

**SPECIAL EDUCATION HEARING OFFICERS**  
(April 2021)

Special education due process hearings are conducted by impartial private practice attorneys and Administrative Law Judges from the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) who meet the standards outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and additional standards set by the Texas Education Agency. Below are the names of the current special education hearing officers and descriptions of their professional experience.

HEARING OFFICER	PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
<b>Steve Elliot</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas practicing attorney since 2003</li> <li>• Graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School</li> <li>• Administrative Law Judge at SOAH since 2017</li> <li>• In addition to special education law, experience in Medicaid, juvenile law, insurance law, and the Americans with Disabilities Act</li> <li>• Special education hearing officer since 2017</li> </ul>
<b>Kimberlee Kovach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas practicing attorney since 1981</li> <li>• Graduate of Capital University Law School</li> <li>• In private practice at Kovach Dispute Resolution</li> <li>• In addition to special education law, experience in civil litigation, family law, employment law, health care matters and mediation</li> <li>• Special education hearing officer since 2017</li> </ul>
<b>Kathryn Lewis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas practicing attorney since 2005</li> <li>• Graduate of the Golden Gate University School of Law</li> <li>• Administrative Law Judge at SOAH since 2017</li> <li>• In addition to special education law, experience in disability benefits entitlement, Medicaid, guardianship, and mental health law and policy</li> <li>• Special education hearing officer since 2017</li> </ul>
<b>Sandy Lowe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas practicing attorney since 1992</li> <li>• Graduate of the University of Texas School of Law</li> <li>• In addition to special education law, experience in administrative law, employment law, teacher contract hearings, civil rights law, and mediation</li> <li>• Former classroom teacher</li> <li>• Special education hearing officer since 2017</li> </ul>
<b>Stacy May</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas practicing attorney since 2016</li> <li>• Licensed to practice law in Arizona and California since 1993</li> <li>• Graduate of the University of Iowa, College of Law</li> <li>• Administrative Law Judge at SOAH since 2020</li> <li>• Certified teacher in special education since 2011</li> <li>• Certified dyslexia specialist</li> <li>• In addition to special education law, experience in intellectual property, commercial litigation, and family law</li> <li>• Special education hearing officer since 2020</li> </ul>

HEARING OFFICER	PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
<b>Deborah McElvaney</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas practicing attorney since 1983</li> <li>• Graduate of South Texas College of Law</li> <li>• In private practice at DHMcElvaney Law, PLLC</li> <li>• In addition to special education law, experience in administrative law, commercial law, mediation, civil litigation, arbitration, and state and federal appellate law</li> <li>• Special education hearing officer from 1996-2013</li> </ul>
<b>Yvonne Patton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas practicing attorney since 2003</li> <li>• Graduate of Louisiana State University School of Law</li> <li>• Administrative Law Judge at SOAH since 2020</li> <li>• In addition to special education law, experience in criminal and civil litigation, criminal law, family law, and administrative law</li> <li>• Special education hearing officer since 2020</li> </ul>
<b>Lynn E. Rubinett</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas practicing attorney since 1985</li> <li>• Graduate of Northeastern University School of Law</li> <li>• In private practice at the Law Office of Lynn E. Rubinett</li> <li>• In addition to special education law, experience in civil litigation, civil rights law, labor and employment law, education law, disability rights law, administrative law, and mediation</li> <li>• Special education hearing officer since 1994</li> </ul>
<b>Brenda Rudd</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas practicing attorney since 1982</li> <li>• Graduate of Texas Tech University School of Law</li> <li>• In private practice at Brenda Rudd, Attorney at Law</li> <li>• In addition to special education law, experience in civil and criminal litigation, family law, administrative law, and mediation</li> <li>• Former classroom teacher</li> <li>• Special education hearing officer since 2003</li> </ul>
<b>Ian Spechler</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas practicing attorney since 2007</li> <li>• Graduate of the University of Texas School of Law</li> <li>• Administrative Law Judge at SOAH since 2017</li> <li>• In addition to special education law, experience in child welfare law, juvenile law, housing law, and Medicaid law</li> <li>• Special education hearing officer since 2017</li> </ul>
<b>Jessica Witte</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texas practicing attorney since 2016</li> <li>• Licensed to practice law in New York since 2014</li> <li>• Graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Law School</li> <li>• Administrative Law Judge at SOAH since 2021</li> <li>• Former special education inclusion teacher</li> <li>• In addition to special education law, experience in school law, public law, civil litigation, employment law, civil rights law and policy, white collar criminal law, and state and federal appellate law</li> <li>• Special education hearing officer since 2021</li> </ul>