

BEFORE THE PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD
STATE OF WASHINGTON

JOHN DUNCAN and EDWARD
ETHERIDGE,

Appellants,

VS.

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION
SERVICES,

Respondent.

CASE NO. R-ALLO-09-034

ORDER OF THE BOARD
FOLLOWING HEARING ON
EXCEPTIONS TO THE
DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR

Hearing on Exceptions. This appeal came before the Personnel Resources Board, LAURA ANDERSON, Vice Chair, and DJ MARK, Member, for a hearing on Appellants' exceptions to the director's determinations dated July 22, 2009. The hearing was held at the office of the Personnel Resources Board in Olympia, Washington, on January 20, 2010.

Appearances. Appellants John Duncan and Edward Etheridge were represented by Sherri-Anne Burke, Counsel Representative for the Washington Federation of State Employees. Starleen Parsons, Human Resource Manager, represented Respondent Department of Information Services (DIS).

Background. Appellants are employed by DIS in the Information Technology Specialist 2 (ITS2) classification. On March 19, 2008, Appellants submitted requests for position reviews to their supervisor. On April 1, 2008, the Position Review Request (PRR) forms were submitted to DIS's Human Resource office. Appellants asked that their positions be reallocated to the Information Technology Specialist 3 (ITS3) classification. By letters dated July 14, 2008, DIS denied Appellants' requests.

On August 21, 2008, Appellants requested director's reviews of DIS's determinations. By letters dated July 22, 2009, the director's designee denied Appellants' reallocation requests.

1 On August 18, 2009, Appellants filed exceptions to the director's determinations. Appellants'
2 exceptions are the subject of this proceeding.

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4 Appellants work in DIS's regional remote Node Site in Spokane. Appellants are supervised by an
5 Information Technology Specialist 6 working in the Network Control Center (NCC) in Olympia.
6 The purpose of the Spokane Node Site is to link and route network connectivity for statewide
7 networks. The Network Control Center (NCC) and Network Operations Center (NOC) are co-
8 located in Olympia, and the employees assigned to those centers form a centralized group
9 responsible for the overall operation of the statewide networks and network services. Appellants
10 provide local site support for the Spokane Node Site and perform the physical equipment
11 maintenance and monitoring of the equipment for the site. Appellants' physical access to the
12 network through the node site is limited to their assigned region and they are not assigned to
13 work on statewide network device.

14 **Summary of Appellants' Arguments.** Appellants argue that multiple agencies are impacted by the
15 thousands of circuits for the various platforms deployed out of the Spokane. Appellants explain that
16 information flowing through their site impacts many customers who rely on DIS for voice, video
17 and data transport to conduct business throughout the state. Appellants explain that they monitor
18 and provide operations support, correct network malfunctions, create installation plans when
19 necessary, and independently install hardware and software enhancements. Appellants receive work
20 assignments from NCC or NOC but contend that they are responsible for determining how to get
21 circuits to interface with the system. Appellants explain that they follow set procedures found in
22 manufacturers' manuals, and using test equipment, do initial diagnoses of problems before
23 contacting staff in Olympia for assistance. When they do contact Olympia staff, Appellants are able
24 to tell them what is probably wrong with a circuit because they have already completed the
25 troubleshooting. Appellants further explain that they conduct ongoing needs assessments by
26 checking daily printouts and reports to identify circuit problems, routing problems, and utilization
27 trouble spots. Appellants assert that the scope of their work impacts more than small groups as
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encompassed by the ITS2 level. Therefore, Appellants contend that their duties, responsibilities and scope of work support reallocation of their positions to the ITS3 classification.

Summary of Respondent's Arguments. Respondent argues that the scope of the Spokane Node Site fits within the ITS2 classification. Respondent contends that the majority of Appellants' work is performed under general supervision using established methods and procedures to complete standard tasks. Respondent argues that the NCC directs and has oversight of the work performed at the node site and that Appellants receive work orders from the NCC or NOC that tell them where to install cards and in the case of a suspected bad cable, which cables to inspect. Respondent contends that Appellants' work is routine and that they do not exercise the level of independence found at the ITS3 level. Respondent explains that the NCC staff has oversight and provides direction for the work performed by Appellants at the Spokane Node Site. Respondent explains that Appellants test and monitor circuits, test cables, install network cabling, change out hardware components, and support and assist the NCC and NOC in troubleshooting problems. Respondent contends that the nature of Appellants' work, their level of independence, and the scope of impact of their positions fit within the ITS2 class.

