

CHARTER SCHOOL SCANDALS

A compilation of news articles about charter schools which have been charged with, or are highly suspected of, tampering with admissions, grades, attendance and testing; misuse of funds and embezzlement; engaging in nepotism and conflicts of interest; engaging in complicated and shady real estate deals; and/or have been engaging in other questionable, unethical, borderline-legal, or illegal activities. This is also a record of charter school instability and other unsavory tidbits.

Home	Single schools	Authorizers, clusters, CMOs, EMOs, etc.	Charter school studies +	Political scheming & other funny business	The Master Plan	About Gulen charter schools
Gulen charter school list	The Gulen movement and GM schools in the media	Gulen charter schools state-by-state				

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2011

Be sure to check out my other blogs:

- THE BROAD REPORT (as in Eli)
- THE PERIMETER PRIMATE

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I make every effort for the info on this site to be verifiable, so if you encounter a broken link, please let me know by leaving a comment or writing to me @ perimeterprimate@yahoo.com. Thanks.

KNOWN GULEN CHARTER SCHOOLS BEING ATTEMPTED



1. Broward Math and Science Schools (Florida)
2. Cape Fear STEM School (North Carolina)
3. Central Region ES #22 (California; LAUSD Public School Choice 3.0 program)
4. Chesapeake Math and IT Academy (Maryland)
5. Cochran Middle School (California; proposal to take over existing school)
6. First State Math and Science Academy (Delaware)
7. Global Sciences Charter School (New York)
8. Harmony School of Excellence - San Antonio (Texas)
9. Harmony School of Political Science (Texas)
10. The Harmony School of Science - Sugar Land High School (Texas)
11. IT Academy of Triangle (North Carolina)
12. Kenilworth Science and Technology High School (Louisiana; expansion of already-existing middle school)
13. Knoxville Charter Academy (Tennessee)
14. Magnolia Science Academy Milpitas (California)
15. Miami-Dade Science Schools (Florida)

California charter schools (food service issues)

CHARTER CHOICES: GOOD FOOD, FREE FOOD, NO FOOD - SOME CAMPUSES SAY THEY LACK THE MEANS TO PROVIDE NUTRITIOUS MEALS — OR ANY MEALS; January 1, 2011; Los Angeles Times (CA)

At Larchmont Charter School in Los Angeles, a former restaurant chef whips up pasta with fresh vegetable sauce for lunch one day; on another he offers a salad bar with figs grown on campus.

But 500 miles north, in tiny Red Bluff, lunchtime at Sacramento River Discovery Charter School is decidedly different: Students must either bring their own lunches or place orders with parent volunteers who make a daily run to Taco Bell, Burger King or Subway.

Cafeteria food at traditional public schools has long had a bad reputation, but at least children can count on a meal that's free for needy families.

Mealtime is more complicated at the more than 900 publicly financed charter schools in California. Unlike traditional campuses that must follow state nutrition regulations for schools, charters can make independent decisions about what's for lunch. Some charter school officials decide not to serve it at all, even if that might mean that the nutrition needs of some of the state's poorest children are not being met...

Lunchtime on some charter campuses "indulges the students' worst impulses and obligates the parents to pay for meals that USDA is willing to fund," said Matthew Sharp, a senior advocate at California Food Policy Advocates.

Posted by The Perimeter Primate at 1:27 PM
Labels: [2011](#), [Inadequate food service](#)

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16. Milwaukee Math and Science Academy (Wisconsin)
17. Minnesota School of Science (Minneapolis)
18. Mokapu STEM School (Hawaii)
19. New Dimension Math and Science School (Texas)
20. Palm Beach Science Academy (Florida)
21. Passaic Arts and Sciences Charter School (New Jersey)
22. Pelican Excellence Academy, a.k.a. Pelican Excellence K-12 Charter (Louisiana)
23. Piedmont IT Academy (North Carolina)
24. Sonoran Science Academy - Oro Valley (Arizona)
25. Sonoran Science Academy - Flagstaff (Arizona)
26. South Region ES #5 (California; LAUSD Public School Choice 3.0 program)
27. South Region HS #8 (California; LAUSD Public School Choice 3.0 program)
28. South Region MS #3 (California; LAUSD Public School Choice 3.0 program)
29. Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School (New Jersey)
30. Young Scholars of Western Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania)

[Details HERE](#)

H/T to my loyal contributors, esp. M.S.

