## Technotime Business Solutions

Technotime was awarded at least five contracts with three Gülen-affiliated New Jersey schools between 2014 – 2016.<sup>69</sup> The amounts for all the contracts were not revealed in the school Board meeting minutes, but three contracts were documented for \$125,069, \$82,272, and \$447,941 – a total of \$655,282 – for school supply purchases and a security camera system and data voice cabling. At least one contract for services under the E-Rate federal program was bid competitively, and Technotime was the low bidder and awarded the contract.<sup>70</sup> One of these contracts went to ProAcademy, a company that provides school and office furniture and operates as an assumed name for Technotime.

M. Mural Kaval is one of the original founders of Technotime,<sup>71</sup> a role he filled at the same time that he served as the CEO of the Peace Islands Institute,<sup>72</sup> an openly Gülenist organization. Kaval's affiliations don't end there—he

<sup>69</sup> Minutes from meetings of the Boards of Directors: Central New Jersey College Prep from July 14, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9tpu3s3> (last checked 6/17/2017); Bergen Arts and Science from July 24, 2014 and October 15, 2015, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8daptax> (last checked 6/17/2017); Paterson Arts and Science from August 18, 2017 and May 28, 2015, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydzahpzq> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>70</sup> Board minutes from Bergen Arts and Sciences announcing bidders for E-Rate contract from April 17, 2014, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8daptax> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>71</sup> Technotime Certificate of Formation, NJ Department of Treasury business entity search, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydc8tcf6> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>72</sup> LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydgd6pxm> (last checked 6/17/2017).



previously worked in public relations for Apple Educational Services, as well. Similarly, Mehmet Yasa became an owner of Technotime in 2011<sup>73</sup> and was a director of the Milkyway Education Center<sup>74</sup> d.b.a. Pioneer Academy. Yasa presented at a Peace Islands Institute conference as a representative of the Council of Turkic American Associations (CTAA).<sup>75</sup> As discussed previously, Milkyway was the landlord for Paterson Science and Technology and later sold the property to Apple Educational Services at a hefty profit (see real estate section). Both Kaval and Yasa exited Technotime in 2012.

Other assumed names for Technotime include ProAcademy, ProAcademy Furniture, Vestell (electronic hardware, phone system), and Inspire (school uniforms).

## Apple Educational Services

Apple Educational Services plays a key role in the Gülen organization in the Northeast through its lucrative contracts with Gülen-affiliated schools in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Apple has three distinct business lines: 1) as a third-party real estate arm and landlord (often through one of its wholly-owned subsidiaries), 2) as an IT services provider, and 3) as an after-school program provider through its wholly-owned subsidiary Ivy Learning.<sup>76</sup> Apple's leadership

is directly connected to other Gülen-affiliated organizations. For example, Apple founder Faruk Apaydin is also a founder of the Peace Islands Institute (formerly the Interfaith Dialog Center), an organization openly aligned with Gülen.<sup>77</sup>

In New Jersey, Apple and its subsidiary Ivy Learning have had at least eight vendor contracts with four Gülen schools between 2014 – 2016, which appear to be on-going contracts that are renewed annually.<sup>78</sup> These contracts are for services that include school proprietary software to manage student records, SAT/PSAT preparation, and tutoring services by Ivy Learning. Many of the public records do not include the total amount of the contracts, but in three instances, the contracts show Apple is paid \$35,000 annually at one school and \$70,000 at another,<sup>79</sup> and at one school, Ivy is paid \$45,000 to prep 30 students for a four-week session. It is not always clear whether one contract will cover more than one school since the iLearn schools appear to share some contracted services, but it is likely that all Gülen-affiliated schools in New Jersey have contracts with Apple. Concerns have been raised about the management of confidential student records by an external contractor that is not directly managed by charter school personnel. In addition, Apple is the landlord for the Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology as discussed in the real estate

<sup>73</sup> Technotime Certificate of Amendment on NJ Department of Treasury business entity search, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydc8tcf6> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>74</sup> LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7thycef> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>75</sup> Peace Islands Institute 2013 Workshop Agenda, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ya9hvd4b> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>76</sup> Apple Education Services Certificate of Formation, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydc8tcf6> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>77</sup> Peace Island Institute/Interfaith Dialog Center IRS Form 990 from 2004, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7zjo8vk> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>78</sup> Minutes from Board meetings: Central Jersey College Prep from September 29, 2016 and July 14, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9tpu3s3> (last checked 6/17/2017); Bergen Arts and Science from August 15, 2016, July 23, 2015, and July 24, 2014, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8daptax> (last checked 6/17/2017); Paterson Arts and Science from July 24, 2014 and June 29, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydzahpzq> (last checked 6/17/2017); Paterson Science and Technology from June 29, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybttsmx8> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>79</sup> Payment of \$70,000 from Bergen budget submitted to NJ Department of Education as part of 2015-16 charter renewal application; received with documents from 2017 FOIA request; Approval for the Apple contract in board minutes for Bergen Arts and Sciences from July 24, 2014, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yblr2vcn> (last checked 6/17/2017); Paterson Arts and Sciences from July 24, 2014, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybn3a6td> (last checked 6/17/2017); Paterson Science and Technology from June 29, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybttsmx8> (last checked 6/17/2017).

