Classification Consolidation Project

Assumptions, Observations, Recommendations, Challenges (September – December 2014)

Project Background:

- In the June 2007 HR Modernization report, SPB and DPA identified over 4,200 separate classifications, of which about 1,000 were vacant. The report stated (in part):

    "Because many of the classification titles are not descriptive of the work to be performed, it is difficult for people trying to get jobs with the State to determine which classifications might be of interest to them and for which classifications they meet the minimum qualifications."

- In that same report, Objective #1 was to *"consolidate classifications into broader, usable occupational families."*

- The report stated:

    "A large number of State classes are narrowly defined, have duties that overlap with similar classifications, share similar characteristics with other classes (e.g., minimum qualifications or duties), and are limited to single positions or are for a specific department. For example, there are twelve department-specific Attorney classification series, all doing pretty much the same type of work. We also have 32 different Research Scientist classifications that are differentiated only by level and field of research. Other public sector employers have successfully collapsed their classifications into consolidated job families where prospective employees can identify the occupational area in which they wish to work."

- In March 2008, SEIU's analysis of the report concurred with the objective. *"There are real problems with the existing system – too many classifications, too minutely defined; classification specifications and examinations that are outdated and no longer describe actual duties; and a lack of upward mobility in the system. A re-vamped system has much to offer."*

- In May 2011, the Governor's Reorganization Plan #1 recognized the need to consolidate human resources activities and to reorient objectives, stating that the *"HR Mod project has made some improvements to the personnel system already"*… *"However, this project was a stop gap measure."*

Project Objective:

According to data reports from the State Controller's Office, there were 4,021 unduplicated civil service classifications as of January 2007. During the tenure of the HR Modernization Project, 355 classifications were abolished by DPA/CalHR.

The Classification Consolidation Project team consisted of five retired annuitants, who collectively have nearly 200 years of service to the people of California; all of whom have a passion for improving state service recruitment and hiring processes. The team's analysis and recommendations should establish the framework for the development of CalHR's comprehensive civil service classification strategic plan. The plan should include streamlined civil service classifications, policies, procedures, and regulation/statute changes to improve the civil service system.

The project team began with the August 2014 payscale file that included all alternate range salaries for every civil service classification. The file included 3,666 unduplicated civil service classifications; including alternate range salaries, there were 7,495 duplicated classifications. The CalHR categorized the August 2014 payscale file into four groups:

1,493	Classes slated for possible abolishment due to vacancy for at least 24 months;
24	Corrections to the database pending by State Controller's Office; "Payscale error CalHR will work with SCO to fix. Class was supposed to be abolished by a previous pay letter, but SCO did not delete it;"
12	Information technology classification codes 9446-9453; CalHR plans to add cyber security duties to class specifications;
100	Attorneys and related classifications (e.g., hearing officers); these classifications are currently under review for change/consolidation as part of the MOU-driven project.

To the project team's knowledge, no additional actions beyond these 1,629 classification actions are scheduled to be taken by CalHR.

Project Methodology:

The project team used the following methodology to complete the review:

1. Sorted the August 2014 payscale list by schematic code and assigned classes by occupational groupings to ensure that related classes were reviewed by the same team member. Project team members volunteered for groupings based on knowledge/experience with the classes or level of interest.

2. Resources utilized during the review included:
   a. Class specifications;
   b. Established/Vacant and Filled Positions databases, as well as the alphabetical list of pay scales on HRNet;
   c. 24-month "Potential Abolish" list and vacancy list provided by CalHR;
   d. Resource material on occupations, licensure requirements, testing processes, industry standards and terminology, and related information available from other sources such as the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, local government human resources websites, State licensure boards, Government Code and California Code of Regulations, and the Governor's Budget, including the Salaries and Wages Supplement;
   e. Examination bulletins; and,
   f. Former colleagues who had knowledge about a particular class and how it is used.
3. Analysis and review standards included:
   a. Similarity/differences in class concept and duties;
   b. Similarity/differences in Minimum Qualifications (MQ's);
   c. Similarity/differences in knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) and resulting test of fitness;
   d. Difference in salary ranges; and,
   e. Likelihood that class will be used/needed in the future based on usage and potential promotion from lower level classes.
4. Recommendations were categorized into:
   a. Classifications that have outlived their usefulness are recommended to be abolished;
   b. Classifications that compared favorably in terms of duties, MQ's, and KSA's are recommended for consolidation, which may involve creation of a new class or adjustments to existing classifications;
   c. Classifications that align to logical promotional paths and are recommended for inclusion into new or existing deep classes;
   d. Classifications that differ significantly from others based on the same criteria noted above are recommended to be retained; and,
   e. Other recommendations that include class specification updates, and converting standalone specifications into series specifications where possible.

