



# The State of Black Children in Texas

## Supporting Black Children from Cradle to Career

February 24, 2022 | 9:30 to 11:30 AM CT  
Speaker Bios

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**Dr. Jasmine Jenkins, Executive Director, [Houston GPS](#)**

Jasmine Jenkins began her professional career as a Bilingual 4th grade teacher in Alief ISD. Recognizing that many of the challenges that she and her students faced on a daily basis stemmed from policy issues at the national, state, and local levels, she decided to pursue a master's degree and Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Houston and focused her research on education policy and school governance. Dr. Jenkins has worked as a new teacher advisor, curriculum specialist, and school director with Teach For America, and she served as the Manager of Community-Based Initiatives with Advantage Testing of Houston. She was also a founding member of the regional strategy team for the Organizing Network for Education (ONE) Houston and a 2016 candidate for the Texas State Board of Education. In addition to leading the Houston GPS team, Dr. Jenkins is an adjunct instructor at Rice University. A Pennsylvania native, Jasmine has been living and working in Houston since 2006, and she is passionate about expanding educational opportunities for all children.



**Briana Gordley, Policy Analyst, [Texas Appleseed](#)**

Briana Gordley supports Texas Appleseed's Fair Financial Services Project as a policy analyst, working to advocate for consumer protection, regulation, and reform in the areas of payday and auto title lending and abusive financial practices for vulnerable communities. Briana has a background in survivor advocacy and housing insecurity, having actively worked to support survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking through rapid rehousing and case management services. Briana holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work from the University of Kentucky and a Master of Science in Social Work with a concentration in Administration and Policy Practice from The University of Texas at Austin.



**Ann Baddour, Director, Fair Financial Services Project, [Texas Appleseed](#)**

Ann Baddour is the director of the Fair Financial Services Project at Texas Appleseed. She conducts research, supports state-based coalitions, and advocates for policies that further racial and economic justice in Texas. Her areas of focus include reining in payday and auto title lending abuses, increasing access to fairly-priced credit, ensuring fair debt collection practices, expanding remedies for victims of financial Abuse and supporting fair auto insurance pricing. Ann holds a Master's in Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs and a Master's in Middle Eastern Studies, both from The University of Texas at Austin. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Consumer Federation of America, a national organization focused on advancing consumer interests, and for RAISE Texas, a statewide asset building coalition. She also served a four-year term on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Consumer Advisory Board.



**Nikki Jones, Professor of African American Studies, [UC Berkeley](#)**

Nikki Jones is Professor and H. Michael and Jeanne Williams Department Chair of African American Studies department at UC-Berkley, Jones earned her Ph.D. jointly in criminology and sociology from the University of Pennsylvania and is considered a leading academic expert on race and the criminal legal system, policing, and violence. Jones is at work on a new book, *BRUTAL AND ROUTINE*, which draws on 20 years of research to crystalize a new and necessary understanding of the violence of policing, with a reasoned argument for abolition, to be published by W.W. Norton Press.

Professor Jones is also the author of *Between Good and Ghetto: African American Girls and Inner-City Violence* (2010) and *The Chosen Ones: Black Men and the Politics of Redemption* (June 2018), which received the Michael J. Hindelang Outstanding Book Award from the American Society of Criminology in 2020. In addition to her ethnographic work, Jones also analyzes video recordings of routine police and civilians, with a focus on encounters that involve the police and Black youth in high-surveillance neighborhoods. These records are housed in the Justice Interaction Lab in the Department of African American Studies at UC-Berkeley.

In partnership with James Burch, Anti Police-Terror Project Policy Director and inaugural member of the City of Oakland’s “Reimagining Public Safety Task Force,” Jones co-leads Research for Reimagining Community Safety, a project that provides research-based recommendations to organizers who are on the frontlines of building community-led visions of safety, well-being, and justice in the Bay Area. At Berkeley, Professor Jones leads an interdisciplinary group of graduate and undergraduate students working to generate research-based recommendations on alternative responses to community safety and programs that address the root causes of violence in the Bay Area and across the country. This work is supported by the Spencer Foundation and the William T. Grant Foundation and the UC-Berkeley’s Department of African American Studies Abolition Democracy Initiative.

Professor Jones has shared her expertise with numerous print, radio, and television news media outlets, including NPR, KCBS Radio, Axios.com, History.com, BBC World Newshour, Minnesota Public Radio, Time Magazine, KQED’s Forum, Ireland Today, Australia Broadcasting Corporation (The Drum), SF Weekly, The Dallas Morning News, The Guardian, and CNN’s “The Lead with Jake Tapper,” among others. Professor Jones is also a faculty affiliate with the Center for the Study of Law and Society at UC-Berkeley.



**Dr. Thandeka Chapman, Professor, Department of Education Studies, [UC San Diego](#)**

Dr. Thandeka K. Chapman is a professor in the Education Studies Department at the University of California San Diego. Dr. Chapman conducts research with teachers and students in urban and racially diverse settings to examine and resolve the ways that institutional racism is manifested in school climate, curriculum, adult and student relationships, and school policies. Using Critical Race Theory, her scholarship includes research on African American College Access, charter school reform, student outcomes in racially desegregated schools, and multicultural education for social justice curricular initiatives in preK-12 urban and suburban school settings.



**Dr. Stella Smith, Associate Director, Minority Achievement, Creativity and High-Ability Center, [Prairie View A&M University](#)**

A qualitative researcher, Dr. Stella L. Smith's scholarly interests focus on the experiences of faculty and administrators of color in higher education; African American females in leadership in higher education; access and inclusion of underserved populations in higher education, and P-20 educational pipeline alignment. For the entirety of her professional career, she has worked in areas that promote access for underrepresented populations to higher education. Dr. Smith is a strong advocate for social justice and passionate about creating asset based pathways of success for underserved students.

