

Table of Contents

A Classification Compliance Audit of The Texas Education Agency

August 1997

Key Points of Report

Overview 1

Section 1:

Ten Positions Are Misclassified 2

Position Number 15 Is Inappropriately Classified 2

Position Number 19 Is Inappropriately Classified 2

Position Number 36 Is Inappropriately Classified 2

Position Number 51 Is Inappropriately Classified 3

Position Number 55 Is Inappropriately Classified 4

Position Number 60 Is Inappropriately Classified 5

Position Number 71 Is Inappropriately Classified 5

Position Number 75 Is Inappropriately Classified 5

Position Number 84 Is Inappropriately Classified 6

Position Number 101 Is Inappropriately Classified 7

Section 2:

Five Positions Have Inappropriate Reporting Relationships 7

Appendix

Objective, Scope, and Methodology 9



Key Points of Report

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Overall Conclusion

The Texas Education Agency (Agency) has a 93 percent rate of compliance with the Position Classification Plan (Plan) for the number of positions that were reviewed in the audit. Ten positions are misclassified. In addition, five positions have inappropriate reporting relationships. Compliance with the Plan is necessary to ensure state employees are properly compensated in relation to the Plan itself as well as in relation to other state employees.

Key Facts and Findings

- Ten positions at the Agency are misclassified.
- Five positions have inappropriate reporting relationships.

Contact

Kelli Dan, CCP, PHR, State Classification Officer, (512) 479-4700



Office of the State Auditor

Lawrence F. Alwin, CPA

This audit was conducted in accordance with the Position Classification Act, Texas Government Code 654.

Overview

Ten positions out of 107 selected for review at the Texas Education Agency (Agency) were found to be misclassified. To correct these misclassified positions, the Agency may either classify the positions according to our recommendations or

restructure the positions. In addition, there were five instances in which inappropriate reporting relationships were found. The Commissioner should ensure that any improper reporting relationships are remedied.

Position Number*	Recommendations		
	Status	Classification Number	Title
15	Present: Recommended:	1812-B4	Statistician II Administrative Technician Series
19	Present: Recommended:	1851-B8 1570-B9	Methods and Procedures Specialist Program Specialist I
36	Present: Recommended:	1974-A13 0154-A13	Contract Technician III Administrative Technician III
51	Present: Recommended:	1550-B8 0156-A15	Staff Services Officer I Administrative Technician IV
55	Present: Recommended:	3574-B8 1550-B8	Legal Assistant III Staff Services Officer I
60	Present: Recommended:	1566-B12 1020-B12	Program Administrator IV Accountant VI
71	Present: Recommended:	0149-A10	Word Processing Operator III Administrative Technician Series
75	Present: Recommended:	0233-B8	ADP Supervisor I Administrative Technician Series
84	Present: Recommended:	1157-B11	Budget Analyst III Systems Analyst Series
101	Present: Recommended:	1550-B8 0233-B8	Staff Services Officer I ADP Supervisor I

* In order to protect the confidentiality of those employees whose positions were reviewed, each incumbent was assigned a position number. A listing of each employee and his or her assigned number has been provided to the Texas Education Agency.

Issues and Recommendations

Section 1:

Ten Positions Are Misclassified

Section 1-A:

Position Number 15 Is Inappropriately Classified

Position Number 15 should be classified in the Administrative Technician job series rather than a Statistician II (1812-B4). The incumbent is responsible for providing administrative support to senior staff by scheduling and maintaining a calendar of meetings; preparing division budget revisions, purchase requisitions, and purchase vouchers; filing documents; making travel arrangements; and preparing transportation fare authorizations, requests for travel advances, and travel vouchers. The incumbent also develops and maintains the unit record keeping systems.

The incumbent is not responsible for performing quantitative analysis in order to identify trends reflected in data, nor is the incumbent responsible for analyzing and interpreting micro- and macro-statistics using statistical techniques as are indicative of the Statistician series.

Management's Response:

We concur.

Section 1-B:

Position Number 19 Is Inappropriately Classified

Position Number 19 should be classified as a Program Specialist I (1570-B9) rather than a Methods and Procedures Specialist (1851-B8). The incumbent is responsible for developing procedures, designing forms, and implementing the process for carrying out the Texas Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Incentive Program. In this

manner the incumbent performs consultative and technical work in the planning, development, and implementation of an Agency program. The incumbent is responsible for interpreting rules and regulations relating to gifted education, credit by examination, graduation requirements, and other areas related to the special projects of the division. The incumbent assists in the preparation of administrative reports.

