# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Assistant secretary for special education and rehabilitative services, 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 special education and rehabilitative services advises the secretary on policies related to children, youth and adults with disabilities, and works to improve outcomes for these individuals through the programs and efforts of the Office of Special Education Programs and the Rehabilitative Services Administration. |
| 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 Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) supports programs that serve millions of children, youth and adults with disabilities. In fiscal 2016, OSERS had a total budget of $12.8 billion and 204 nonseasonal full-time permanent employees.[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Serves as the principal advisor to the secretary of education on the education and employment of individuals with disabilities[[3]](#endnote-3) * Provides overall direction, coordination and leadership to the Office of the Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education Programs and the Rehabilitative Services Administration[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Subject matter expertise * Prior agency experience * Extensive management experience * Strong relationships with relevant stakeholders or ability to form them |
| Competencies | * Strong communication and interpersonal skills * Excellent leadership skills * Ability to work under high pressure and handle sensitive matters * Energy for frequent travel * Excellent negotiation skills * Ability to work in a matrix environment * Ability to work across party lines |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Michael Yudin (2015 to 2016) – Acting Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education; Senate Staffer[[5]](#endnote-5) | |
| Alexa E. Posny (2009 to 2012) – Commissioner of the Kansas State Department of Education; Director of the Office of Special Education Programs; State Director of Special Education with the Kansas State Department of Education[[6]](#endnote-6) | |
| Tracy Ralph Justesen (2007 to 2009) – Career Program Specialist for the Department of Education; served in the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division; Associate Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council[[7]](#endnote-7) | |

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/overview/budget/budget16/justifications/i-specialed.pdf>

   Partnership for Public Service analysis of FedScope data [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/as.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www2.ed.gov/news/staff/bios/yudin.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <https://blog.ed.gov/2012/07/leadersed-alexa-posny-assistant-secretary-for-special-education-and-rehabilitative-services/> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.allgov.com/officials/justesen-tracy?officialid=28660>

   <http://www.cpdusu.org/featuredstories/twins/> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)