

Addressing  
Human Trafficking  
in **AMERICA'S SCHOOLS**

A Webinar Series by the U.S. Department of Education



# Protecting Young People from Online Exploitation

October 26, 2022



# NCSSLE Website: <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>

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School Climate Improvement Resource Package
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ED School Climate Surveys
- 

Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package
- 

Building Student Resilience Toolkit
- 

Human Trafficking in America's Schools

- 

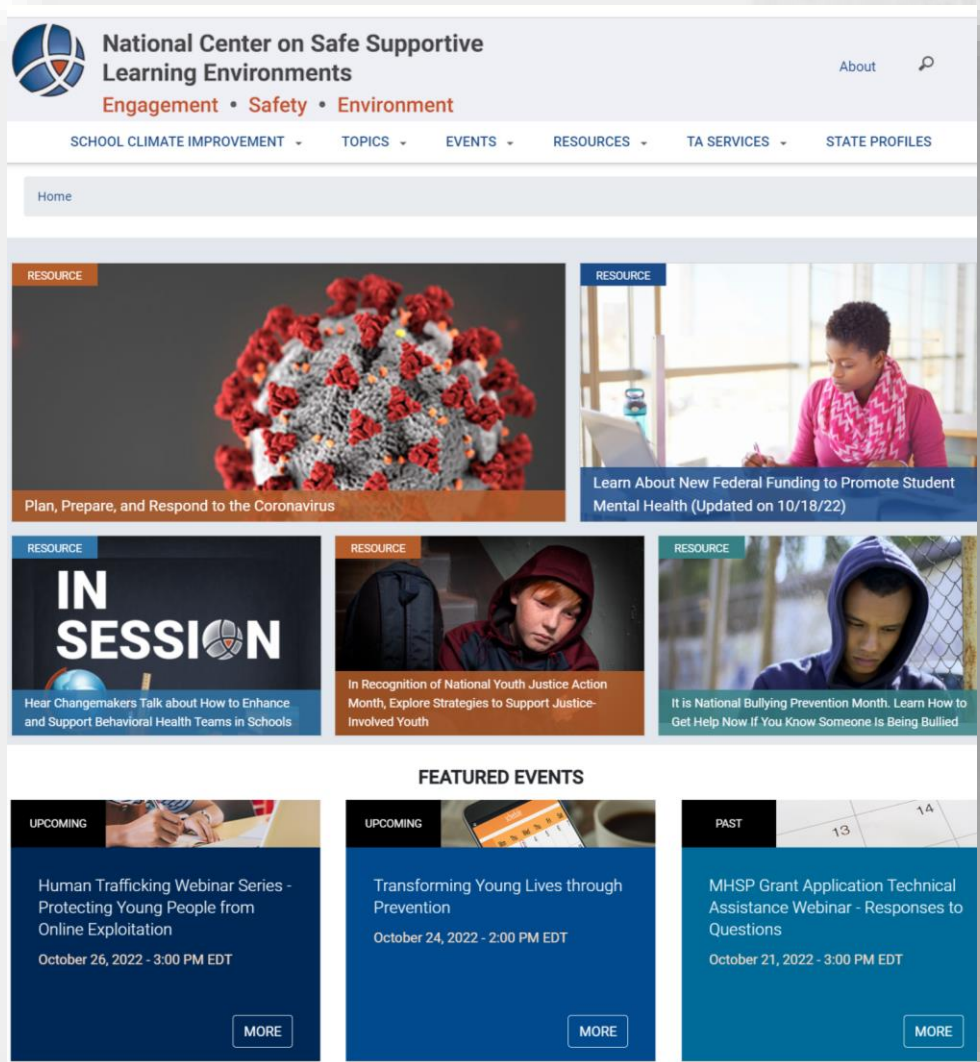
Improving Higher Education Learning Environment
- 

Supporting Trauma Recovery
- 

Promoting Mental Health
- 

Responding to Covid-19

To access previous webinars in the *Human Trafficking Series*, go to <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-webinar-series>.