The incumbent is not responsible for developing or implementing methods and procedures for improved work processes, staff utilization, office layouts, equipment utilization, and communications. The incumbent does not determine the methodologies and techniques for analyzing and evaluating the methods of operations or participate in the development, testing, and evaluation of new or existing organizational structures. The incumbent is not responsible for applying cost effectiveness, quality control, and production management techniques to attain uniformity of work output.

Management's Response:

We concur.

Section 1-C:

Position Number 36 Is Inappropriately Classified

Position Number 36 should be classified as an Administrative Technician III (0154-A13) rather than a Contract Technician III (1974-A13). This position is responsible for recording applications in a log and checking them for completion and accuracy. The incumbent maintains records and files, records receipts, and checks for completeness. The incumbent is responsible for comparing amounts submitted by the districts to the amounts on file and approving expenditures.

Issues and Recommendations

The incumbent contacts districts to resolve discrepancies. The incumbent has limited discretion. Major issues of concern are addressed at the consultant level.

The incumbent does not perform complex work in the areas of contract development, management, technical assistance, training, or evaluation. The incumbent does not develop, prepare, or process independent and interagency contracts, amendments, trade sheets, encumbrance memos or budget revisions; the incumbent is not responsible for developing work standards or procedures. The incumbent does not develop training plans, handouts, or other materials for use in training contract agency staff and does not gather contract evaluation information nor evaluate contracts. The incumbent is not responsible for assisting in the evaluation of client services provided by contract agencies.

This position currently has a subordinate Contract Technician III (salary group A13) reporting to it. This vacant position should also be reviewed by the Agency in order to ascertain the proper classification and to avoid an inappropriate reporting relationship.

Management's Response:

We concur.

Section 1-D:

Position Number 51 Is Inappropriately Classified

Position Number 51 should be classified as an Administrative Technician IV (0156-A15) rather than a Staff Services Officer I (1550-B8). The incumbent is responsible for tracking legislation pertinent to the division and for performing administrative support work. The incumbent types reports and prepares, interprets, and disseminates information

related to the division's programs. The incumbent prepares non-routine correspondence, reports, studies, forms, and documents; responds to inquiries regarding legislation; and prepares reports on the impact of certain legislation on the division's operations. The incumbent assists in the division's budget and planning processes and prepares minutes from the State Board of Education meetings.

The incumbent does not perform duties of the depth nor breadth commonly associated with the Staff Services Officer class series. The incumbent is not responsible for planning, directing, or coordinating several staff services functions such as human resources, accounting, budgeting, duplicating, purchasing, training, and material and property management. In addition, the incumbent does not prepare or recommend annual budgets or analyze current expenditures.

Management's Response:

We believe this position should remain classified as a Staff Support Officer I. We find that the questionnaire submitted does not fully describe the responsibilities of this position concerning its budgeting, personnel, purchasing and other support services functions. The incumbent prepares the division budget and advises management on allocations for operational expenses. Additionally, this division has larger allocations for operational expenses than other divisions. The incumbent is either directly responsible for performing these functions or overseeing their completion by her subordinate staff member.

State Auditor's Follow-Up Comment:

We maintain that this position would be appropriately classified as an Administrative

Issues and Recommendations

Technician IV. Neither the questionnaire nor the interview responses indicate the variety of tasks the Agency mentions in its response. Although the Agency points out that the position is responsible for preparing the division's budget, the questionnaire and interview findings report that the position is only responsible for budget maintenance for only 10 percent of the time.

The position is primarily responsible for tracking and reporting on legislation. No other duties were mentioned in the questionnaire or during the interview. The position tracks approximately 400 pieces of legislation during the session and responds daily to requests for information from the Legislature. Since the tracking and reporting of legislation involves limited discretion and decision making, and the position does not have any direct subordinates or the diversity of responsibilities found in the Staff Services Officer I job description, the appropriate classification is an Administrative Technician IV.

Management's Response:

This division will be significantly impacted by a reorganization scheduled to be implemented September 1, 1997. The reorganization will result in changes to the role and tasks associated with this position. At the time that the reorganization is completed and the duties and responsibilities are finalized, we will ensure that it is properly classified in accordance with the State Classification Plan.