AND IN NEW JERSEY...

"New Jersey's charter school law is alone in allowing the State's Department of Education to authorize an unlimited number of new charter schools, regardless of the wishes of the host communities, while expecting those communities to pay for the operations of the charter schools out of their existing public school budgets." --- [Julia Sass Rubin](#)

PLEAS FOR CHARTER SCHOOL OVERSIGHT

AS U.S. AID GROWS, OVERSIGHT IS URGED FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS; February 24, 2010; New York Times

...The president of one influential charter group told the [House Education and Labor Committee](#) that the federal government had spent \$2 billion since the mid-1990s to finance new charter schools but less than \$2 million, about one-tenth of 1 percent, to ensure that they were held to high standards.

"It's as if the federal government had spent billions for new highway construction, but nothing to put up guardrails along the sides of those highways," said Greg Richmond, president of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers...

CHARTER BACKER SAYS HOUSE PROPOSAL WEAKENS OVERSIGHT; April 30, 2011; Columbus Dispatch (OH)

A leading school-choice supporter says the sweeping changes proposed by House Republicans would weaken oversight of charter schools severely and threaten to turn Ohio into a "laughingstock of the nation's charter-school programs.

"It's hard for me to say that," said Terry Ryan, vice president of Ohio programs and policy for the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, which sponsors seven charter schools in the state, including two in Columbus...

It was just last year that Mr. Ryan said, ["The charter movement must police itself."](#)

"The idea of regulating charter schools makes no sense because deregulation is the justification for the policy." -- Jim M., retired teacher

Perhaps it's finally dawning on some charter school supporters that the whole business is a huge can of worms.

WHAT REPORTERS COVERING CHARTER SCHOOLS NEED TO KNOW...

...about miracle schools, vouchers and all that [educational firm-flam](#). In other words, be skeptical and **always** follow the money.

DEBT, MISUSE OF FUNDS, EMBEZZLEMENT & CLOSURE

Charters schools that are closed for fiscal problems and debt rarely repay their districts, also leaving vendors and staff members unpaid. Charter school funds that are misused or stolen are rarely recovered.*

Read more about unmentioned consequences at ["When charters close, public schools foot the bill"](#) (*Voice of San Diego*, December 4, 2007).

*See the listings for these accumulating amounts below under "Cross Referencing."

"...MINIMAL REGULATION AND MINIMAL OVERSIGHT."

"But charters have now become a stand-in for vouchers because they accomplish the same goal of getting the government out of public education and turning public dollars over to private control with minimal regulation and minimal oversight."

[Diane Ravitch, February 18, 2011 @ 46:33.](#)

THE GULEN MOVEMENT IN RECENT NEWS

[WikiLeaks files detail U.S. unease over Turks and](#)

[charter schools](#), *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 4, 2011

[U.S. charter-school network with Turkish link draws federal attention](#), *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 20, 2011

Taraf began releasing [Wikileaks info](#) about Turkey's religious Gulen community on March 16, 2011. One segment is [HERE](#).

[Turkey: Ankara Coup Investigation Credibility Under Attack](#), *EurasiaNet*, March 7, 2011

[Gulen Cult: Legislators to welcome "Ugly Unionbusting" to Hawaii schools?](#), *Hawaii Free Press*, March 6, 2011

[7 More Journalists Detained in Turkey](#), *NY Times*, March 3, 2011

BE SURE TO FOLLOW [CASILIPS ON TWITTER](#) for updates on the Gulen Movement and its charter schools.

April 4, 2011: A contact who lives there has informed me that my website has been banned in Turkey.

GULEN MOVEMENT MUST READS!



You've heard of Scientology and you've heard of the Moonies, but have you heard of the Gulen movement?