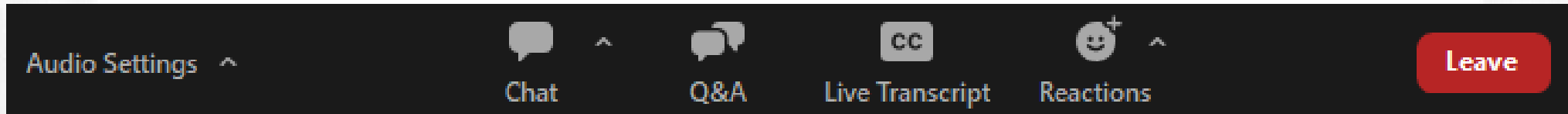


The screenshot shows the homepage of the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. The header includes the organization's name, logo, and navigation links for 'About' and search. Below the header is a main navigation bar with categories: SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT, TOPICS, EVENTS, RESOURCES, TA SERVICES, and STATE PROFILES. The main content area features several resource cards. The largest card is titled 'Plan, Prepare, and Respond to the Coronavirus' with a background image of a virus model. Other cards include 'Learn About New Federal Funding to Promote Student Mental Health (Updated on 10/18/22)', 'IN SESSION' (Hear Changemakers Talk about How to Enhance and Support Behavioral Health Teams in Schools), 'In Recognition of National Youth Justice Action Month, Explore Strategies to Support Justice-Involved Youth', and 'It is National Bullying Prevention Month. Learn How to Get Help Now if You Know Someone Is Being Bullied'. A 'FEATURED EVENTS' section at the bottom lists upcoming and past webinars, such as 'Human Trafficking Webinar Series - Protecting Young People from Online Exploitation' on October 26, 2022, and 'Transforming Young Lives through Prevention' on October 24, 2022.



# Logistics

## Zoom Control Panel



## Technical Issues

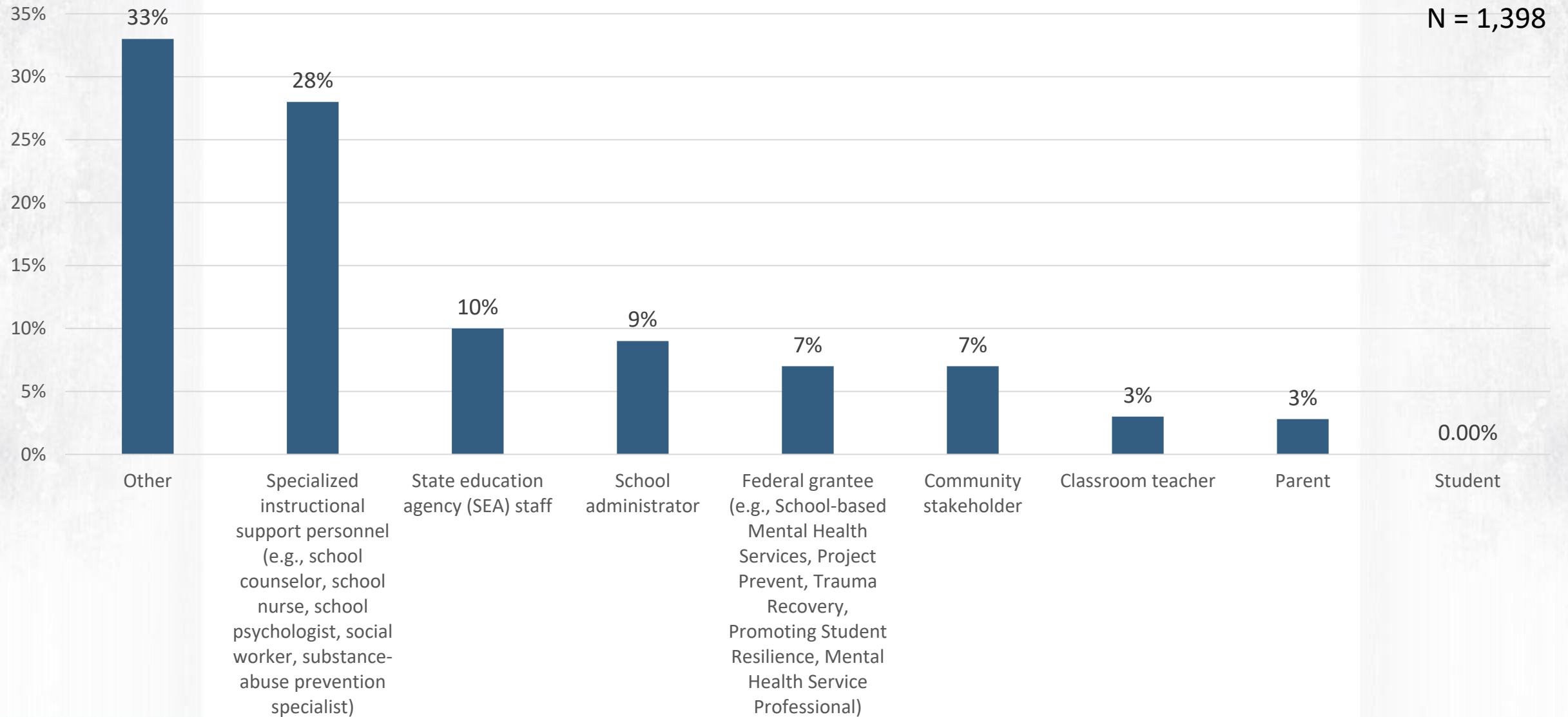
For assistance during the webinar, please contact Shoshana Rabinovsky at [srabinovsky@air.org](mailto:srabinovsky@air.org).

