

# STATE OF LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR

Department of State Civil Service -  
Hiring and Performance Planning  
and Review System

March 2008



**Performance Audit**

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Office of the Legislative Auditor  
State of Louisiana**

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March 17, 2000

The Honorable John J. Hainkel, Jr.,  
President of the Senate  
The Honorable Charles W. DeWitt, Jr.,  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Dear Senator Hainkel and Representative DeWitt:

This report gives the results of our performance audit of the Department of State Civil Service. This audit was conducted under the provision of Title 24 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1998, as amended.

This performance audit report contains our findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Appendix B contains the Department of State Civil Service's response. I hope this report will benefit you in your legislative decision-making process.

Sincerely,

Daniel G. Kyle, CPA, CFE  
Legislative Auditor

DKS/m

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# Office of Legislative Auditor

## Executive Summary

### Performance Audit

#### Department of State Civil Service - Hiring and Performance Planning and Review System

State Civil Service administers the Civil Service system and functions as the central personnel organization for the state of Louisiana. Our performance audit of the services provided to state agencies related to hiring activities and the Performance Planning and Review system found that:

- In most cases, State Civil Service quickly issues lists of candidates to be used by agencies to fill vacancies. In cases where a special announcement is required, however, State Civil Service fails to issue lists of candidates in a timely manner.
- State Civil Service provides agencies with certification containing many candidates who do not wish to be considered for the vacant position and few candidates who wish to be considered.
- The pilot program allowing agencies to update candidate availability is quicker than the traditional process; however, pilot agencies do not always update candidate availability as soon as it is determined.
- State Civil Service incorrectly processes some resignation requests received from candidates during its regular process.
- State Civil Service does not provide sufficient oversight of the alternative hiring methods.
- State Civil Service's manuals (both internal and those provided to the other state agencies) contains information that is outdated because no policy exists to ensure that the manuals remain current.
- The Performance Planning and Review (PPR) system does not ensure that classified state employees receive appraisals in a timely manner and that employees do not receive merit increases until they have a PPR rating.
- Supervisors are not using PPR forms to accurately capture past performance by employees.

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## Audit Objectives

This performance audit was conducted under the provisions of Title 24 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended. The objectives of the audit were to:

- Determine the effectiveness of the following activities conducted by State Civil Service related to the hiring of new state employees:
  - Providing and maintaining certificates (i.e., lists) of eligible candidates
  - Authenticating and administering the principal hiring methods used as alternatives to certificates
- Determine if State Civil Service's oversight of the Performance Planning and Review (PPR) system (i.e., the state classified employee appraisal system) ensure that employees receive appraisals in a timely manner and that these appraisals capture employee performance over the period rated
- Determine if state agencies are satisfied with the services and oversight provided by State Civil Service in the areas of hiring, new employees and the PPR system

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## Background

State Civil Service administers the Civil Service system and functions as the central personnel organization for the state of Louisiana. The Civil Service Commission is a seven-member body that serves as the executive head of the Civil Service system.

### Overview of the Hiring Process

State Civil Service has five primary methods available for hiring classified state employees. These are:

- Certificates of eligible candidates
- Certifiable scores
- Non-competitive job classifications (including shortage and low-skilled jobs)



- 3.5 grade point average (GPA) provision
- Certified public accountant (CPA) provision

State Civil Service maintains databases of qualified applicants, called registers, for many state jobs. When an agency needs to fill a vacancy in one of these jobs, it can request a *certificate of eligible candidates* from State Civil Service listing the names of eligible candidates for a particular job title and geographic location. If the position is continuously open for application (State Civil Service constantly maintains a register), State Civil Service prints a certificate and delivers it to the agency. If the position is not continuously open for application (State Civil Service does not maintain a register), State Civil Service advertises the vacancy on a special announcement. Job titles with few vacancies are usually placed on a special announcement to solicit a sufficient number of applications. For special announcements, State Civil Service issues the certificate after all the applications have been processed.

Once the agency receives the certificate, it is the agency's responsibility to determine if the candidates listed on the certificate are available for the particular job vacancy by sending out "inquiry of availability" letters to candidates, to interview candidates, and to hire an individual to fill the vacant position. The agency is required by Civil Service rules to fill the vacancy from the candidates within the two highest final grade groups on a certificate. A final grade group consists of all the available candidates on a certificate with the same score (or grade).