EST. NUMBER OF WORLDWIDE MEMBERS

Moonies = several hundred K to a few million
 Scientologists = 8 M
 Gulen movement = 3 M to 8 M

[Turkey's population](#): 77,804,122
 Number of GM missionaries living abroad: **unknown**

Under the radar of the American public, the Gulen movement has been quietly advancing its presence in the U.S. via the establishment of charter schools, "cultural centers", and "[interfaith dialogue](#)" centers. Politicians, reporters, academics, community leaders, and charter school families have been strategically targeted, influenced, and given gifts, as the Gulenists have steadily built up their political cover. But how many of these Americans have an understanding of the controversies which surround this secretive movement and its worldwide political ambitions? And how would the public respond to finding out that such a movement is opening more and more charter schools, supported by their tax dollars as part of the GM's primary global project, without being willing to admit the connection?

The tally of GM's charter schools is now at 155 in 28 states (122 operating, plus 34+ attempted). Be sure to read [HERE!](#) The affiliation between the Movement and its charter schools has been [confirmed by movement insiders](#).

LEARN MORE

1. Read about the [federal investigation into the Gulen Movement's charter schools](#).
2. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED: [Islam, Secularism and](#)

[the Battle for Turkey's Future](#), 23 August 2010, *STRATFOR Global Intelligence*

3. [Video of Joshua Hendrick](#) of the U. of OR and Y. Alp Aslandogan discussing the Gulen Movement. Here are the first [24 pages of Hendrick's 2009 thesis](#).

4. [Charter School Watchdog](#)

5. [Gulen Charter Schools](#) (don't miss the entry [HERE](#).)

6. [A Guide to the Gulen Movement's Activities in the U.S.](#)

7. [Gulen in the International Press](#)

8. "Turkey's survival of the fittest: The Islamic anti-Darwinism movement in Turkey is being helped by an unlikely source - US Christian conservatives," 12 March 2008, *ISN Security Watch*)

9. "Religious movements in Turkey," 20 December 2010, *OpenDemocracy*

10. "First Class Revolution: From Medina to Mecca" and "Fethullah Gulen's Missionary Charter Schools Coming under Increasing Scrutiny in the United States and around the World," 24 January 2011 & 26 February 2011, *Kurdish Aspect*

11. "Turkey: Politics of Identity and Power," 13 August 2010, *Congressional Research Service*

12. "Turkey's pivotal role in the international drug trade," July 1998, *Le Monde diplomatique* (more background info)

13. EXTRA CREDIT: Check out the animated [Imperial History of the Middle East](#) and this [Middle East geography game](#).

JOIN US!



Visit PAA on Facebook, too!

WELCOME

Charter School Scandals (CSS) was launched on May 14, 2010 to provide the public with a source of independently collected information about U.S. charter schools.

For instance, compare what you learn from my entry for the 3,500 student [CATO School of Reason](#) to the information provided by the pro-charter Center for Education Reform in their compilation: "[Closed Charter Schools by State: National Data 2009](#)" ([63 page pdf](#)). In the CER's document, the closure reason is "Management" explained as "*Inadequate record keeping, suspect relations with private and sectarian schools,*" but the true story is much bigger and dirtier than that.

CSS is a non-billionaire funded (and un-bought off!), non-union affiliated (!), one-person operation in the

name of transparency and public service to our democracy. I post the information as quickly as I can, but have a massive backlog due to the sheer number of stories. Please check back periodically for new additions.

And as you scroll through these stories, be sure to keep a running tally of the estimated legal costs.

CALLING ALL WHISTLEBLOWERS!

If you are a concerned citizen with information about a yet-to-be-revealed charter school scandal, please consider writing to me at perimeterprimate@yahoo.com. Your name will be kept confidential.

SEARCH THIS BLOG

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USEFUL SEARCH TIPS

- **For Google** - Enclose your search item in quotations, such as "John Doe." If searching for two connected items, use a + sign between them.
- **With Web pages or documents** - Simultaneously press **ctrl + f** and an interactive search box will appear.