This webinar is being recorded and will be archived at the following location:  
[Human Trafficking Webinar Series - Protecting Young People from Online Exploitation](#)



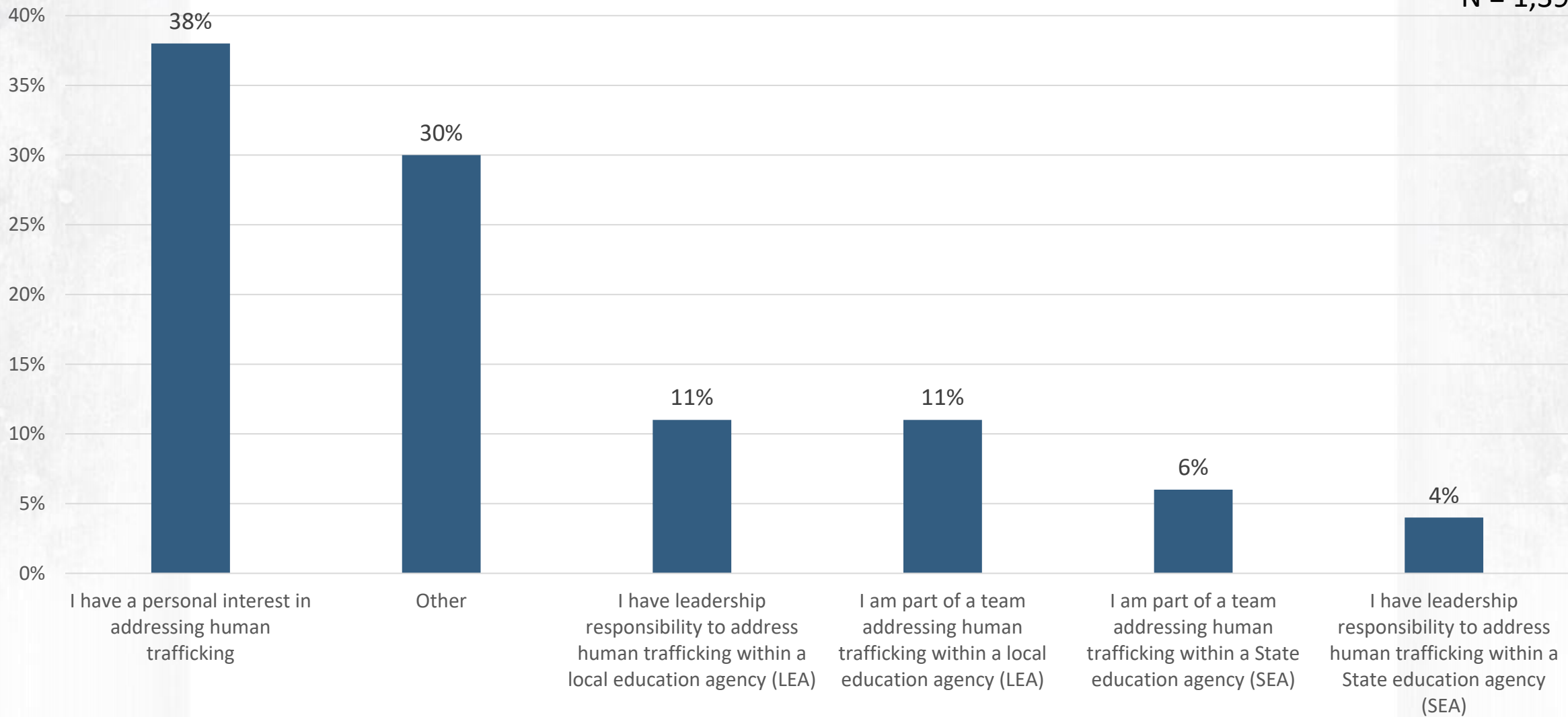
*The content of this presentation does not necessarily represent the policy or views of the U.S. Department of Education, nor does it imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.*