section of this report. Finally, Apple has submitted 31 H1B visas over the last ten years to bring in foreign workers, primarily from Turkey.<sup>80</sup>

## Gülenist Cultural and Business Organizations Active in New Jersey

- Peace Islands Institute (formerly Interfaith Dialog Center): Gülen-affiliated cultural organizations such as the Peace Islands Institute exist throughout the United States under different names. The organizations sponsor trips to Turkey for elected officials and community leaders, organize events, awards dinners, and interfaith forums. The people who receive awards from the organizations are often in positions that could be extremely beneficial to the Gülen charter schools, as noted by the awards given in the New Jersey example below. The organizations also serve as an employer for key Gülen supporters.<sup>81</sup>

The Peace Islands Institute has affiliated groups in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. It is a member organization of the Alliance for Shared Values, the umbrella organization for several Gülen groups, and openly supports the Gülen Movement and features Gülen on its website.<sup>82</sup> The executive director of the Alliance, Ercan Tozan, is also a spokesperson for Fethullah Gülen. The Peace Island Institute sponsored or participated in New Jersey events such as:

- Annual awards dinner in Morristown, NJ (date unknown)<sup>83</sup> that honored former NJ Governor James Florio,

Clifton Mayor James Anzaldi (Gülen schools submitted applications for schools in Clifton), David Hespe, NJ Commissioner of Education (charter school authorizer), Richard Thigpen, VP of PSEG, and Hidayet Karaca, the president of Samanyolu Broadcasting Group of Turkey (a known Gülen corporation).<sup>84</sup>

- Annual Awards dinner in Hasbrouck Heights (June 2, date unknown – 9th annual) honoring Dr. Chris Rodriguez, Director of New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness; Dr. Angus Kress Gillespie, Director of New Jersey Folk Festival; Dr. Paul Winkler, Executive Director of NJ Commission on Holocaust Education; Michele Siekerka, Presidents of New Jersey Business and Industry Association, with keynote by Assemblywoman Holly Schepisi.
- Law Enforcement Appreciation Awards in Morristown<sup>85</sup> (12.10.15) that honored Michael E. Campion, the Assistant U.S. Attorney, the District of New Jersey (who stated “Peace Island agenda consistent with the civil rights work we do at the U.S. Attorney’s office”).
- Law Enforcement Luncheon Series (5.26.15): speaker – Col. Joseph R.

<sup>80</sup> H-1B visas application can be reviewed by employer at MyVisaJobs, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/6ajwfey> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>81</sup> Peace Island Institute website, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/p7g8sue> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>82</sup> Alliance for Shared Values website; available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybe5nddg> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>83</sup> Event details from awards dinner, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ya4qqnj> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>84</sup> New Yorker article on Turkish coup mentions Semanyolu TV, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/jq7u9t3> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>85</sup> Law Enforcement Appreciation Awards video, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydhsn482> (last checked 6/17/2017).

