BEFORE THE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

JAMES GRIFFITH, Appellant, v. DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY, Respondent.	Case No. ALLO-00-0016 ORDER OF THE BOARD FOLLOWING HEARING ON EXCEPTIONS TO THE DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR

Hearing on Exceptions. Pursuant to RCW 41.64.060 and WAC 358-01-040, this matter came on for a hearing before the Personnel Appeals Board, LEANA D. LAMB, Member, on Appellant's exceptions to the Director's determination dated May 2, 2000. The hearing was held on October 5, 2000, in the Personnel Appeals Board hearing room in Olympia, Washington. GERALD L. MORGEN, Vice Chair, reviewed the record and participated in the decision in this matter. WALTER T. HUBBARD, Chair, did not participate in the hearing or in the decision in this matter.

Appearances. Appellant James Griffith was present and was represented by Larry Goodman, of Larry Goodman and Associates L.L.C. Respondent Department of Ecology (ECY) was represented by Martha Tennis, Human Resource Consultant.

Background. As a result of a class study, the Washington State Personnel Resources Board adopted revisions to the information technology classes. Appellant's Computer Information Systems Specialist (CISS) 2 position was reallocated to the new Information Technology Systems Specialist (ITSS) 5 classification. Ms. Tennis informed Appellant of his reallocation by letter dated October 14, 1999

By letter dated October 25, 1999, Appellant appealed to the Director of the Department of Personnel (DOP). In his letter of appeal, Appellant requested that his position be reallocated to the Information Technology Systems/Applications Specialist (ITS/AS) 6 classification.

On February 15, 2000, the DOP Director's designee, Paul Peterson, conducted an allocation review of Appellant's position. By letter dated May 2, 2000, Mr. Peterson determined that Appellant's position was properly allocated to the Information Technology Systems Specialist (ITSS) 5 classification. On May 18, 2000, Appellant filed timely exceptions to the Director's determination with the Personnel Appeals Board. Appellant's exceptions are the subject of this proceeding.

Appellant is the agency's highest-level technical specialist for information technology planning and customer consultation for administration of information technology Requests for Quotations (RFQs), Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and contracts. His duties included in part, developing and issuing highly technical RFPs and RFQs for information technology hardware, software, and purchased and personal services. Appellant evaluates responses to RFPs and RFQs, responds to protests of RFPs and RFQs, is responsible for contract development and administration for standard and major information technology products and projects, and researches technology, product sources and available contracts for planned acquisitions.

Summary of Appellant's Argument. Appellant argues that his duties and responsibilities, as described in his classification questionnaire (CQ), are encompassed by the ITS/AS 6 classification. Appellant asserts that he is designated as the agency's highest technical specialist in information technology planning and customer consulting. Appellant asserts that initially management supported allocating his position to the ITS/AS 6 classification but later recanted their position. However, Appellant contends that his CQ was not revised and that it continues to state that he is

designated as the highest technical specialist. Appellant asserts that the level and scope of his duties and responsibilities are best described by the ITS/AS 6 classification.

Summary of Respondent's Argument. Respondent argues that before an employee can be allocated to the ITS/AS 6 level, the employee must be designated in writing as the highest-level authority for the agency in an information technology specialty area. Respondent asserts that in Appellant's case, his manager, Carol Fleskes, determined that Appellant was the technical specialist for his area. However, she decided that Appellant's specialty did not require an expert professional and therefore did not provide written designation as the highest-level authority to Appellant's position. Respondent asserts that because Appellant's position was not provided a specific written designation as the expert professional for his specialty area, his duties and responsibilities are best described by the ITSS 5 classification.

Primary Issue. Whether the Director's determination that Appellant's position was properly allocated to the Information Technology Systems Specialist 5 classification should be affirmed.

Relevant Classifications. Information Technology Systems Specialist 5, class code 03275, and Information Technology Systems/Applications Specialist 6, class code 03286.

Decision of the Board. The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. Also, a position review is not a comparison of work performed by employees in similar positions. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the

class which best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

Allocation of a position must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities assigned to an individual position compared to the existing classifications. Flahaut v. Dept's of Personnel and Labor and Industries, PAB No. ALLO 96-0009 (1996).

At the ITSS 5 level, incumbents are professional specialists for major, high risk/high impact systems, projects or operations problems. Incumbents at this level utilize broad, extensive technical and business knowledge to creatively evaluate and meet complex system needs and to resolve problems. Incumbents at this level also serve as a technical mentor, coach and trainer to others.

At the ITS/AS 6 level, incumbents are designated in writing as the highest level authority in an information technology specialty area, they serve as the agency's spokesperson in their area of technical expertise and serve as a technical mentor, coach and trainer to others.

Appellant's CQ is signed by his supervisor, Robert Monn, and by the Administrative Services Manager, Carol Fleskes. Neither Mr. Monn nor Ms. Fleskes indicated that they agreed or disagreed with the description of Appellant's duties as listed on the CQ. At the exceptions hearing, Ms. Fleskes told the Board that she had attached a "sticky note" to the CQ and that on the note she indicated her disagreement with the CQ. However, this note is not part of the record before the Board.

Appellant's CQ states, in part:

> Serves as the designated highest technical specialist in the agency in information technology (IT) planning and customer consulting (Specifically IT Request for Quotation (RFQ) administration, Request for Proposal (RFP) administration and contract administration).

> Develops highly technical IT strategic acquisitions plans and RFPs and RFQs . . . .
>
> Responds to protests of IT RFPs and RFQs and to breach or non-compliance of contracts, leases and agreements.
>
> . . . .
>
> Consults with agency staff . . . .
>
> Evaluates long-term agency business needs and works closely with agency Information Services management . . . .

Position allocations are "based upon an investigation of duties and responsibilities assigned and/or performed and other information and recommendations." (WAC 356-20-200). Because a current and accurate description of a position's duties and responsibilities is documented in an approved classification questionnaire, the classification questionnaire becomes the basis for allocation of a position. An allocation determination must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities, as documented in the CQ. Jacobson v. Dept of Ecology, PAB No. ALLO 99-0004 (2000).

In this case, Appellant's CQ states that he is designated the highest technical specialist in his area of expertise. His first- and second-line supervisors signed the CQ and did not indicate on the CQ that they disagreed with the duties as described therein. In addition, the level of his duties and responsibilities are comparable to those found at the ITS/AS 6 level. Therefore, Appellant's position should be reallocated to the ITS/AS 6 classification.

Conclusion. The appeal on exceptions by Appellant should be granted and his position should be reallocated to the Information Technology Systems/Applications Specialist 6 classification. The determination of the Director, dated May 2, 2000, should be reversed.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Appellant is granted, the determination of the Director, dated May 2, 2000, is reversed, and Appellant's position is reallocated to the Information Technology Systems/Applications Specialist 6 classification, effective July 1, 1999.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 2000.

WASHINGTON STATE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

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Gerald L. Morgen, Vice, Chair

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Leana D. Lamb, Member