# Which of the following best describes your role?



# Which of the following best describes your primary reason for participating in this webinar?

N = 1,398



# Meet our Speakers and Panelists



**Dr. Jennifer E. O'Brien**

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Faculty Affiliate, Crimes against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire



**Dr. Wendy Walsh**

Research Associate, Crimes against Children Research Center  
University of New Hampshire



**Dave Alley**

Special Agent, Homeland Security Investigations,  
Acting Supervisor Child Exploitation Group, Detroit, MI



**Rachel Thomas**

Member, U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, Lived Experience  
Expert, Los Angeles, CA



**Stacey Robinson**

Manager, Project-Grant Fund, School Social Work Department, Dekalb  
County School District, Stone Mountain, GA

Bios for the speakers are archived at the following location:

[Human Trafficking Webinar Series - Protecting Young People from Online Exploitation](#)

# Webinar Agenda

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- 1 Introduction and Logistics
- 2 U.S. Department of Education Welcome
- 3 The Facts about Online Exploitation and Prevention
- 4 Panel Discussion
- 5 Wrap Up & Closing
- 6 Live Q&A

# Welcome from the U.S. Department of Education

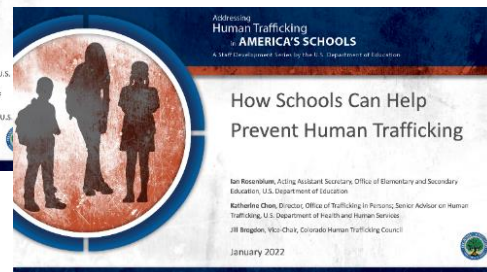
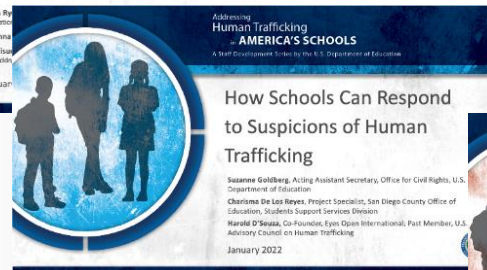
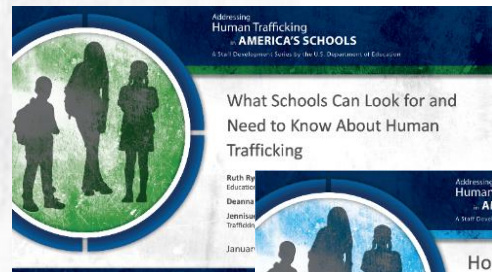
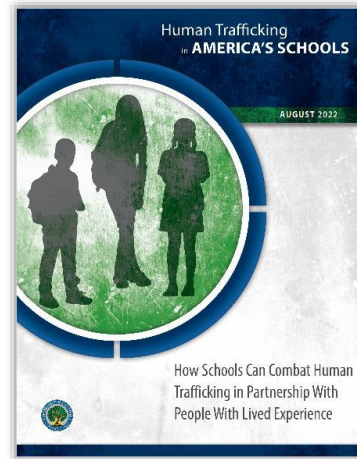
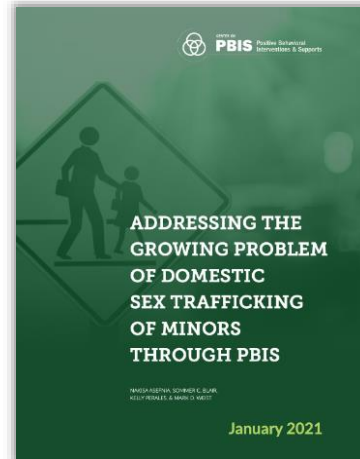
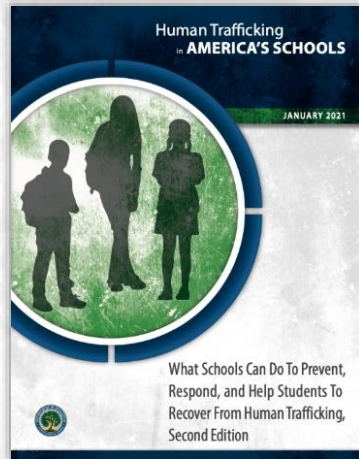


