

Letter from Jarett Fields to Dr. Jeanette Mitchell on 1/28/15

Concept Schools

Concept Schools (2003) was started by the same Turkish American group of educators that founded Horizon Science Academy in Cleveland (1999). The CREDO study (Stanford University) in 2013 named Concept as one of the highest performing charter organizations in the nation.

The FBI investigation began in June 2014 with confiscation of paperwork and documents at 19 different locations in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Not all of the locations were Concept Schools. The investigation centers around individuals within Horizon and Concept and paperwork related to E-rate federal funds.

E-rate federal funds allow schools access to telecommunications, internet access, and internal networking at discounted prices. Schools must apply for federal funds; if granted, Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) vendors receive a list of those schools that were awarded funds and details of the schools' request. After reviewing bids, the schools choose a vendor and submit an application for USAC approval.

The FBI investigation of Concept is centered on their use of E-rate funds. To date, there have been no charges. Salim Ucan has told me that Concept is cooperating with FBI investigators. Since June, Chicago Public Schools has approved an additional Concept school (I will be visiting the Chicago school next week).

For Milwaukee Math and Science Academy (MMSA) the school has not been mentioned for investigation. The local MMSA board does not have any Concept employees serving on it. The school has never been awarded any E-rate funds.

Salim Ucan will be sending me a short letter with updates this week. It will also contain information about current teaching staff and responses to Islam being taught in the schools.