CROSS REFERENCING

- [**Managed by Achievement First](#) (2)
- [**Managed by Advantage Schools](#) (1)
- [**Managed by American Indian Model](#) (2)
- [**Managed by American Quality Schools](#) (1)
- [**Managed by Ashe Culture Center](#) (6)
- [**Managed by Believe High School Network](#) (2)
- [**Managed by Brighter Choice](#) (2)
- [**Managed by Clackamas Charter Alliance](#) (2)
- [**Managed by Concept Schools](#) (4)
- [**Managed by Confluence Academy schools](#) (2)
- [**Managed by Cosmos Foundation](#) (1)
- [**Managed by Eagles Peak Charter School](#) (2)
- [**Managed by Ed Futures](#) (1)
- [**Managed by Edison Schools or EdisonLearning](#) (12)
- [**Managed by Educational Administrative Services](#) (1)
- [**Managed by GEO Foundations](#) (3)
- [**Managed by Grace Institute](#) (1)
- [**Managed by Green Dot](#) (1)
- [**Managed by Gulen movement](#) (34)
- [**Managed by ICEF Public Schools](#) (1)
- [**Managed by Imagine Schools](#) (13)
- [**Managed by KIPP](#) (15)
- [**Managed by Leona Group](#) (1)
- [**Managed by Lighthouse Academies](#) (1)
- [**Managed by Magnolia Educational and Research Foundation](#) (1)
- [**Managed by McKeel Charter School System](#) (1)
- [**Managed by Mexican American Community Services Agency](#) (1)
- [**Managed by Mosaica Education](#) (1)
- [**Managed by National Heritage Academy](#) (5)
- [**Managed by Public Academy Inc.](#) (1)
- [**Managed by Richard Allen Schools](#) (2)
- [**Managed by Rylie Family Faith Academies](#) (1)
- [**Managed by School of Excellence in Education](#) (

- 2)
- [**Managed by Sonoran Science Academy schools \(1\)](#)
 - [**Managed by Success Charter Network \(1\)](#)
 - [**Managed by Summit Academy Schools \(1\)](#)
 - [**Managed by UNO Charter School Network \(1\)](#)
 - [**Managed by Victory Schools \(3\)](#)
 - [**Managed by White Hat Management \(1\)](#)
 - [**Managed by White Hat Management \(1\)](#)
 - [**Managed by Young Women's Leadership Network \(1\)](#)
 - [*Arizona \(13\)](#)
 - [*Arkansas \(5\)](#)
 - [*California \(54\)](#)
 - [*Colorado \(21\)](#)
 - [*Connecticut \(2\)](#)
 - [*Delaware \(2\)](#)
 - [*Florida \(36\)](#)
 - [*Georgia \(6\)](#)
 - [*Hawaii \(5\)](#)
 - [*Idaho \(5\)](#)
 - [*Illinois \(12\)](#)
 - [*Indiana \(11\)](#)
 - [*Iowa \(1\)](#)
 - [*Louisiana \(11\)](#)
 - [*Maryland \(4\)](#)
 - [*Massachusetts \(10\)](#)
 - [*Michigan \(8\)](#)
 - [*Minnesota \(20\)](#)
 - [*Missouri \(11\)](#)
 - [*Nevada \(5\)](#)
 - [*New Jersey \(21\)](#)
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 - [*Texas \(27\)](#)
 - [*Utah \(10\)](#)
 - [*Virginia \(1\)](#)
 - [*Washington D.C. \(13\)](#)
 - [*Wisconsin \(2\)](#)
 - [1997 \(1\)](#)
 - [1998 \(1\)](#)
 - [1999 \(5\)](#)
 - [2000 \(4\)](#)
 - [2001 \(5\)](#)
 - [2002 \(7\)](#)
 - [2003 \(6\)](#)
 - [2004 \(13\)](#)
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 - [2006 \(23\)](#)
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 - [2008 \(32\)](#)
 - [2009 \(41\)](#)
 - [2010 \(224\)](#)
 - [2011 \(116\)](#)
 - [Abrupt closure \(13\)](#)
 - [All Children Matter PAC \(1\)](#)
 - [Altering documents \(2\)](#)
 - [Assault \(4\)](#)