**Ruth Ryder, Deputy Assistant Secretary**  
**Office of Elementary and Secondary Education**  
**U.S. Department of Education**  
**Washington, DC**





# Additional Support from U.S. Department of Education Related to Human Trafficking



U.S. Department of Education

Student Loans | Grants | Laws | Data

## Human Trafficking

### Combatting Human Trafficking in America's Schools

Of 22,326 trafficking victims and survivors identified through contacts with the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2019, at least 5,359 were under age 18.<sup>1</sup> Many underage victims of human trafficking are students in the American school system. No community, school, socioeconomic group, or student demographic is immune to the threat of human trafficking. Cases of child trafficking are found in every area of the country—in rural, suburban, and urban settings alike.

The U.S. Department of Education recognizes these facts and stands ready to support America's schools in preventing, responding to, and helping students recover from human trafficking. It is fitting that schools take on this challenge; of all social institutions, schools are perhaps the best positioned to identify and report suspected trafficking and connect affected students to critical services.

To support schools' efforts to combat trafficking, the Department offers helpful resources, for administrators, teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, parents, caregivers, and students

#### How Do I Find...?

- Student loans, forgiveness
- Higher Education Rulemaking
- College accreditation
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- FERPA
- FAFSA
- 1098, tax forms
- More...

#### Information About...

- Transforming Teaching
- Family and Community Engagement
- Early Learning
- Constitution Day

#### Guides

- **Human Trafficking in America's Schools, 2nd Edition** (2021). This guide provides:
  - Awareness of the current prevalence of child trafficking and the forms it takes;
  - Information on risk factors and indicators of child trafficking;
  - Details about three prevention tiers and the implications for schools' role in addressing child trafficking;
  - Information on how professional development of school staff and prevention education for students and families can reduce the likelihood of trafficking; and
  - Details on how policies, protocols, and partnerships with other community sectors can help prevent trafficking.
- **Human Trafficking in America's Schools** (2015). This guide was developed to help school officials:
  - Understand how human trafficking impacts schools;
  - Recognize the indicators of possible child trafficking; and
  - Develop policies, protocols, and partnerships to address and prevent the exploitation of children.

#### Briefs

- **Addressing the Growing Problem of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Minors through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports** (2021). Particularly relevant to schools or districts currently utilizing multi-tiered systems of supports, this resource provides information on how to utilize such existing support strategies to support students impacted by sex trafficking.

#### Webinars

- **Identifying and Supporting Students Affected by Human Trafficking** (January 2020): This event focused on how to effectively identify and support students impacted by trafficking activity.
- **Human Trafficking: Online Safety** (June 2020): This event focused on trauma-informed and survivor-centered strategies for protecting students from falling prey to online trafficking activity.
- **Addressing Human Trafficking: An Expanded Look at Online Safety** (August 2020): This event

<https://www.ed.gov/human-trafficking>

# Technology and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children



JENNIFER O'BRIEN, PH.D.  
WENDY WALSH, PH.D.

CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN RESEARCH CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE



# What is the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)?



Survival  
Sex

Commercial  
Sex

Live  
Videos/  
Chat

**Child Sexual Exploitation**

# Technology-Facilitated CSEC\*



- Related to all phases of CSEC
  - Grooming
  - Perpetration
  - Recovery/Exit
- A “double-edged sword”
- Online CSEC and COVID
  - “There’s no boundaries and no limits...”
- Prosecution and evidence



# CSEC does not happen in a vacuum...\*



- History of child maltreatment
  - 90% have child welfare-involvement
- Homelessness/Running Away
  - 75% of known exploited youth
- Substance Use
  - 50-70% experience substance use/misuse
- School Issues/Truancy
  - Co-Occurring (risk and result of CSEC)
- Delinquency
  - 85% of known exploited youth
- Health Issues
  - Mental and physical health (90-95%)



# Youth and their Experience of Technology-Facilitated CSEC



- Nationally representative sample
  - 2639 respondents aged 18-28 from the Knowledge Panel
- Online survey
- Respondents answered the questions:

Have you done any of the following things over the Internet or a cell phone (including texting) in exchange for money, drugs, or other valuable items: Sexual talk; Making, sending, or posting sexual pictures or videos of yourself; and/or Any other sexual activity.”