Section 1-E:

Position Number 55 Is Inappropriately Classified

Position Number 55 should be classified as a Staff Services Officer I (1550-B8) rather than a Legal Assistant III (3574-B8). The incumbent is responsible for personnel,

budgeting, payroll, accounting, travel, and purchasing issues for the division. The incumbent supervises support staff in planning and preparing documents, briefs and correspondence and prioritizes and makes work assignments to support staff. The incumbent:

- Assists in the interview process and trains new staff members
- Plans, prepares, and recommends the annual operating budget for the division
- Projects and analyzes the needs of the division (such as travel, capital outlay, professional services, communications, utilities, and supplies) and determines the sources of funding
- Monitors budget expenditures and notifies supervisor of projected shortfalls
- Ensures that Agency rules and regulations are complied with
- Oversees and processes all division personnel and payroll changes
- Processes special education hearing officer contracts and other outside consultant contracts

The incumbent is not responsible for performing duties that are typically found in the Legal Assistant class description. The incumbent does not research, analyze, investigate, or draft legal documents. The incumbent does not assist attorneys in case management; schedule or prioritize attorney case loads; organize case files; attend initial interviews or depositions; conduct interviews; or prepare chronologies, fact summaries, or witness files. The incumbent does not draft, prepare, or review pleadings, motions, briefs, abstracts, petitions, summary

Issues and Recommendations

judgements, or other legal documents.

Management's Response:

We concur.

Section 1-F:

Position Number 60 Is Inappropriately Classified

Position Number 60 should be classified as an Accountant VI (1020-B12) rather than a Program Administrator IV (1566-B12). The Accountant VI title more specifically describes the duties performed than the current Program Administrator IV classification, which is more generic. The duties described in the Program Administrator IV job description do not accurately reflect the duties performed by this position. The incumbent is responsible for supervising the cash management and fund control operations for the division and overseeing the preparation of quarterly financial reports and the detailed reporting of expenditures and encumbrances made by the division. The incumbent plans, organizes, and directs programs to control the financing of Agency operations. The incumbent is responsible for developing methods for the control of cash receipts, deposits, and disbursements.

The incumbent is not responsible for establishing general program goals or developing general program guidelines, procedures, policies, rules, or regulations.

Management's Response:

We concur.

Section 1-G:

Position Number 71 Is Inappropriately Classified

Position Number 71 should be classified in the Administrative Technician job series rather than a Word Processing Operator III (0149-A10). The majority of duties performed by this position are clerical in nature and are not specific to word processing. The incumbent is responsible for the preparation, proofing, processing, follow-up, and maintenance of travel claims documents. The incumbent is responsible for making travel reservations and preparing, processing, and maintaining purchase requisitions for property and consultant fees. The incumbent stocks and maintains an inventory of supplies for the division, ordering fresh supplies when needed.

This position should not be classified as Word Processing Operator III because the incumbent does not perform the requisite duties found in the class description. The incumbent is not responsible for performing complex word processing duties, or revising or modifying programs. The incumbent does not determine format requirements or the feasibility of using word processing equipment. The incumbent also does not compile production statistics.

Management's Response:

We concur.

Section 1-H:

Position Number 75 Is Inappropriately Classified

Position Number 75 should be classified in the Administrative Technician class series instead of an ADP Supervisor I (0233-B8). The incumbent is responsible for performing key data entry and for leading and supervising the work activities of three other data entry operators. The incumbent is responsible for

Issues and Recommendations

assisting and approving division users in designing forms according to their specifications and developing key entry formats to correspond with the forms. The incumbent meets with division users to identify their key entry needs and schedule data entry staff accordingly to meet deadlines.

This position should not be classified as an ADP Supervisor I because the nature of the work performed is related to providing data entry services, not supervising automated data processing employees. The work performed does not involve the training and supervising of ADP Equipment Operators or planing and scheduling ADP work. The incumbent does not operate or supervise the operation of data communications network operations.

Management's Response:

We concur.

Section 1-I:

Position Number 84 Is Inappropriately Classified

Position Number 84 should be classified in the Systems Analyst class series rather than a Budget Analyst III (1157-B11). The duties of the position focus on reviewing and revising systems as necessary for greater efficiency and effectiveness. The incumbent has participated as a group leader in the statewide PeopleSoft modification process for Integrated Statewide Administrative Systems (ISAS) and is responsible for testing statewide modified modules, statewide reports development, and prototyping Agency business processes. The incumbent is responsible for establishing chart field hierarchy structures, developing and testing various scenarios, and analyzing and documenting test results. The position also assists programmers with data conversion from current Financial Management Systems (FMS)

to ISAS. The incumbent participates in reengineering efforts by providing knowledge and experience with systems administration. Although the systems analysis work is performed on a statewide accounting system, its main focus is on systems analysis, not budgeting.

The incumbent is not responsible for preparing Agency budget instructions, biennial legislative appropriation requests, fiscal notes, legislative analysis, or special fiscal reports. The incumbent does not establish budget policies or procedures or evaluate performance and workload measures. The incumbent does not examine operating budgets for appropriate expenditures.