- Attendance deception (2)
- Attendance tracking problems (5)
- Authorizer accountability (3)
- Bizarre (3)
- Bribing public officials (3)
- Charter school research (3)
- Child molestation (2)
- Child pornography (2)
- Closure trauma (2)
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- Corrupt approval practices (1)
- Corrupt management practices (4)
- Cover ups (1)
- Credential deception (1)
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- Debt: \$1.2M (1)
- Debt: \$1.65M (1)
- Debt: \$100K (2)
- Debt: \$101K (1)
- Debt: \$114K (1)
- Debt: \$142K (1)
- Debt: \$150K (1)
- Debt: \$177K (1)
- Debt: \$1M (1)
- Debt: \$2.42M (1)
- Debt: \$21M bond debt (1)
- Debt: \$26M (1)
- Debt: \$3.2M (1)
- Debt: \$300K (2)
- Debt: \$341K (1)
- Debt: \$400K (2)
- Debt: \$425K (1)
- Debt: \$500K (1)
- Debt: \$516K (1)
- Debt: \$5M (1)
- Debt: \$600K (1)
- Debt: \$750K (1)
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- Extensive legal battles/costs (1)
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- [Inadequate food service](#) (1)
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- [Misspent funds: \\$28K](#) (1)
- [Misspent funds: \\$300K](#) (1)
- [Misspent funds: \\$330K](#) (1)
- [Misspent funds: \\$400K](#) (1)
- [Misspent funds: \\$476K](#) (1)
- [Misspent funds: \\$500K ?](#) (1)
- [Misspent funds: \\$750K](#) (1)
- [Misspent funds: \\$79K](#) (1)
- [Misspent funds: \\$90K](#) (1)
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- [Stolen: \\$100K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$105K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$14K](#) (1)

- [Stolen: \\$18K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$195K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$200K](#) (3)
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- [Stolen: \\$300K](#) (1)
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- [Stolen: \\$3K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$454K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$47K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$48K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$490K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$4K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$5.5M](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$500K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$50K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$5M](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$6.25K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$64K](#) (1)
- [Stolen: \\$674K](#) (1)
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- [Violating master plan of community](#) (1)
- [Violating teachers' rights to organize](#) (5)
- [Violation of open governance](#) (8)
- [Violation of state policies](#) (1)
- [Virtual charter school](#) (2)

[ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF PUBLICLY-FUNDED RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS](#)

[Why Not Religious Charter Schools?](#) (Chester E. Finn Jr.), December 10, 2003, Education Week Commentary

[What About Religious Charter Schools?](#), June 18, 2007, Education Week Commentary (praises TiZA)

[Zelman v. Simmons-Harris](#) decision (2002), permitting vouchers to be used for religious schools

[BAD APPLES, TIPS OF ICEBERGS, AND CANS OF WORMS](#)

In 2000, the [Center for Education Reform](#) wrote:
"A few bad apples shouldn't sour the public on the promising charter school movement, but when a bad apple does turn up, critics of charter schools pounce on it. Charter opponents are quick to claim that "more than a few" schools have closed and even quicker to characterize the movement as one that invites unscrupulous, fly-by-night operators to set up shop. Those mean ol' charter opponents. Isn't it curious how the reformers don't have any problem at all with building up a few negative public school stories into an anti-public teacher-bashing movement of national proportions in order to destroy teacher

unions and public schools as a whole?"

But are charter schools really so innocent?

- In 2009, [83 percent of 145 Minnesota](#) charter schools were found to have at least one financial irregularity in their audit.

- In February 2009, a New Mexico state audit found [financial problems with 36](#) of the [44 charter schools](#) in Albuquerque.