- Fuentes, superintendent of the NJ State Police<sup>86</sup>
- ▶ MLK event (1.15.16) with speaker Assemblyman Gordon M. Johnson, Deputy Speaker of the New Jersey Assembly<sup>87</sup>
- ▶ Donation to Toni's Kitchen in conjunction with New Jersey Assemblyman Thomas P. Giblin as part of Muslim festival of Eid<sup>88</sup>
- ▶ Ambassador Series<sup>89</sup> featuring different countries – focus on Africa on 6.11.15
- ▶ Annual awards dinner (June 18, 2014) honored Mike Schneider, NJTV News; local Sheriff Richard Berdnik; Assemblywoman Annette Quijano; Chief Academic Officer Tracey Severns, New Jersey Department of Education; Executive Director Rev. Robert Moore, Coalition for Peace Action and Peace Action Education Fund; and President Jeffrey Vega of New Brunswick Tomorrow, with closing comments from Assemblywoman Sheila Y. Oliver on the work of the Peace Island Institute.<sup>90</sup>
- ▶ Turkish Cultural Center of New Jersey: The Center is another Gülen-affiliated cultural organization that sponsored trips to Turkey and offers cultural classes.<sup>91</sup>
  - ▶ Turkish American groups were recognized by NJ assembly, including Peace Islands, Turkish Cultural Center, Turkish American Business Development and Improvement, and Pioneer Academy (see more information in next section).<sup>92</sup>
- ▶ North East Turkish American Scholars, Inc.: The current president of the Board is Ehat Ercanli<sup>93</sup> who was also the founder of the Syracuse Academy of Science in New York and the Horizon Education Center in Ohio, the parent organization of the Horizon charter network, which are all Gülen-affiliated schools.
- ▶ Hudson Turkish American Cultural Association: This association received over \$1 million in contributions and program service revenue.<sup>94</sup>
- ▶ Federation of Turkish American Associations (Perth Amboy): iLearn staged an unsuccessful attempt to locate a new school in Perth Amboy<sup>95</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Event details for Law Enforcement Luncheon Series, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yatcrdx4> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>87</sup> Daily Voice article about MLK even, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybmvgz7m> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>88</sup> Toni's Kitchen donation information, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybva8j5b> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>89</sup> Peace Island ambassador series event details, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yc99pkp> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>90</sup> Hizmet Movement News Portal article about awards dinner, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y83rbc4u> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>91</sup> Turkish Cultural Center New Jersey in Bergen County information, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybe5nddg> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>92</sup> Hizmet Movement News Portal article about New Jersey legislative recognition of Peace Islands, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9o7op42> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>93</sup> NE Scholars 2004 IRS Form 990, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9o7op42> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>94</sup> Hudson 2014 IRS Form 990, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7y58uhr> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>95</sup> Federation of Turkic American Organization IRS Form 990, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9jlwt4d> (last checked 6/17/2017).

## Friends of Gülen Spotlight

- ▶ State elected officials took Gülen-sponsored trips to Turkey in 2011, including Sen. Loretta Weinberg and Assemblyman Gordon Johnson.<sup>96</sup> The legislators reported that they paid for airfare, but the remaining costs were paid by the Peace Islands Institute. Johnson took a second trip in 2014 paid for by the Council of Turkic American Associations.<sup>97</sup>
- ▶ Cong. Leonard Lance (R-NJ) was part of 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. The members of Congress were not aware that SOCAR had funded the trip and had sought trip approval from the House Ethics Committee. Lance also took an extended trip to Turkey. 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."<sup>98</sup>
- ▶ Members of the New Jersey General Assembly and Senate recognized the Peace Island Institute, the Turkish Cultural Center, the Pioneer Academy of Science (private Gülen school in New Jersey (parent organization is the Milkyway Education Center); and the Turkish American Business Development and Improvement through a resolution on 1.22.13. Elected officials who joined in the recognition included: Assembly members Holly Schepisi, Gordon Johnson; Alberto Coutinho, Troy Singleton, and Thomas Giblin; and Senators Loretta Weinberg, Anthony Bucco, Theresa Ruiz, Diane Allen, and Tom Kean, Jr.<sup>99</sup>
- ▶ New Jersey Governor Chris Christie visited three of the New Jersey Gülen schools in 2016.<sup>100</sup>
- ▶ In law enforcement circles, former Bergen County sheriff, Leo McGuire serves as a paid consultant to the iLearn Schools. He and his family took a sponsored trip to Turkey in 2010 just before he retired.<sup>101</sup>

## 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 networks.

<sup>96</sup> Center for Public Integrity report, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lzd8zsl> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>97</sup> The Record/NorthJersey.com article about alleged state legislator links to Gülen, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lсны9ys> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>98</sup> Washington Post article about 10-member congressional trip, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yc7lk4la> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>99</sup> New Jersey Legislative recognition of Peace Islands, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y84q7z3t> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>100</sup> Information on Gov. Christie visits: Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y77gkkn2> (last checked 6/17/2017); Bergen from May 24, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yawgeyvn> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>101</sup> EBRU TV interview with McGuire about trip to Turkey, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yacymamz> (last checked 6/17/2017).