Project Recommendations:

Total Unduplicated Classifications Reviewed	3,666
Abolish Classification	2,583
Consolidate with Existing or New Classification	1,851
Create New Classification	985
No Changes; Retain Classification	824
Change Classification Specifications	578

NOTE: The project team recommendations do not tie to the 3,666 unduplicated total due to many classifications having more than one recommendation. For example, the project team recommendation could be to abolish a classification and consolidate with another classification, and/or create a new classification.

Project Assumptions:

In order to begin the project, the team created assumptions that would frame the analytical approach.

1. The project will review every classification; there are no "sacred" or untouchable classifications.
2. The project will emphasize use of current servicewide classifications, with recommendations to add additional "select" flags or testing options as necessary.
3. The project may recommend additional classifications become servicewide.
4. Project recommendations will abolish "parentheticals" and review classification titles for consistency. "Parentheticals" are classifications that include modifying phrases; e.g., specialist, supervisor, etc., to distinguish a rank and file position from a supervisor position, or to reflect other types of specialties, work settings, safety/correctional facility, or departments.
5. Even though CalHR has identified some classifications for abolishment due to vacancy for over 24 months, those planned future actions will not deter the project from alternate recommendations; i.e., a classification that is part of either a series, or is similar to other classes, may be recommended for possible consolidation, conversion to a deep class, or creation of a new classification.
6. If a classification does not have a license or certificate as part of the MQ, but includes some specific experience, the project will still consider use of one of the servicewide classifications and add a select flag to reflect the specific expertise, such as insurance or tax experience, to name a few.
7. When reviewing classifications, the project acknowledges that the KSA's, and specialized expertise in the MQ's, coupled with the test of fitness and

salary comparability, may prevent classification consolidation, and render examination administration impossible.

8. When reviewing classifications, if a classification is in one bargaining unit and the recommended classification is in a different bargaining unit, the project will not let the change of a bargaining unit preclude a logical alignment of duties to a more appropriate classification, and will attempt to document bargaining unit impacts as they are detected.

General Observations:

Department-specific and program-specific classifications

1. While not all-inclusive, the project team identified several examples of questionable use of department-specific civil service classifications:
   a. Classifications with operational titles, rather than the use of servicewide classifications (e.g., Board Counsel vs. Attorney);
   b. Classifications with detailed "typical duties" that are either identical to or very comparable to servicewide classification duties;
   c. Classifications that include MQ experience from a servicewide classification;
   d. Classifications that do not include non-state experience minimum qualifications effectively restrict examinations and the resultant candidate pool to only state employees;
   e. Classifications that have no promotional pattern, use outside patterns for MQ's, and are not part of a series.
   f. Classifications that include the department name or program in the class title. When a department name, a specific division or project is referenced in the class specifications, this creates unnecessary added workload when departments change their name or are abolished; e.g., ~~Technology, Trade and Commerce~~; Department of Health <u>Care</u> Services / <u>Department of Public Health</u>; Department of Corrections <u>and Rehabilitation</u>, Department of Fish and ~~Game~~ <u>Wildlife</u>, <u>Natural</u> Resources Agency.
   g. Classifications that have duties consistent with servicewide classes, with salaries $1 different than the servicewide class; e.g., Housing and Community Development Representative I vs. Staff Services Analyst. The HCD Representative I has three ranges: Range A is $1 lower than a Staff Services Analyst, Range A; the Range B salary is identical to an SSA, Range B, and the Range C salary is $65 lower than a SSA, Range C.

2. Departments established classifications that were created for a single executive management function/position; e.g., Chief, Licensing and Enforcement, California Horse Racing Board, C.E.A.; Chief, Sanitation and Radiation Laboratory Branch; Deputy Chief of Operations, Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, Department of Justice, to name a few.

Consistency

3. Generally speaking, all class and series specifications are in great need of a complete review for typographical errors, abolished classifications that are included in the MQ's, departments and programs that no longer exist, and educational requirements. Additionally, classification names are not consistent; e.g., Adviser vs. Advisor; Aid vs. Aide, etc.

4. For a job seeker, the absence of consistency in typical duties, KSA's, and naming conventions for civil service classifications makes searching difficult. To the extent possible, the project team identified instances where recommending classification name changes will benefit future job seekers.

