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<http://www.conceptschools.info/concept-schools-charter-schools/accusations-allegations-about-gulen-charter-schools-gulen-movement/>

Concept was founded by Turkish American educators and academics. These educators and academics developed an auspicious school design 13 years ago and became very successful over such a short time. Concept is now one of the most successful management organizations that manage [charter schools](#) with math, science, and technology focus in the Midwest. This is a great American success story: a few visionary, entrepreneur Turkish Americans develop a school design that becomes very successful, as evident by its growth in terms of number of schools and geographic expansion in a short period of time. Aside from the founders of [Concept Schools](#), there have been other Turkish American educators, scientists, and academics involved in charter schools in different parts of the U.S. However, they are independent of each other. There is no network or association, formal or informal, of individuals or charter schools initiated by Turkish Americans around the country.

However, not everyone perceives this as an American success story. There are people who are very troubled that immigrants, particularly Turkish Americans, are behind this success.

Within the last few years, there have been significant, concerted attacks toward Concept and Concept-managed schools (not [gulen charter schools](#)). Such attacks manifested in many forms such as personal web pages and blogs, unsolicited emails to our teachers and staff members, news articles in local, small papers, and repetitively posting the same comments over and over to relevant/irrelevant, local/ national newspaper articles.

The interesting thing about those “blogs” on the Internet is that the writers are often faceless, lurking in the shadows and speak in phrases designed purely to drive emotion. They use names such as “watchdog” or “[charter school scandals](#).” These personal blogs and websites are filled with mendacity, allegations, accusations, hatred, intolerance, and racism against the schools and Concept. Those blogs put all the charter schools that have been initiated by local Turkish Americans around the country in one basket, though they are completely separate and independently operated, then attack them as a whole.

One would also see these blogs using each other as references. Blogs provide links to other personal web sites and blogs, which back up their claims about Concept by links to other blogs.

Below are the main accusations and allegations and our responses to them:

These Schools are Turkish Schools?

Neither Concept nor the schools it manages can be named as “Turkish Schools” or “[Gulen charter schools](#).” Just because some of the founders of those organizations are Turkish Americans, they do not automatically become “Turkish Schools” or “[Gulen Movement](#) Schools.” They are public charter schools operate under the applicable state laws in which they are located and highly regulated environments. More than 90% of teachers who are employed at these schools are local teachers. Our teachers are highly skilled and dedicated teachers who make a huge difference in the lives of many children everyday. Claiming that most of their employees are Turkish, as some blogs and web sites do, is nothing but ill-intended exaggeration.

Founders of these schools are influenced by [Fethullah Gulen](#), a prominent Turkish Muslim scholar:

With more than 750 employees, Concept-managed schools are located in large urban centers; the staff members are very diverse, including teachers from many different races, religions, backgrounds, and nationalities. In fact, it partly due to the very diversity among our staff that helps make our schools very successful.

As some of the founders of Concept were Turkish American educators, some of them may be inspired by the teachings of Mr. [Fethullah Gulen](#), teachings that focus on social justice, tolerance, and **education**. Concept cannot, and does not, have any control over individuals’ inspirations or beliefs. If any of Concept’s founders or employees is inspired by Mr. Gulen, it does not suggest that Concept has an institutional affiliation or guidance from Mr. **Gulen**. We have to clearly distinguish the dynamics of personal life and personal preferences (or inspirations) from institutional attachments to any affiliation. Since Concept does not discriminate against race, sex, color and personal beliefs, it would be completely baseless and

ungrounded to say that Concept is attached to any particular ideology when its employees may in fact be inspired by any particular leader, movement, or political party.

Mr. [Gulen](#) is a well-known Turkish and Muslim scholar, who emphasizes interfaith dialogue, peace, and tolerance among all people. According to his statements, publications, and works he promotes education as a solution to many of the world's problems such as ignorance, poverty, war, and crime. Mr. [Fethullah Gulen](#) has inspired millions of people in Turkey and around the world to serve humanity in any way that they can, whether through education, through business, community service, philanthropy or through interfaith dialogue.

Fethullah Gulen movement is a faith-inspired civil society movement often named after Mr.

Fethullah Gulen. The Movement inspires certain moral and universal values, such as love, compassion, and seeking God's pleasure by serving the humanity.

Schools have ties to [Gulen movement](#)?

Schools have no ties to [Gulen Movement](#) including financial. As it was mentioned above, Concept is a not-for-profit [charter school management company](#) subject to Illinois laws and regulations. Independent auditors audit the Concept annually according to the state audit standards and regulations. This applies to all of the 27 charter schools that Concept manages, too. Moreover, audit reports of the Concept managed [charter schools](#) are public documents and available for review by anyone.

Concept has no ties or affiliation with any other charter networks across the country.

The schools recruit teachers from Turkey to serve their own, hidden agenda?

As mentioned before, the founders of these schools are Turkish American educators. As the number of schools started increasing in Ohio and other Midwest states, [Concept Schools](#) faced the challenge of finding quality math and science teachers who wanted to work in urban schools. Therefore, the founders of **Concept Schools** tapped into their resources abroad. They began bringing international teachers from Turkey, Russia, and other European countries to teach math and science. These teachers brought content expertise that made a difference in the schools where they taught. Since these international teachers added great value to the [Concept Schools](#), they recruited some more. These teachers are selected carefully, undergo background checks, and must file the proper paperwork to be able to teach (including their teaching certificates and legal working visas).

This has been practiced by other public school systems in the past. For example **Chicago** and **Cleveland** have recruited teachers from overseas.

Our priority is to find the best teacher possible for our students. Therefore, Concept and the managed schools recruit employees locally, nationally, and internationally, independent of any other *charter schools* or networks.

There are federal investigations on these schools?

As far as Concept's network is concerned, Concept along with the managed schools employ more than 750 employees. It is natural that when you deal with more than 750 individuals, disagreements, disputes, and resentments sometimes arise. Such cases are always handled properly through legal means.

However, some personal blogs and web sites run by hate groups and disgruntled employees have been intentionally using the name [FBI](#) or other federal agencies just to fortify their allegations and accusations.

Concept would cooperate with any federal and state agency in the case of any investigation. Concept chooses to continue providing high quality educational options to the children rather than responding to such uncorroborated and baseless allegations.

Money generated in the schools gets transferred to other Gulen organizations?

No funds generated by the schools is given in any way back to any organizations or individuals. Audit reports by the state auditors prove such fact since 1999. Concept has been in operation since 2002 and all of the schools have been annually audited by state and independent auditors for their fiscal managements since their inceptions. All of the audit reports to date have been publicly announced. If such allegations were true, they would have been caught by the auditors.

Turkish teachers who are employed at these schools are not qualified to teach?

Concept and managed schools make sure that all employees are highly qualified and meet certain academic standards before they get hired. The hiring process in our schools is a comprehensive process and aims to put the best teachers in the classroom.

In addition to our comprehensive process, *United States Immigration and Citizenship Services* requires all foreign workers to meet certain criteria to be a non-immigrant worker in the United States. Any non-immigrant worker who is employed at a Concept-managed school has gone through such selection process of Concept and **USCIS**. Furthermore, such non-immigrant workers also go through an interview process by the American Consulate in their home country before they are granted a visa. To claim that someone who has been through such processes is not qualified is outright questioning the credibility and functionality of such US government agencies.