“How old were you when (the first time) you did any of these things?”

# Results: Prevalence



- The prevalence of Internet-facilitated CSEC was 1.7% with a range of 1.4- 2.0%. This suggests that tens of thousands of youth experience this in the context of the total United States youth population.
- 30% of youth engaged in CSEC were boys
- Sexual minority youth made up a disproportionately large share (42%) of the youth engaged in CSEC.
- Nearly one in five of the exchanges were with current or former intimate partners.
- Only 8% of the current sample described having a 3rd party facilitator who brokered the activity in any way.

# Results: Qualitative Responses



- Needed money:

*“I was 17 and needed money for one of my legitimate prescription medications because my mother had put me out on the street and several adult men online said they would PayPal me money for dirty pics.” (17-year-old female)*



# Results: Qualitative Responses



- Casual exchanges:

*“Had an older girlfriend when I was about 15-16 and we used to sext and talk sexual over the phone. She’d usually give me weed and money and other perks (like rides and stuff) for keeping her satisfied.” (15-year-old male)*

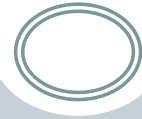
# Results: Qualitative Responses



- Extreme abuse:

*“I had been molested since I was 5 up until the age of 11. Then when I was 11, the person started raping me (actual penetrating intercourse). As an out and to have some kind of control, I felt that I could choose to have phone sex with men I was meeting on phone sex lines and hook up apps and chat rooms online...The man would send me money through electronic pay cards that he set up for me and mailed them to me under a fake name.” (11-year-old female)*

# Implications



- Technology applications are facilitating the entry of juveniles into commercial sex
  - Need to develop better methods of verifying age and policing age restrictions
- More prevention education needs to be directed toward youth
  - Need to understand what message to send...criminally endangering the adult partners
- The dynamics of the episodes are quite diverse
  - Need to understand limitations of the terminology “sex trafficking”

# CSEC Programming



- **School and Community-Based Programming**
  - Primary vs. Tertiary prevention
- **Known School-Based Programming**
  - General Information on CSEC and dynamics
  - Risk Factors
  - Help Seeking
  - Healthy Relationships
- **Known Community-Based Programming**
  - Housing
  - Survivor Mentorship
  - Therapeutic Groups
  - Intensive Case Management
  - Vocational Training
  - Medical Evaluations with follow-up Care
- **Limited Evaluation**



# Key Points from Related Programming\*

- Mentorship matters
  - Age/Race match is useful
- Positive interpersonal relationships are healing
- Development of positive coping
  - Cognitive Behavioral techniques
- Education about safe behaviors and opportunities to practice
  - Including help-seeking
- Holistic model of treatment
  - Physical, psychological and spiritual wellness are linked



# Online Safety and CSEC



- Staying safe online includes staying safe from sexual exploitation!
- Key points
  - Disclosure of personal information
  - Harassing behaviors
  - Meeting/Friending People Online
  - Sexual Behaviors Online
  - Downloading images from file-sharing programs
- Our research suggests doing 4 or more of these behaviors puts youth at differential risk of interpersonal victimization, including CSEC\*





**Thank  
You!**



**Find out more about our ongoing research and  
work:**

**<https://www.unh.edu/ccrc/>**

# Meet our Panelists

Bios for the panelists are archived at the following location:

[Human Trafficking Webinar Series - Protecting Young People from Online Exploitation | National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments \(NCSSLE\) \(ed.gov\)](#)



**Stacey Robinson**  
Manager, Project-Grant Fund,  
Division of Equity and Student Empowerment  
DeKalb County School District, Stone Mountain, GA



**Dave Alley**  
Special Agent, Homeland Security Investigations  
Acting Supervisor, Child Exploitation Group, Detroit,  
MI



**Rachel Thomas**  
Member, U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking  
Lived Experience Expert, Los Angeles, CA





*The Cool Aunt*  
www.TheCoolAuntSeries.com

- **Rachel Thomas, M. Ed** *RachelCThomas.com*
- Director of Sowers Education Group since 2012
- 13 Years' experience teaching, training
- Ending The Game & The Cool Aunt Series
- Reached 150,000 live; millions via media
- Presidential Appointee to United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking (2020)



## Online Recruitment into Trafficker-Controlled HT

### Los Angeles Times

# South L.A. woman known as 'Pretty Hoe' indicted on charges of sex trafficking of girls

She calls herself “the Most Hated Hoe in L.A.”