5. There is no consistency when classifications reference college graduation:
    a. Bachelor's degree;
    b. College degree;
    c. Equivalent to graduation from college;
    d. Equivalent to graduation from college or university;
    e. Graduation from an accredited college or university or equivalent degree approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education under the provisions of California Education Code Chapter 3, Part 59, Division 10; and,
    f. Degree must have been obtained from a recognized U.S. university or from a foreign university approved by the Bureau of Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education under the provision of California Education Code Chapter 3, Part 59, Division 10.

6. There is no consistency in the wording of the MQ's when referencing state civil service classifications. Some class specifications use the terminology "performing the duties of (named class)" which is interpreted to mean the candidate must have an appointment to the class or be on a bona fide training and development assignment to the class. Other class specifications use the phrase "performing duties of a class with a level of responsibility of…" or "performing duties comparable to…". The latter two phrases provide more flexibility.

7. Classifications are not consistently consolidated or grouped based on functions in the schematic code list. As a result, it was difficult to review the various schematic codes to identify like or similar classifications. For example, in the review of auditor classifications, we identified "audit", "auditor", "auditing" classifications, as well as "evaluator", "investigation specialist", and "examiner". These various classifications were located in schematic codes: JA, JC, JD, JG, JH, JI, JJ, JP, KT, and LE.

Promotional Path Impacts

8. Some of the classifications that have been vacant for 24 months are part of a series. They may be vacant because incumbents have moved out on their promotional path and the department has not hired anyone at that level. For

example, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has a series called Control Engineer, which consists of: entry level Control Engineer, Associate, Senior, and Supervising. The classification "Control Engineer" is on the abolishment list; however, if there is no other way to recruit at the Associate level, DWR would have a recruitment problem, as the only way to recruit at the Associate level, would be to use Pattern II.

"Comma CEA" Classification

9. With a few exceptions, departments have not used the "Comma CEA" class according to established rules, as each "Comma CEA" should have a parallel Class 7500 CEA. A "Comma CEA" classification is a classification that is normally a high-level executive; appointment to a "Comma CEA" classification is permanent, not "at will." If the chosen applicant is a state employee, the applicant would be appointed into the Class 7500 CEA, with return rights upon a 20-day notice. If the chosen applicant is not a state employee, the department would use the "Comma CEA" class, the incumbent completes a probationary period, and is either rejected on probation, or becomes a permanent "Comma CEA."

Tools for Job Seekers

10. The PDF version of the alphabetical pay scales is not in a format that allows users to search using key words.

General Recommendations:

1. **Deep Class:** For rank and file classes where there is a typical promotion in place progression, consider conversion to a deep class to reduce the need for testing at each level; this would also reduce the number of classifications.
2. **Series Specification:** For those classes that have individual class specifications but are part of a series, consider conversion to a series specification. For example, Equipment Engineer, Senior Equipment Engineer, and Supervising Equipment Engineer all have individual class specifications but are clearly a series. Converting to a series from individual class specs would ensure that all related classes are contained in one document for easy identification. This is particularly important since classes and schematic codes are not always sequential.
3. **Examination and Scoring:** Although the project team's focus was primarily to review every civil service classification for consolidation consideration, we also want to share recommendations regarding the state's current examination process and scoring system, including:
   a. Departments must be allowed to conduct examinations on an as-needed basis and allow all exams to be Internet-based, capable to receive applications on a continuous basis. Departments cannot be asked/forced to collaborate and give examinations once every two or

three years. The main reason why departments established department-specific classifications rather than use servicewide classifications was to control the frequency of the examination and not rely on the infrequency of examinations administered by CalHR. CalHR must improve policies and procedures to give flexibility to departments so that vacancies can be filled in a timely fashion.

b. Modernize the scoring system currently in place. Start by eliminating all "rule of three names" (Government Code § 19057) and "rule of one rank" (Government Code § 19057.4) scoring schemes by assigning Footnote 19 to all classes. Eliminating both of these scoring schemes and assigning FN 19 (class exams are scored using 9 limited ranks and the hiring manager can choose from the top three interested ranks) broadens the candidate pool and provides an expanded recruitment base.

c. Consider elimination of 9-rank scoring and utilize only 3-rank scoring.

d. Alternatively, for 6-rank scoring, expand the reachable ranks from 3 to 4. Eliminate "career credit" scoring or change credit amount to avoid creating additional ranks. The goal is to have lists with only three (or up to a maximum of six) ranks.

4. **Specialty Options:** Consider specialty options within servicewide classes rather than creating separate classes for the specialized experience. This concept is used by the County of Sacramento. For example, the County's Senior Civil Engineer classification has multiple specialty options, including General, Airport, Highway Engineering, Sanitary Engineering, and Water Resources. Each specialty has specialized knowledge in addition to the knowledge applicable to all options and the MQ's state that the applicant must possess the requisite amount of experience in the identified specialty. Examination bulletins identify the option for which applicants are testing.

