# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Assistant Secretary for career, technical and adult education, Department of Education

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Health, Education, Labor and Pensions |
| Agency Mission | To promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary for career, technical and adult education advises the secretary on policies in the area of career, technical and adult education, including community colleges and adult literacy. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Education |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education administers programs related to adult education and literacy; career and technical education; and community colleges. It includes three deputy assistant secretaries (policy and strategic initiatives; community colleges; and management and planning).[[2]](#endnote-2) This assistant secretary manages investments of approximately $1.79 billion annually.[[3]](#endnote-3) He or she oversees about 80 employees. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Supports a range of state and local activities at the secondary and postsecondary levels—with a special emphasis on the community college—that help young people and adults obtain the knowledge and skills needed to prepare for successful careers and productive lives
* Coordinates and administers programs and policies for activities related to career and technical education; adult education and literacy; correctional education; and agricultural science that are designed to improve and provide greater access to these programs; promote successful transitions to postsecondary learning; strengthen academic achievement and workforce preparation; and prepare adults for work, citizenship and future learning[[4]](#endnote-4)
* Oversees administration of grant programs in these areas[[5]](#endnote-5)
* Provides a unified approach to rural education and rural family education through the coordination of programs within the department
* Works with the Federal Interagency Committee on Education to coordinate related activities and programs of other federal departments and agencies (20 U.S.C. § 3416)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Content expertise and familiarity with adult and technical education in order to determine policy direction (critical)
* On the ground experience, an understanding of the day to day work, and an understanding of you who are serving
* Extensive management experience
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| Competencies | * Strong communication and interpersonal skills
* Ability to work under high pressure
* Energy for frequent amount of travel
* Collaboration and partnership skills in order to work across different agencies and stakeholders
* Ability to work with and testify before Congress
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Brenda Dann-Messier (2009 to 2014) – President of Dorcas Place (adult and family learning center); Northeast and Islands Regional Education Laboratory at Brown University; Regional Representative for Region I in Boston under the Department of Education[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| Troy R. Justesen (2006 to 2009) – Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Deputy Commissioner of the Rehabilitative Services Administration; Associate Director for Domestic Policy at the White House Domestic Policy Council[[7]](#endnote-7) |
| Susan K. Sclafani (2003 to 2005) – Counselor to the Secretary of Education; Chief of Staff for Education (Houston Independent School District) |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/contactus.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www2.ed.gov/news/staff/bios/dann-messier.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <http://www.allgov.com/officials/dann-messier-brenda?officialid=29000> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.allgov.com/officials/justesen-troy?officialid=28662> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)