

January 2022



The Center for
Safe and Secure Schools
Harris County Department of Education

Safety Always First in Education

A Message from the Director



On behalf of **The Center for Safe and Secure Schools**, I wish each of you a happy and safe new year! We are well into the second quarter and are ready to expand our footprint in Harris County.

January is human trafficking month and I want to present a great resource, **Unbound Houston**. This organization offers low and no-cost training for parents, teachers, students and administrators on the fight against human trafficking. For questions or more information regarding these trainings, email houston@unboundnow.org or call (346) 313-7664.

The Center is excited to announce that we will host our first reunification exercise this summer for our partner districts in Harris County. Be on the lookout for more information to be part of this essential exercise.

Lastly, I am pleased to announce **The Center** is fully staffed and would like to welcome our new culture and climate specialist, Sasha Blake, coming from Fort Bend ISD. Learn more about Sasha in our spotlight below.

Julia Y. Andrews

Director, HCDE Center for Safe and Secure Schools

Safety Tip of the Month

Raising awareness for National Slavery & Human Trafficking Prevention Month

Human trafficking is the fastest-growing criminal industry globally, with an estimated 40.3 million victims worldwide.

A simple definition for human trafficking is any instance a person or child is involved, forced, tricked, or manipulated into providing labor or sexual service for someone else's financial gain.

Human trafficking doesn't just happen in third-world countries; it also happens here in the United States. The city of Houston is an especially high-risk city because of its location. Houston is one point of the "Texas Triangle," where three of the largest cities in the State of Texas are connected by major interstates. Human traffickers often take advantage of the high volume of people and ease of mobility in this region. Because of this, the Texas Triangle is considered one of the most heavily trafficked regions in the United States.

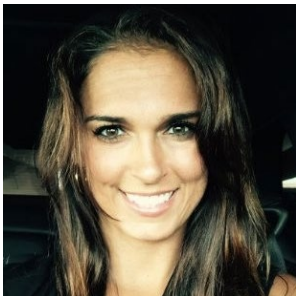


Source: <https://hopeforjustice.org/national-slavery-and-human-trafficking-prevention-month/>

CSSS Spotlight

Sasha Blake

*Culture and Climate Specialist
The Center for Safe and Secure Schools*



Sasha Blake is an educational leader with almost 20 years of experience. As a successful educator, she has worked as a director of student-athlete development (University of Houston – GO COOGS!), director of athletics (KIPP Texas), dean of students (Yes Prep), and her most recent position as assistant principal (Willowridge High School). She has presented across many platforms on diverse topics, including emotional backpack, dynamic mindfulness, leading with SEL in mind and trauma-informed practices.

Sasha received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Fairfield University, her Master of Arts in Applied Development of Educational Psychology from Boston College and is currently working on her Doctorate of Education at Northeastern University. She is passionate about working with all educators and providing professional development in teacher efficacy, trauma-informed practices and mindfulness. She likes reading, practicing yoga and coaching volleyball in her free time.

Grant Opportunities

Description: The purpose of this program is to support the

communities served by **Raising Cane's** as it provides financial support, products or gift cards.



Funding will be provided in the following program areas:

- **Education:** support for educational facilities is provided in order to allow students to achieve their full potential;
- **Feeding the hungry:** support for local food banks and other organizations who provide meals and goods to the homeless and hungry;
- **Pet welfare:** support for local pet welfare causes and humane, no-kill pet facilities;
- **Promoting active lifestyles:** support for walking trails, recreation areas and programs, runs and walks, sports teams, and physical fitness programs to encourage a healthy lifestyle;
- **Business development and entrepreneurship:** support for entrepreneurs in order to build small business success and economic impact; and
- **Everything else:** support for other causes in the community.

Ultimately, funding is intended to give support back to the community and encourage community success.

Eligibility: Academic Institutions, Nonprofits, Private Sector, Schools/School Districts

Award: Not specified.



Description: The purpose of this program is to end the global education crisis and unleash the potential of the next generation by supporting efforts to make cities skills-friendly.

This program intends to build more equitable and effective skills-enabling environments for young people at the local level along with the business community and educational institutions. Financial

and technical assistance will be provided to nonprofit organizations partnering with cities and metro areas, businesses, or higher education institutions for projects that involve innovative approaches and big ideas for youth skills and employment opportunities across the United States. Projects may launch a new idea or scale up an existing initiative.

In addition to monetary awards, this program will provide:

- technical support from the funding agency's business partners and other communications and technology expertise; and
- an opportunity for cross-city collaboration through participation in a year-long community of practice.

For the purposes of this program, skills-friendly cities are defined as cities that fully cultivate a collaborative ecosystem for young people who are 15-25 years of age, encompass education and training; connections and matchmaking between jobseekers and employers; and funding and investment from public, private, and other sectors.

Eligibility: Local Government, Academic Institutions, Consortia, Nonprofits, Private Sectors

Award: \$50,000 or \$100,000

For more information and to apply:

[Global Business Coalition for Education \(et al.\): Skills-Friendly City Initiative: Big Ideas, Bright Cities Challenge - FY 2022](#)

Emergency Management

Integration of advanced security solutions for school safety

Moving forward, schools and school districts will continue to focus on threat prevention and detection through conventional methods. Security and industry experts predict the main difference going into the future will be integrating technology into these processes to enhance efforts and help in the growth and expansion of solutions. The CEO of Patriot One Technologies, Peter Evans, echoes this sentiment when saying, "Schools will move towards preemptive security solutions, leaving reactive solutions behind."



While school violence continues as part of the rising unrest in society, schools will move away from the current ineffective security solutions. Instead, they'll start using advanced security solutions that are preemptive and technology-based to identify threats much earlier. Examples of these solutions include scanning social media for hostile or threatening comments by students and facial recognition technology with artificial intelligence (AI) that can identify and alert a school about a threat before it reaches its doorstep. These solutions are on the market today and more are being developed every day. Schools will re-examine their approach and find new funding to implement the latest preemptive security technology and put it into action in 2022.

Source: <http://edtechchris.com/2018/08/19/can-artificial-intelligence-keep-schools-safe/>

Take Care Tuesday Podcast

The Center for Safe and Secure Schools' **Take Care Tuesday** podcast reaches listeners throughout the United States as well as abroad in Ireland, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, Germany and Singapore.

The graphic is a promotional banner for a podcast episode. It features a circular portrait of Jammy Kiggundu on the left. The text includes 'Take Care Tuesday' in a large, stylized font, 'Podcast Episode' with a microphone icon, and the title 'SAFETY IN LAW EDUCATORS NEED TO BE AWARE'. At the bottom, it identifies the guest speaker as Jammy Kiggundu, Founding Partner of Douglass & Kiggundu Law Firm. Logos for 'The Center for Safe and Secure Schools' and 'Harris County Department of Education' are also present.

Available now:

**Safety In Law:
Educators Need to Be
Aware**
Jammy Kiggundu,
Attorney

Listen Now

BJA STOP School Violence Grant

Grant-Supported Professional Development Training

Digital Threat Assessment Training

In 2022, the BJA STOP School Violence grant will focus heavily on providing social media and online threat assessment trainings during the first half of the year.

Youth Mental Health First Aid

Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development and teaches a five-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations.

Intro to Restorative Practices

This training allows participants to experience the impact of a virtual *Restorative Circle*. Participants will have an opportunity to experience a community building circle process and develop the skills to plan and facilitate a virtual *Restorative Circle*.

Upcoming Training and Events

Virtual Workshops:

[Feb. 23](#) - Basic Incident Command System (ICS)

[Feb. 24](#) - Basic National Incident Management System (NIMS)

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