In a lecture at Rice University, Joshua Hendricks, a professor at the University of Oregon who published a book about the Gülen movement, stated, "What is mind-boggling to some and infuriating to others is why do the leaders deny affiliation when affiliation is clear?"<sup>102</sup>

- ▶ Osman Oztoprak: Founder, Bergen Arts and Science (NJ); CEO, Principal and Teacher, Pioneer Academy (NJ); Director, Alliance for Shared Values (NY); the umbrella organization for other Gülen-affiliated nonprofits that is openly aligned with Fethullah Gülen; Program Director, Apple Education Services (NJ).<sup>103</sup>
- ▶ Faruk Apaydin; Founder and Board member, Apple Education Services (NJ); Vendor to iLearn Schools (NJ); Landlord to Paterson School of Science and Technology through Apple Education Services/Railway Avenue Partners.<sup>104</sup>
- ▶ Furkan Kosar: President, Council of Turkic American Associations (NY)(funded trips to Turkey and Azerbaijan for members of Congress); Head, Paterson Science and Technology School (NJ); Founding Board Member, Milkyway Education Center/ Pioneer Academy (NJ).<sup>105</sup>
- ▶ Nihat Guervicin: CEO, iLearn Schools (NJ); Founder of four of the five Arts and Sciences/ iLearn charter schools (NJ); School Leader for four of the five Arts and Sciences/iLearn charter schools (NJ); Principal, Science Teacher, Harmony Public Schools (TX) in Texas, the largest Gülen-affiliated charter network in the United States; Director, Teacher, Researcher at Gülistan Education Institutions (Albania); B.S., Middle Eastern Technical University (Ankara, Turkey).<sup>106</sup>
- ▶ Mustafa Coban: Chief Operations Officer, iLearn (NJ); Reports income from Apple Educational Services on his 2016 School Ethics Commission Personal Disclosure Statement and reports income for his wife from Milkyway Education Center; married to Patricia Ann Coban, Founder and Operations Manager of the Syracuse Academy of Science (NY) and Founder of Utica Academy of Science (NY).<sup>107</sup>
- ▶ Ali Riza Gurcanli: Lead Person, Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology (NJ); Head Principal, Pioneer Academy of Science (NJ); Principal, Superintendent, Pioneer Charter School of Science (MA); B.S., Middle East Technical University (Gaziantep, Turkey).<sup>108</sup>

<sup>102</sup> The Oklahoman/NewsOK.com article containing quote, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y97tud7x> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>103</sup> Bergen Arts and Science charter application received from NJ Dept of Education through a 2017 FOIA request; LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybroxfyh> (last checked 6/17/2017); Campaign Finance Report for Holt Victory Fund, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8f5pnvk> (last checked 6/17/2017); 2015 IRS Form 990 for Alliance for Shared Values, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7as3hhd> (last checked 6/17/2017); Web site for the Alliance for Shared Values available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yaqlsx28> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>104</sup> Minutes from Central Jersey College Prep board meetings from September 29, 2016 and July 14, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9tpu3s3> (last checked 6/17/2017); Minutes from Bergen Arts and Sciences board meetings from September 15, 2016 and July 23, 2015, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8daptax> (last checked 6/17/2017); Apple Education Services 2015 IRS Form 990, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yclwxbwj> (last checked 6/17/2017); New Jersey Dept of Treasury business entities, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydc8tcf6> (last checked 6/17/2017); The Record/NorthJersey.com article, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mkoky53> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>105</sup> Information taken from: Roll Call article, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mvawss8> (last checked 6/17/2017); Milkyway 2001 IRS Form 990, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mdknvzx> (last checked 6/17/2017); NJ Department of Education letter to Kosar, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y824stg8> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>106</sup> Information taken from: Annual reports for each Arts and Science school; LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yd4ap3dr> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>107</sup> Information taken from: Charter applications received from the New York Department of Education through 2017 FOIA request; School Ethics Commission Disclosure, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybhw7exe> (last checked 6/17/2017); 2010-2011 public school employee pay records, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yah8fmtq> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>108</sup> Information taken from: Resume for Ali Riza Gurcanli from Paterson Science and Technology, received from 2017 FOIA request; LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybedsxo5> (last checked 6/17/2017).