5. **Non-Supervisory Experts:** The project team acknowledges a need to have non-supervisory classifications higher than the level of the top range of an Associate Governmental Program Analyst. There are several examples in the science and health programs where departments established new classifications to handle expert-level analytical work. The CalHR should create a Staff Services Manager I Specialist concept and a Staff Services Manager II Specialist concept with salary ranges that obviate the need for "parenthetical" classifications (defined in Assumption #4) and eliminate requests to establish new department-specific classifications to handle above journey-level non-supervisory workload.

6. **Career Executive Assignments:**

a. Executive level managers and policy makers should be appointed at the Class 7500 Career Executive Assignment (CEA) or gubernatorial exempt level, to provide the Administration and the department directorate appointment discretion.

b. The CEA criteria must be modified to allow non-state employees to compete for CEA positions. This will eliminate the need for

department-specific permanent CEA positions (commonly referred to as "Comma CEA's") or the creation of gubernatorial exempt positions. Rules and regulations should be modified along with requisite statutory changes as necessary, to allow appointments from outside state service without making the appointments permanent. Current state employees would still be able to apply for the CEA positions; however if the talent pool does not exist within state service, departments should have the ability to hire outside state service.

c. Abolish all "Comma CEA" classifications.

7. **Classification Naming Convention:**

a. When a department or program undergoes a name change and the department has department-specific civil service classifications, the classifications must be updated to reflect the correct department or program name. This emphasizes one of the problems associated with department-specific classifications, and the ongoing workload these classifications create for the department and CalHR. New classifications should not include a department or program name.

b. Mandate classification nomenclature consistency, so when pay scales are searched alphabetically, all similar classifications will be listed together; e.g., Fire and Rescue Senior Specialist (the focus area appears first, then the level, then the position), or other consistent and uniform naming scheme for all classifications.

8. **Quality Control:** Every class and series specification should be reviewed for accuracy and all typographical errors must be removed. When the original specifications were scanned and converted into electronic form, the optical character reader conversion process created numerous errors that were not corrected. These errors reflect poorly on the State of California as a quality employer.

9. **Consolidation:** Classifications with substantially similar duties and job requirements should be consolidated, and salary ranges added to accommodate salary disparities between departments.

10. **Abolished Programs and Departments:**

a. Rather than the "wave" process currently in progress, expedite the abolishment of those classifications that have not been filled in more than 24 months, assuming none of the classifications are feeder classes.

b. As departments and programs are eliminated, there should be closer coordination between department budget/fiscal staff who complete the 7A for the Governor's Proposed Budget, the Department of Finance, the State Controller's Office, and the department human resources staff, so that classifications and associated positions and programs abolished in the budget are also abolished in the civil service classification database. For example, on January 1, 2004, the Technology, Trade, and Commerce Agency was abolished. The Agency-specific classifications are still in existence as of August 2014.

11. **Abolished Classification Database:** A database of abolished classifications should be created as part of the HRNet Civil Service Class database search (Pay Scales search). Retain the search terms (class code, schematic code, class title) and link them to a database that includes the action(s) taken and the date of the State Personnel Board adoption of the item. If the abolishment proposal included reallocating incumbents to another class, provide the link to the new class in the historical reference. In addition, start including class history documentation at the bottom of each class specification, similar to the digest in the California Code of Regulations. Information should include a brief summary of the action taken; e.g., title changed to _____, consolidated with _____, converted to deep class, etc., along with the date the action was adopted by the Board. In all cases, the Board date reference will allow the reader to refer to the applicable Board agenda and/or minutes if more information is desired.

12. **Moratorium on New Classifications:** Until more work has been completed to abolish and consolidate civil service classifications, there should be a moratorium on establishing new civil service classifications, unless a department can demonstrate why a servicewide classification cannot be used.

13. **Minimum Qualifications:**
    a. Loosen the standards for measuring time required to meet MQ's by revising the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 2, Division 1, 171.1 (b) (Amount of Time Required to Meet Minimum Qualifications). The rule currently reads, "An applicant must have the required calendar time unless the applicant worked two different jobs concurrently. The time spent on two different qualifying jobs worked concurrently shall be added together to determine the total amount of qualifying experience." This rule is interpreted to mean that rounding up is not permitted and that if an applicant is even a few days short of meeting the MQs, the applicant must be rejected from the examination. For example, if the MQ requires 12 months of a particular type of experience and as of the final filing date an applicant has 11 months and 3 weeks of experience, that applicant must be rejected from the examination, even though it seems highly unlikely that one more week of experience would make a significant difference. More emphasis should be placed on whether the applicant possesses the necessary KSA's to do the job (accomplished through the testing process) as opposed to using a rigid process on the front end which serves as a barrier for otherwise qualified candidates.
    b. As classifications are abolished, all classifications that include the abolished classifications in the MQ's must be modified. For example, the Data Processing Manager I classification specification states (in part): "entry into the series is typically from the associate level of EDP classes", yet, there is no "EDP Associate" classification in state service.

