

Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
Board of Education Meeting of August 9, 2018

Office of the Board of Education  
Rhonda Skillern-Jones, President and District II Trustee

**SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN**

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) consistently states that the safety of its students is its top priority. This concern extends beyond school grounds to each student’s home and community.

Human trafficking and sex trafficking are growing threats to our children. The organization Children at Risk, in its publication *The Sex Trafficking Marketplace: Addressing Demand through Legislation and Tactics*, states that, “Texas is believed to be a particular hotspot for human trafficking due to its large cities, international airports, busy interstate highways, and vast border with Mexico.” The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children notes, “The only way not to find this problem in any community is simply not to look for it... Child sex trafficking has devastating consequences for its minor victims, including long-lasting physical and psychological trauma, disease, or even death.”

Recognizing this risk to our children, the HISD Board of Education is asked to approve the attached resolution to encourage the expansion and strengthening of efforts to combat human and child sex trafficking in Houston.

**COST/FUNDING SOURCE(S):** None

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:** None

**ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS/IMPACT:** This agenda item supports all three district goals and is aligned to Core Initiative 5: Culture of Trust through Action.

**THIS ITEM DOES NOT REQUIRE CONSULTATION.**

**THIS ITEM DOES NOT ESTABLISH, MODIFY, OR DELETE BOARD POLICY.**

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Board of Education adopts the resolution against human trafficking and sex trafficking of children, effective August 10, 2018.

**RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
AND SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN**

WHEREAS, the laws of the State of Texas assign to the local Board of Education the duty to govern and oversee the management of the public schools of the District, which includes the duty to adopt a vision statement for the District and policies in furtherance of the board's responsibilities;

WHEREAS, human trafficking is an egregious human-rights violation, a form of modern slavery which forces its victims to provide labor services or sell their bodies for sex;

WHEREAS, there is a need for the nation's major city school systems to express their positions on human trafficking, which affects their students and the children residing in their cities;

WHEREAS, the International Labor Organization estimates there are more than 40 million victims of human trafficking worldwide, with hundreds of thousands in the United States, and 25 percent of them are children, some of whom are in our schools;

WHEREAS, in 2016, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimated that one in six endangered runaways reported to them were likely victims of sex trafficking;

WHEREAS, according to the University of Texas at Austin (UT) Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, there are an estimated 300,000 victims of human trafficking living in Texas, of which nearly 80,000 are minors who were sex trafficked;

WHEREAS, Texas has the nation's second-highest number of human trafficking cases reported, behind California;

WHEREAS, Houston has been identified as a hub for human trafficking, in part due to its proximity to the border with Mexico, and the ease of dispersing victims throughout the nation via the Interstate 10 corridor;

WHEREAS, across Texas, hundreds of illegal massage businesses (IMBs) act as fronts for human trafficking and sexual exploitation;

WHEREAS, a Children at Risk study found that over 35,000 Texas children attend public schools that are within 1,000 feet of a suspected IMB;

WHEREAS, Harris County has the largest concentration of suspected IMBs in Texas, with 23 schools, representing more than 16,000 students, located within 1,000 feet of a suspected IMB;

WHEREAS, research by the Polaris Project indicates that the majority of trafficking victims come from vulnerable groups including undocumented migrants, runaways, and at-risk youth, oppressed and marginalized groups, and the poor, and this occurs specifically because they are easiest to recruit and control, and many of these young people are our students;

WHEREAS, our schools can be part of the front line to combat human trafficking and child sex trafficking through greater awareness and training of paraprofessionals, teachers, and school personnel;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Houston Independent School District supports the fight to end human trafficking, and especially condemns the ongoing exploitation and profit from sex trafficking of children;

NOW, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Houston Independent School District supports the appropriate training of school and district personnel so they may identify indicators of children at risk and signs of child trafficking;

NOW, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Houston Independent School District supports the appropriate training of school and district personnel so they may recognize and safely report suspicious activity to the appropriate authorities and agencies such as the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children;

NOW, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Houston Independent School District supports legislation to eradicate human sex trafficking by supporting prosecution of purveyors and clients in Texas, the United States, and globally.

ADOPTED this 9th day of August, 2018.

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Rhonda Skillern-Jones, President  
Board of Education  
Houston Independent School District

Attest:

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Sergio Lira, Secretary  
Board of Education  
Houston Independent School District