

SPECIAL EDUCATION MEDIATOR LIST

(March 2021)

Special education mediations are conducted by impartial private practice attorneys who meet the standards outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and additional standards set by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Below are the names of the current mediators under contract with TEA and descriptions of their professional experience.

MEDIATOR	PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
Lucius D. Bunton	Mr. Bunton received his law degree from the Southern Methodist University School of Law. His practice, Law Offices of Lucius Bunton, is limited to conducting private mediations and to serving as a mediator in special education disputes. In addition to special education mediations, Mr. Bunton mediates civil litigation, business, employment law, real estate law, and family law disputes. He previously practiced administrative law, employment law, civil litigation, civil rights litigation and served as a special education hearing officer.
Mary Carolyn Carmichael	Ms. Carmichael received her law degree from the University of Texas School of Law. She is with the law firm of Nance & Carmichael, PC. In addition to special education mediations, Ms. Carmichael has mediated family law and children's rights matters. She has served as a special education hearing officer and also has experience in school, public utilities, administrative, disability, and employment law.
Elizabeth Chappell	Ms. Chappell received her law degree from the University of Texas School of Law. Her practice, Chappell Mediation, is dedicated to family-based legal services, offering mediation and legal counsel for education, divorce, parenting disputes, child custody and support, and elder care. She is a former felony and child abuse prosecutor. Ms. Chappell is a <i>Credentialed Mediator</i> with the Texas Mediator Credentialing Association and is a Texas State Board of Education Heroes for Children award recipient.
Luecretia Dillard	Ms. Dillard received her law degree from University of Houston Law Center. She spent many years as a partner in private practice at Dillard, McElvaney & Kovach LLP. Her current practice is limited to serving as an arbitrator and mediator. In addition to special education mediations, Ms. Dillard mediates and arbitrates a wide variety of employment law and commercial disputes. Ms. Dillard also served as a special education hearing officer from 1996 to 2011 and special education mediator from 2003 to 2011.
Roberto M. Garcia	Mr. Garcia received his law degree from the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University. His practice, the Law Offices of Roberto M. Garcia, focuses on mediation, arbitration, law enforcement representation, and business organization. He has mediated labor and employment, personal injury, construction, commercial, and environmental disputes. Mr. Garcia has experience in civil litigation, school law, labor and employment law, civil rights law, and administrative hearings. He is also a <i>Credentialed Advanced Mediator</i> with the Texas Mediator Credentialing Association.

MEDIATOR	PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
Brenda Jarden-Holter	Ms. Jarden-Holter received her law degree from the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University. She is a solo practitioner and has experience conducting family law and Child Protective Services mediations. Ms. Jarden-Holter also has experience in military criminal litigation, family law, administrative law, disability law, and probate law. She is a retired U.S. Army Judge Advocate General and is a <i>Credentialed Mediator</i> with the Texas Mediator Credentialing Association.
Kimberlee Kovach	Ms. Kovach received her law degree from the Capital University Law School. Her practice, Kovach Dispute Resolution, focuses on mediation and arbitration. Ms. Kovach has mediated civil litigation, family, employment, and health care matters. She is a nationally and internationally recognized mediation trainer and received a Lifetime Achievement Award by the International Academy of Mediators. Ms. Kovach also has experience in civil litigation, family law, employment law, and health care matters.
Deborah H. McElvaney	Ms. McElvaney received her law degree from South Texas College of Law. She is in private practice at DHMcElvaney Law, PLLC, where she currently focuses her practice exclusively on serving as a hearing officer and mediator in special education disputes. Ms. McElvaney served as a Special Education Mediator from 2003-2014 and as a Special Education Hearing Officer from 1996-2013; 2017-present. In addition to special education law and mediation, she has experience in administrative law, commercial law, civil litigation, arbitration, and state and federal appellate law. Before attending law school, she was a classroom teacher.
Lynn E. Rubinett	Ms. Rubinett received her law degree from Northeastern University School of Law. Her law practice focuses exclusively on mediation, arbitration, and independent hearing officer services. In addition to serving as a special education mediator and hearing officer, Ms. Rubinett mediates all civil litigation matters, with a focus on disputes related to family, labor and employment law. Ms. Rubinett also works as an arbitrator and hearing examiner in labor and employment disputes. Ms. Rubinett's prior experience includes practicing in the areas of labor, employment, education, disability rights, civil rights, and administrative law. Ms. Rubinett is a Distinguished Credentialed Mediator with the Texas Mediator Credentialing Association.
Renee M. Rusch	Ms. Rusch received her law degree from Boalt Hall School of Law (UC Berkeley School of Law). She is retired from the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH), where she served as an administrative law judge and the alternative dispute resolution team leader. During her tenure at SOAH, Ms. Rusch conducted mediations involving a wide range of issues and presided over special education due process hearings. She also has experience in administrative law, civil rights law, disability law, employment law, government law, health care law, education law, and civil litigation.

Barbara L. Stroud	Ms. Stroud received her law degree from the University of Texas School of Law. Her firm, Stroud Mediation, focuses on alternative dispute resolution and limited scope representation in family law matters. She has conducted family, Child Protective Services, consumer, personal injury, and real estate mediations. Ms. Stroud also has experience in personal injury law and civil litigation. She is a <i>Credentialed Advanced Mediator</i> with the Texas Mediator Credentialing Association.