- ▶ Tarkan Topcuoglu: Chief Education Officer, Central Jersey College Prep Charter School (NJ); Director, Dean of Academics, Hampden Charter School of Science (MA); Vice Principal, Program Coordinator, Computer Science Teacher, Putnam Science Academy,(CT); Fatih Private School (Istanbul, Turkey); B.S., Marmara University (Turkey).<sup>109</sup>
- ▶ Ufuk Zini: High School Director, Bergen Arts and Science (NJ); Testing Coordinator, School Operations, Building Coordinator, Paterson Charter School for Science and Technology (NJ) at time Apple Educational Services bought the building from Milkyway; Program Coordinator, Ivy Learning (NJ); Apple Educational Services (Apple's third business – after-school care); Science teacher, Pioneer Academy of Science (NJ); Teacher, Vice Principal, Anafen Learning Center (Istanbul, Turkey); B.S., Middle East Technical University (Ankara, Turkey).<sup>110</sup>
- ▶ Harun Celik: Director, Passaic Arts and Science Charter School (NJ); Executive Director, Hampden Charter School of Science (MA); Project Coordinator, Bergen Arts and Science Charter School (NJ); B.A., Kazan State Pedagogical University (Tatarsan, Russia).<sup>111</sup>
- ▶ Ercan Tozan: Executive Director, Peace Islands Institute (NJ); Director, Rochester Academy Charter School (NY); Administrator, Putnam Science Academy, (CT); Director, Peace Islands Institute (NY); Board of Trustees, FBI Citizens Academies (NJ).<sup>112</sup>
- ▶ Lynne Ozgur: Grants Manager, State Reporter, Central Jersey College Prep (NJ); married to Kemal Ozgur, a microbiologist who is reported to be the person who invited Fethullah Gülen to Pennsylvania and is described as an "aide" to Gülen.<sup>113</sup>
- ▶ Namik Sercan; Chief Education Officer, Central Jersey College Prep (NJ); Executive Director, Terra Foundation for Science and Education (NY) (Gülenist landlord); Principal, Fulton Science Academy High School in Atlanta when the charter was revoked(GA); Author of 2008 article in The Fountain Magazine, a Gülenist publication; B.S., Uludag University (Bursa, Turkey).<sup>114</sup>

<sup>109</sup> All references are from resume included in charter amendment dated December 1, 2016 and submitted to the NJ Department of Education; received through 2017 FOIA request.

<sup>110</sup> Information taken from: Resume received in documents as part of 2017 FOIA request; Board Minutes from Bergen Arts and Science, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yd8xns12> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>111</sup> LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/hyo2htt> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>112</sup> Information taken from: FBI Citizen Academies Alumni Association New Jersey, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7l6upgm> (last checked 6/17/2017); LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9na3396> (last checked 6/17/2017); NJ.com article on Peace Island Institute, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y74mre5g> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>113</sup> Desert News profile of Gülen, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9eszw5l> (last checked 6/17/2017); Central Jersey College Prep Board Minutes from July 14, 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9t2s9zw> (last checked 6/17/2017); RPNPS blog, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybajh69n> (last checked 6/17/2017); Pocono Record article, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydzdtlan> (last checked 6/17/2017); Philly.com article, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y9pqhvqp> (last checked 6/17/2017).

<sup>114</sup> Atlanta WSB-TV report on revoking Science Academy charter, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ybylox6x> (last checked 6/17/2017); LinkedIn profile, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yc3ersfs> (last checked 6/17/2017); Article on expanding Central Jersey College Prep charter, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mfrp6ck> (last checked 6/17/2017); Dissertation curriculum vitae from 2016, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y7nrt8na> (last checked 6/17/2017); The Fountain Issue 63, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/k3kch2l> (last checked 6/17/2017).

## Notable Press Coverage and Research Regarding the New Jersey Gülenist Network

---

Rimbach, Jean; Pillets, Jeff; Adely, Hannan, *Investigation: Charter School leaders, founders linked to controversial Turkish cleric; Turks create big footprint in New Jersey Charter Schools*; THE RECORD/NORTHJERSEY.COM, February 15, 2017. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lсны9ys> (last checked 6/16/2017).

Filkins, Dexter, *Turkey's Thirty-Year Coup*; New Yorker, October 17, 2016. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/jq7u9t3> (last checked 6/16/2017).

Rimbach, Jean, *Sale of charter school property boosts private academy*, THE RECORD/NORTHJERSEY.COM, February 16, 2017. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/yb3dhcof> (last checked 6/16/2017).

Rimbach, Jean, *District alleges fraud in charter school application*, THE RECORD/NORTHJERSEY.COM, March 19, 2017. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/lxtd23b> (last checked 6/16/2017).

Rimbach, Jean, *Charterschoolfoundersfacescrutiny from local officials*, THE RECORD/NORTHJERSEY.COM, March 19, 2017. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8deu6ow> (last checked 6/16/2017).

Rahman, Jayed. *State approves expansion for four Paterson charter schools*. PATTERSON TIMES, March 1, 2017; Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ycxugmc3> (last checked 6/16/2017)

Hutchison, Dave. *2 charter school in this town accused of segregation*. NJ ADVANCE MEDIA FOR NJ.COM, February 10, 2017. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y8uq6plb> (last checked 6/16/2017).

Spencer Kent. *New charter would 'drain millions' from district, Old Bridge officials war*. NJ ADVANCE MEDIA FOR NJ.COM, February 7, 2017. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/y6uusras> (last checked 6/16/2017).