Management's Response:

After ISAS implementation is at an operational level on or about November 1997, this position will return to more traditional budget analyst work (assisting with time and effort systems, assisting in the preparation of annual operating budget, responding to biennial legislative appropriations requests, etc.) Therefore, we request the retention of the Budget Analyst III classification.

State Auditor's Follow-Up Comment:

We maintain that the information provided in the questionnaire and during the interview supports the reclassification to the Systems Analyst class series. Since 80 percent of the incumbent's time is involved with the implementation of the ISAS system, the Systems Analyst class series is the most appropriate at this time. If the duties change in the future (upon completion of the ISAS project), another classification might be appropriate. The Agency may reclassify this position on a monthly basis; the Agency needs to be continuously vigilant with regards to

Issues and Recommendations

proper classification.

Section 1-J:

Position Number 101 Is Inappropriately Classified

Position Number 101 should be classified as an ADP Supervisor I (0233-B8) rather than a Staff Services Officer I (1550-B8). The incumbent is responsible for the supervision of ADP staff in the maintenance of ADP equipment. The incumbent trains and supervises contract ADP equipment operators by planning and scheduling ADP work, and coordinating work of the division with that of other divisions in the Agency. The incumbent assists with contract oversight and management and is accountable for ADP equipment repairs and maintenance. The incumbent serves as a consultant to other divisions of the Agency on proposed ADP applications and functions as the section representative in contacting vendors and contractors concerning equipment and maintenance matters.

The incumbent should not be classified as a Staff Services Officer I because the duties and responsibilities are limited in scope. The Staff Services Officer class series was designed to classify positions that have a multitude of different functions (such as human resources,

budgeting, accounting, duplicating, purchasing, training, and material and property management). Since the incumbent is solely involved in the supervision of ADP equipment operators, and does not have the broad responsibility of the Staff Services Officer job description, it would be more appropriately classified as an ADP Supervisor I.

Management's Response:

We concur.

Section 2:

Five Positions Have Inappropriate Reporting Relationships

Five positions were found to have inappropriate reporting relationships. An inappropriate reporting relationship occurs when a subordinate's classification has the same or higher salary group than his or her supervisor.

Supervisory duties indicate a higher level of responsibility, and this should be reflected in the level of compensation (salary group). In order to correct this error, the Agency should consider reassigning the subordinate to a more appropriate position or reviewing both employees' classifications to ensure that they are properly classified.

Reporting Relationship	Classification	Division/Unit
Position: 1207-21 Reports To: 1207-21	Director of Auditing Director of Auditing	450
Position: 1559-21 Reports To: 1545-21	Director of Programs II Division Director	312
Position: 1559-21 Reports To: 1545-21	Director of Programs II Division Director	312
Position: 1559-21 Reports To: 1545-21	Director of Programs II Division Director	302
Position: 1557-20 Reports To: 1557-20	Director of Programs I Director of Programs I	214

Issues and Recommendations

Management's Response:

You have identified five positions which you determined had inappropriate relationships. The first one (1207-21, division 450) will either be reclassified to an Auditor V, or the position will be realigned within the division to report to the Division Manager (currently an exempt position). On the two Director of Programs II positions (1559-21) in division 312, the organizational chart showed the Division Manager in a classified position (1545-21) when in actuality it is an exempt position. On position 1559-21 in division 302, we agree that this reporting relationship is not appropriate. We are currently in the

process of evaluating those Division Managers, such as this one, who are in classified positions. Part of this analysis will involve resolving these types of reporting relationships and we plan to make these changes effective September 1, 1997. On the last position cited (1557-20) in division 214, the supervisory position is currently being audited by our private contractor. We expect the audit will be completed by mid-August and if the supervisor's position is not recommended for reclassification to a group 21 position, we will adjust the reporting relationships to have this subordinate position supervised by a group 21 manager or the exempt Division Manager.

Appendix

Objective, Scope and Methodology

The Texas Education Agency was selected for review in order to monitor compliance with the Position Classification Act. The scope of our review included 107 of the 750 full-time classified positions in the Agency and included a review of approximately 14 percent of the employees in all divisions of the Agency. In determining whether the sample of 107 full-time classified positions were properly classified, we reviewed the following:

- State job descriptions

- Position questionnaires completed by incumbents

- Internal salary relationships

In addition, we conducted individual interviews with 37 incumbents.

This review was conducted in accordance with the Position Classification Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 654, by the following members of the State Auditor's staff:

- Jeff Lund (Project Manager)
- Kelli Dan, CCP, PHR (Audit Manager)
- Deborah Kerr, Ph.D (Director)

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