Her website touts her “wild twerking videos” and her “run-ins with the law.”

Now, federal prosecutors say there’s more to add to the 22-year-old’s resume: A grand jury has indicted Melanie Williams, known on social media as “Pretty Hoe,” on five counts, including sex trafficking by force and two counts of sex trafficking of a minor, the U.S. attorney’s office said Tuesday.

Williams was arrested by Los Angeles police in December after allegedly assaulting a woman she’d recruited to work as a prostitute, federal authorities said.

# Parent/Caregiver Resources

Our Parent/Caregiver Resource page features a curated list of helpful tools, tips and videos. Here are the categories we organized these resources into to make it easier for parents/caregivers to navigate what they need to know.

[www.RachelCThomas.com/Parent-Resources](http://www.RachelCThomas.com/Parent-Resources)



**RELATIONSHIP IS EVERYTHING**



**BE LOVING, APPROACHABLE, REAL**



**HELP PREPARE GENERAL SAFETY PLANS**



**LEARN ABOUT THE INTERNET THEN TALK TO YOUR TEEN ABOUT IT**



**TO MONITOR OR NOT TO MONITOR**



**TALK AFTER THE SERIES**



**WHEN YOUR TEEN SAYS "I NEED TO TALK"**



**MAKE ANY NECESSARY REPORT**

*The Cool Aunt*  
**SEX TRAFFICKING TALK  
WITH AUNTIE RACHEL**

*"My biggest vulnerability was that  
I didn't know what to look out for.*

*I'm teaching everything  
I wish someone had taught me  
before I was trafficked."*

[www.TheCoolAuntSeries.com](http://www.TheCoolAuntSeries.com)



[www.RachelCThomas.com/Parent-Resources](http://www.RachelCThomas.com/Parent-Resources)