Dr. Smith was recognized with a 2014 Dissertation Award from the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education and as part of the 2019 class of 35 Outstanding Women Leaders in Higher Education by *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*. Dr. Smith serves as the Managing Editor the *Journal for Minority Achievement, Creativity, and Leadership*, and an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Family Strengths*.

Dr. Smith also serves as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling and the Associate Director for the Minority Achievement, Creativity and High-Ability (MACH-III) Center at Prairie View A&M University. Prior to this role, she held several roles in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Smith earned her PhD in Educational Administration with a portfolio in Women and Gender Studies and BS in Microbiology from The University of Texas at Austin and an MA in Organizational Management from the University of Phoenix.



**Dr. Vicki Mokuria, Adjunct Faculty, [Stephen F. Austin University](#)**

Dr. Vicki Mokuria is a faculty member at Stephen F. Austin State University, where she teaches a broad range of education classes to both undergraduate and graduate students, with her main area of expertise being on teaching multicultural education. She is a lifelong educator/learner who has worked for over 30 years as a public high school teacher in Dallas ISD at a blue ribbon school, as a parent educator, and now, on the college level. After graduating from Soka University of America's MA program, she attended Texas A&M University and earned a doctoral degree in 2019 in curriculum and instruction, focusing on urban education.

In addition to being a poet/scholar/educator, Dr. Mokuria is also a devoted mother and grandmother. She has won several teaching awards on both the high school and collegiate levels and published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals and books. Her research interests include anti-racism education, multicultural education, and Soka education in Brazil. Together with her colleague and business partner, Dr. Diana Wandix-White, Dr. Mokuria provides professional development to in-service teachers that focuses on culturally relevant practices, classroom management, creating equitable and caring learning spaces, closing opportunity gaps, and strategies to support teachers to be their best selves.



**Andre' Watkins, Owner, [SevenPeace Solutions](#)**

Andre' is a graduate of Liberty University (2021) and a Student Services Liaison Lead for Forney ISD. He is the Owner and Principal Consultant of SevenPeace Solutions and a Trainer & Consultant for Austin ISD, Waco ISD, LaPorte ISD, and Harris County Department of Education. He is also a member of the Texas Association of Black Educators.



**Dr. Ashley C. Williams, Vice President of Programs, [Jumpstart](#)**

Dr. Williams is the Vice President of Programs at [Jumpstart](#) and a Policy Fellow at the [National Black Child Development Institute](#). Prior to returning to Jumpstart as a part of the organization's leadership team, Dr. Williams was the Director of California Policy and Educator Engagement Programs for the [Center for the Study of Child Care Employment](#).

Dr. Williams has worked in several roles in ECE, including serving as a Jumpstart Corps Member where she started her ECE journey. She continued on to become a preschool teacher, Head Start center director, and early childhood teacher educator at the undergraduate and master's levels at SF State. She has experience with ECE policy and systems work, serving as the Senior Quality and Workforce Analyst for the [San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education](#).

Dr. Williams' professional work also extends internationally as she co-led a study abroad service-learning program in ECE settings in South Africa and New Zealand. Overall, Dr. Williams' daily work is rooted in contributing to ECE systems in ways that explicitly reveal, dissolve, and resolve systemic inequities that cause harm to children, families, and the educators that work with them- especially when they are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Dr. Williams earned her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership at SF State where she also earned her BA in Child and Adolescent Development and an M.A.Ed. with an emphasis on Early Childhood Education.



**Dr. Keffrelyn D. Brown, Suzanne B. and John L. Adams Endowed Professor of Education, [UT Austin](#)**

Keffrelyn D. Brown (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison) is the Suzanne B. and John L. Adams Endowed Professor of Education and Distinguished University Teaching Professor of Cultural Studies in Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Department of African and African Diaspora Studies (by courtesy) at the University of Texas at Austin. She is also co-founder and co-director of the Center for Innovation in Race, Teaching, and Curriculum (CIRTC) (with Dr. Anthony Brown). She has authored over 50 academic works, including two books. Dr. Brown is a former elementary and middle school teacher and school administrator whose research explores the relationship between race, curriculum, and teaching.



**Dr. Aisha White, Program Director, [P.R.I.D.E., University of Pittsburgh](#)**

Aisha White is a mother and grandmother born and raised in Pittsburgh where she grew up in public housing communities. She was educated at the University of Pittsburgh where she earned her bachelor's degree in Media Communications and her master's and PhD in Library and Information Science. She has held positions at many early education programs including Family Communications, Inc. -now Fred Rogers Productions- where she is currently a consultant to the *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood* television show. She also is also a consultant to the Committee for Children's *Imagine Neighborhood* podcast, and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). She has coordinated arts and social activism efforts for more than 40 years and is currently the director of the P.R.I.D.E. Program

(positive racial identity development in early education), at the Office of Child Development in the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh.



**Jessica Bundage, Program Coordinator, Center for Social Measurement & Evaluation, [CHILDREN AT RISK](#)**

Jessica's interest in education came as a result of her time serving as an AmeriCorps member, in which she worked as a day camp counselor and after school instructor for inner-city elementary and middle school students in Dallas. Following her graduation from Southern Methodist University, where she double majored in Political Science and International Studies, she then went on to serve in the Peace Corps as a Community Health Educator in Ethiopia. These experiences led her to pursue a Master's degree in International Education from New York University.

Prior to joining Children At Risk, Jessica served as an Americorps VISTA for the Houston Chapter of the United Nations Association, where she successfully led the relaunch of its Global Classrooms/Model UN program for inner-city Houston schools. Jessica is eager to apply these experiences to advocating for children's rights here in Texas.