Primary Issue. Whether the director's determination that Appellants' positions are properly allocated to the Information Technology Specialist 2 classification should be affirmed.

Relevant Classifications. Information Technology Specialist 2, class code 479N, and Information Technology Specialist 3, class code 479N.

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

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2 The definition for Information Technology Specialist 3 states:

3 In support of information systems and users in an assigned area of responsibility,
4 independently performs consulting, designing, programming, installation,
5 maintenance, quality assurance, troubleshooting and/or technical support for
6 applications, hardware and software products, databases, database management
7 systems, support products, network infrastructure equipment, or
8 telecommunications infrastructure, software or hardware.

9 Uses established work procedures and innovative approaches to complete
10 assignments and coordinate projects such as conducting needs assessments;
11 leading projects; creating installation plans; analyzing and correcting network
12 malfunctions; serving as system administrator; monitoring or enhancing operating
13 environments; or supporting, maintaining and enhancing existing applications.

14 The majority of assignments and projects are moderate in size and impact an
15 agency division or large workgroup or single business function; or internal or
16 satellite operations, multiple users, or more than one group. Consults with higher-
17 level technical staff to resolve complex problems.

18 Appellants failed to provide persuasive argument that they perform independently or use
19 innovative approaches to complete assignments and coordinate projects as necessary for
20 allocation to the ITS3 level. Rather, the focus of Appellants' positions is the performance of
21 routine maintenance, troubleshooting, installation, and technical support under the guidance of
22 the NCC and NOC. The impact of Appellants' work is limited to the Spokane Node Site and its
23 customers and is further diluted by the redundancies built into the statewide system to prevent
24 system failures. Appellants' failed to show that their positions meet the level of independence,
25 responsibility, or breadth of impact encompassed in the ITS3 classification.

26 The definition for Information Technology Specialist 2 states:

27 In support of information systems and users, performs standard consulting,
28 analyzing, programming, maintenance, installation and/or technical support.

29 Under general supervision, follows established work methods and procedures to
complete tasks on computers and/or telecommunication software/hardware,
applications, support products, projects, or databases for small scale systems or
programs or pieces of larger systems or programs. Performs standard tasks such as
consulting with customers to identify and analyze technology needs and problems;
responding to and resolving trouble reports from users; processing equipment and

1 service orders; coordinating installations, moves, and changes; analyzing problems
2 for parts of applications and solving problems with some assistance; supporting and
3 enhancing existing applications in compliance with specifications and standards;
4 conducting unit, system or usability testing; writing specifications and developing
5 reports; developing and conducting application, software and/or system operation
6 training for users; or serving as part of a problem solving team addressing more
7 complex issues. The majority of tasks are limited in scope and impact individuals
8 or small groups. Complex problems are referred to a higher level.

9 Appellants work under general supervision and follow established work procedures and specific
10 instruction from the NCC and NOC to perform the duties and responsibilities encompassed at the
11 ITS2 level. Appellants install, maintain, troubleshoot and provide technical support for the systems
12 and connections routed through the Spokane Node Site. Appellants' scope of assigned duties and
13 responsibilities, the scope of impact of their work, and their level of authority are encompassed in
14 the ITS2 classification.

15 In a hearing on exceptions, the appellant has the burden of proof. WAC 357-52-110. To meet their
16 burden of proof, Appellants must establish that a majority of their assigned duties and
17 responsibilities fit within the classification to which they wish to be reallocated. Appellants have
18 failed to meet their burden of proof. Therefore, the appeal on exceptions should be denied, and the
19 director's determinations, dated July 22, 2009, should be affirmed.

20 ORDER

21 NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by John Duncan
22 and Edward Etheridge is denied, and the director's determination dated July 22, 2009, is affirmed.

23 DATED this ____ day of _____, 2010.

24 WASHINGTON PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

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LAURA ANDERSON, Vice Chair

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DJ MARK, Member