**LEARN ABOUT  
THE INTERNET**

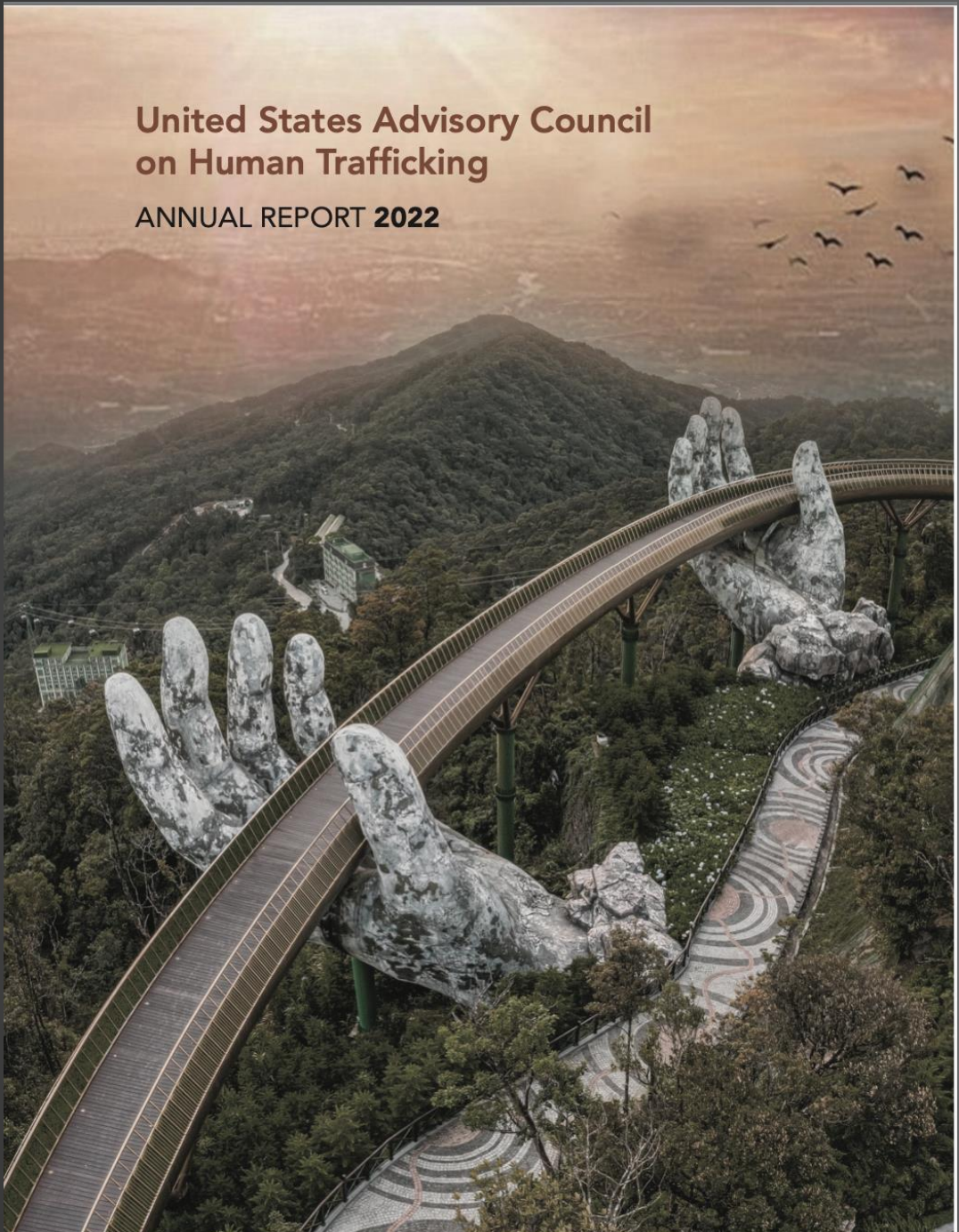
then talk to your  
teen about it

\*\*Overall Top Picks for online safety resources: [Online Safety Toolkit](#) from [JusticeU](#). With 12 major topics including gaming, social media, sexting, online schooling, cyberbullying, family media agreements, safety checklists and 60 links to even more great resources, this is your one stop shop to online safety for your teen. Also check out this [Resource Guide List](#) and [ConsumerNotice.org](#)

\*\*Top Pick for talking to kids about internet safety: [Thorn's Interactive Discussion Guides](#)

\*\*Top Pick for talking to teens about porn: [Culture Reframed](#).

If you're more of a documentary person, check out the videos below. You can watch them with your teen and have an open conversation afterward.



## United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking

ANNUAL REPORT **2022**

# Addressing Child Exploitation and Online Safety

## Overview

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In our 2021 report, we called for:

- ED to update the “Human Trafficking in America’s Schools” guide to encourage schools to partner with advocates who are Survivor Leaders and can support youth who have experienced trafficking in navigating various systems of care.
- DHS/Blue Campaign to further promote online safety prevention efforts for youth and underserved populations by creating a tool similar to iGuardian that specifically addresses human trafficking and targets individuals at risk of human trafficking online, individuals exploiting others through human trafficking online, and/or potential online buyers of commercial sex from human trafficking victims.
- HHS, DOJ, and DHS to address the gaps and issues relating to the intersection between pornography, human trafficking, and child sexual exploitation.
- Congress to amend Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act to empower victims and their attorneys, states, territories, tribes, and localities to use all the applicable criminal and civil laws to effectively combat human trafficking, including all sexual exploitation of children online.

<https://www.state.gov/united-states-advisory-council-on-human-trafficking-annual-report-2022/>



# Closing Comments & Webinar Feedback

# Thank you!

Need Help? Reach out to NCSSE at [NCSSE@air.org](mailto:NCSSE@air.org).

Event Webpage:

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/events/webinar/human-trafficking-webinar-series-protecting-young-people-online-exploitation>

Webinar Series:

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-webinar-series>

ED's Human Trafficking Webpage:

<https://www.ed.gov/human-trafficking>



# Feedback Form



Human Trafficking  
in **AMERICA'S SCHOOLS**



## Human Trafficking Webinar Series - Protecting Young People from Online Exploitation

Thank you for attending the webinar, *Protecting Young People from Online Exploitation*, on October 26, 2022. To best serve you, we would greatly appreciate receiving your feedback on the webinar.

1 Prior to the webinar, how knowledgeable were you about the webinar's topic?

- Not At All Knowledgeable
- Somewhat Knowledgeable
- Very Knowledgeable

2 Overall this webinar was a good use of my time.

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HTWebinar10>





## Live Q&A