- Philadelphia City Controller Alan [Butkovitz \(April 2010\)](#): *"The fact that there were significant issues at 13 out of 13 [schools] raises the likelihood you would see many of these same issues found in a much larger sampling of the schools. By May 2010, his probe had widened to 18 charter schools."*

RELATIONSHIPS TERMINATED

Charter school promoters live in an abstract world where it's perfectly fine to shutter a school when the "need" arises. This reveals a profound detachment and utter disregard for the emotional lives of the children and families who, as a result, end up being subjected to tremendous disruption, stress, termination of meaningful relationships, loss and grief. Kids need security and dependability.

A school going "out of business" takes a very different emotional toll on families and children than when their local gas station or Denny's restaurant does.

The demise and death of our institutions of social support:

Family.....*check!*
Church.....*check!*
Neighborhoods.....*check!*
Schools.....*check!*

"It comes down to what ultimately is in the best public interest here -- supporting the growth of charters or not. Does that support ultimately weaken the rest of the school district? You bet it does." ([Fred LeBrun, Albany, NY](#))

OBSERVATIONS

There is no doubt but that an increasing number of inspectors, auditors, investigators, prosecutors and court rooms (and a lot of time and money) will be needed as more state charter caps are lifted.

Part of the problem is that too many people running charter schools see them as their own little fiefdoms. After all the effort and money put into setting up their schools -- and with political leaders and the mainstream media shining their bright spotlights on charter schools -- the stakes are inordinately high for them to be able to show "success."

Another problem I've discovered by doing this research is that the unmonitored access to millions of public education dollars is drawing unscrupulous people into the "business." At other times, new-found access to funds is proving to be too tempting for some people who were perhaps less criminally-minded.

Additionally, I've now discovered that, in this era of high-stakes testing, the education security business is booming. As [one company](#) put it, *"Cheating on tests isn't the exception anymore; it has almost become the*

rule."

ON COMPETITION

From "Deregulation and Charter School Swindles" by Gary Clabaugh (Educational Horizons, Winter 2009):

Two main ideas inform the charter school movement. The first is that competition is an essential ingredient in school improvement. Charters are said to provide that.

The trouble with this argument is that competition doesn't select the best, only the most popular. McDonald's doesn't produce the best-tasting or most-nutritious food, for instance, but its heart attack specials certainly are popular. A second-rate school might prove similarly competitive if it provides a tawdry but reassuring education to the children of the low-information crowd. Fearful your kids will discover you are an ignoramus? Send them to Alpha Charter where they will never learn to doubt.

WHAT IS A "SCANDAL"?

The American Heritage Dictionary defines it as the following:

1. A publicized incident that brings about disgrace or offends the moral sensibilities of society.
2. A person, thing, or circumstance that causes or ought to cause disgrace or outrage.
3. Damage to reputation or character caused by public disclosure of immoral or grossly improper behavior; disgrace.

DEDICATION

This Web site is dedicated to Eli Broad, Bill Gates, the Walton family, Arne Duncan, Whitney Tilson, Joe Williams, Reed Hastings, Ted Mitchell, Jack O'Connell, Tom Vander Ark, George Miller, Joanne Weiss, Randy Ward, Arnold Swarzenegger, all Milton Friedman-lovers, and any other free-market, pro-school choice, minimally-regulate-what-goes-on-in-charter school supporters who are also proud self-stated "DISRUPTORS" of public school communities, who have never, EVER been part of a public school community or local neighborhood, or who rejected being part of any public school community or local neighborhood long, long ago -- but have ended up deciding to help tear apart the tapestry of basic local human connections anyway.

ABOUT ME



The Perimeter Primate

Sharon Higgins writes about schools, neighborhoods, parents, society, class, education, children, crime, race, reality and change.

[View my complete profile](#)



PAGE VIEWS

6/1/2010 to 5/31/2011 = 219,937 = 601/day

VISITORS

A variety of people have been looking at my blog, probably because of the great Gulen charter school

information I've posted. This site is regularly visited by readers from Turkey. I get periodic visits from dhs.gov, doj.gov and ed.gov. I've had visits from house.gov and ed.gov, and at least one visit from someone at eop.gov (? Executive Office of the President). I've had a few visits from a couple of [mystery IPs](#) that are supposedly associated with the State Department.

It looks as if this site has hit a nerve.

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