14. **Minimum Education Requirement:** For those classifications with an education requirement, the minimum requirement should be a high school

diploma or equivalent. For example, Class 7884, Laboratory Assistant, is the entry and first working level of the Laboratory Assistant series. The Pattern II education qualification states "equivalent to completion of the eighth grade."

15. **Job Seeker Resources:** Resources should be provided to website users that allow for search capabilities, including but not limited to alphabetical listing of pay scales. Further, the civil service database currently only available to HRNet users should be made public and include search functions.

Post-Project Implementation Challenges:

1. The civil service classification system must be reviewed in a more strategic manner. There must be a clearer plan of action beyond simple classification abolishment.
2. Clear policies and procedures must be developed to allow for department delegation that are not so arduous that the process becomes a de facto barrier for department utilization; e.g., use of new specialist concepts, etc. Policies should include a method for unified implementation, as well as appropriate oversight, transparency, and accountability.
3. Regulations and/or statutory changes will be required to fully implement the project team's recommendations.
4. The current data system will need expansion to accommodate many of the recommendations, particularly the expanded use of the "select flag" for servicewide classifications.
5. Future classification changes should include a full and complete assessment of every comparable class in all other departments, not simply a review of the classes in the series. The review should include an impact assessment of the proposed change and how the change will affect and impact all related classes in civil service. The review should also include impacts to promotional path options for employees.
6. Salary compaction issues will occur; consideration should be given to offering safety pay differentials for supervisors and managers.
7. As new classifications are established in the next phase of the consolidation effort, there will be a need to resolve salary differences between departments, particularly when the MQ's are identical.
8. In the instances where a position is reclassified to a generalist classification, policies must be developed to include how incumbents will be reallocated; e.g., red circle pay (to maintain current salary), assign Footnote 24 and wait for attrition, etc.
9. Any layoff considerations should be function–specific; i.e., "select" flag-specific vs. department-wide.

10. Some stakeholders may oppose the recommendations included in the project team's analysis; e.g., proposed abolishment of classifications, consolidations, and name changes.

Next Steps:

Short-Term (complete in 60 days):
1. Issue a moratorium for all new classifications until the abolishment effort is complete.
2. Develop implementation plan to implement recommendations contained in the project team's report.
3. Obtain updated report from the State Controller's Office for current list of classifications vacant for 24 months or longer. For those classifications that do not have related or impacted classifications as identified by the project team, notice departments and unions for expedited review and abolishment.
4. Update the CalHR website to increase resource accessibility for job seekers.
5. Review project team recommendations and segregate into categories:
   a. Classifications that have outlived their usefulness and are not related to any other classifications should be abolished on an expedited basis.
   b. Class specifications that require modification.
   c. Classifications that require a title change using the recommended naming convention.
6. Create an "Abolishment Database" to track all abolished classifications. This database should be accessible to all job seekers and human resources personnel.
7. Identify business requirements to expand current data system to accommodate expanded use of "select" flags.

Mid-Term (complete in six to twelve months):
1. Complete feasibility analyses for recommended statutory and regulatory changes contained in report; i.e., minimum qualifications, rule of three names, rule of one rank, etc.
2. Draft policies and procedures to implement recommendations, including 3-rank scoring, Internet-based continuous testing, etc.
3. Develop non-supervisory staff concepts.
4. After review of case law and statutory mandates, identify alternate solutions to the "Comma CEA" classification to address the need for executive level managers and policy makers, when the candidate pool will most likely come from outside state service.
5. Classifications recommended for consolidation, incorporation into a series specification, deep class, or new classifications should be established.
   a. Consolidate classes into current servicewide classifications;
   b. Consolidate classes into new servicewide classifications;
   c. Establish new deep classifications; and,

       d.   Establish new series specifications.
6.   Implement Internet-based testing for servicewide classifications recommended for retention.
7.   Implement system enhancements to expand the use of "select" flags.

Longer-Term (complete in 12 to 24 months):
1.   Develop regulations to implement recommendations.
2.   Draft statutory language to implement recommendations.
3.   Implement changes in policies and procedures.

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