



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Contact: Randy Wanke
(651) 582-1145

Review of Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy
Statement by Minnesota Department of Education
Deputy Commissioner Chas Anderson

In response to allegations first raised in March 2008, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has been conducting a thorough review of the operations of Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy (TiZA) to ensure that the school is in compliance with state law.

MDE's review of TiZA focused on the school's accommodations for student prayer; after-school transportation and activities available to the school's students; and the school's curriculum. The review included correspondence with school officials, interviews with current staff and a former substitute teacher, and two site visits, one of which was unannounced.

Today the MDE released the findings from that review. The following statement is from Deputy Commissioner Chas Anderson regarding those findings:

"The Minnesota Department of Education goes to great lengths to make clear to charter schools and their sponsors that, while schools should appropriately accommodate students' religious beliefs, they must be 'nonsectarian' under the state's charter school law.

"MDE has determined that, with regard to the areas reviewed, most of TiZA's operations are in compliance with state and federal law. However, we have identified two specific areas of concern related to the school's accommodations for communal prayer on Fridays and providing transportation at the end of the normal school day.

"We have directed the school to take appropriate corrective actions regarding these matters and will continue to provide oversight to ensure that the school is in compliance with state and federal law."

(A copy of the findings is available upon request.)

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