Once a vacancy is filled, the agency returns the certificate to State Civil Service. State Civil Service verifies the qualifications of the new employee and updates each candidate's availability status. State Civil Service inactivates the scores of those candidates who declined or failed to reply to the "inquiry of availability" letters, thus removing their names from the register. State Civil Service notifies these candidates by mail that their scores were inactivated. Candidates may request in writing to be placed back on the register for future job vacancies.

In March 1998, State Civil Service began a pilot program granting certain agencies the authority to issue certificates to fill vacancies for jobs continuously open for application and to update candidate availability themselves. One of the purposes of the pilot program is to update availability as soon as it has been determined

in order to remove unavailable candidates from the registers as soon as possible.

To streamline the hiring process, State Civil Service established some alternatives to the certificate of eligible candidates hiring method. One such procedure allows state agencies to fill vacancies in *low-skilled jobs* and *shortage jobs* with any candidate who meets the minimum qualifications for the job. *Low-skilled jobs* include unskilled labor, custodial workers and attendants. *Shortage jobs* are those that consistently result in certificates with an insufficient number of candidates.

The *certifiable score* is a procedure that allows state agencies to hire any candidate who earns the designated certifiable score on a Civil Service exam, without regard to the top five final grade groups. State Civil Service attempts to set the certifiable score to correspond to the average scores of new employees hired through the traditional certificate of eligibles method.

The *3.5 GPA provision* allows state agencies to fill vacancies in jobs that require only a baccalaureate degree and three years or less of professional level experience with any individual who possesses a baccalaureate degree and a GPA of 3.5 or higher. The *CPA provision* allows state agencies to appoint to any accounting-type job any individual who possesses a CPA certificate.

### **Overview of the Performance Planning and Review System**

The Performance Planning and Review (PPR) system is an employee appraisal system used to evaluate classified state employees. Within 45 days of an employee's anniversary date or at the time a new employee becomes eligible for a merit increase, the employee's supervisor completes a PPR form categorizing the employee into one of five overall ratings: "outstanding," "very good," "satisfactory," "needs improvement," and "poor." If the PPR form is not completed within 45 days before an employee's anniversary date, the employee is given an overall rating of "satisfactory" by default.

To maximize the use of the PFR system, State Civil Service conducts technical assistance visits at state agencies. During these visits, State Civil Service reviews a random sample of personnel records (including PFR forms).

*(See page 3-11 of the report.)*

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## Hiring

Overall, the effectiveness of services and oversight that State Civil Service provides to state agencies relating to hiring new permanent employees needs improvement. The following describes what we found.

### **Timeliness of Issuing Certificates**

State Civil Service issues certificates in a timely manner for vacancies in jobs that are continuously open. Of the continuously open vacancies we reviewed, State Civil Service issued 82% within one day of receiving the request and 85% within three days. As a result, a majority (58%) of the respondents to our survey of department administrators and human resource directors reported that they are satisfied with the amount of time taken by State Civil Service to issue certificates (66 of 114). The remaining respondents were split evenly between neutral and dissatisfied.

State Civil Service does not, however, issue certificates in a timely manner when a special announcement is required. Under current policy, special announcements are made twice a month. The process of issuing a certificate from a special announcement typically takes six weeks.

In our sample of 60 vacancies filled using certificates, four required special announcements. The average number of days it took State Civil Service to issue the certificate after receiving the request for these four vacancies was 49 days. These vacancies were filled and the new employees began work an average of 66 days after the certificates were issued. Therefore, in these cases, over 40% of the time spent in filling the vacancies was spent by State Civil Service in issuing the certificates, and almost four months passed before the employees began working.

We did not specifically ask about the timeliness of certificates that required special announcements in our survey of state administrators and Human Resource directors. However, 10 of the 127 respondents submitted written comments that it takes too long for State Civil Service to issue certificates in these cases. This indicates a lack of effectiveness on the part of State Civil Service in this area.

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## Recommendation

**2.1 State Civil Service should study the special announcement process to determine how the processing time could be shortened. Possibilities include:**

- Issuing special announcements on a weekly basis to shorten the time agencies must wait between deadlines
- Issuing special announcements electronically to reduce processing time by one week and to save the costs of printing and distribution

*(See pages 26-28 of the report.)*

## Adequacy of Certificates

State Civil Service provides agencies with certificates containing many candidates who do not wish to be considered for the vacant position and few candidates who wish to be considered. In our sample of 68 classified civil service positions filled using certificates in calendar year 1998, we found that on average only 26% of the candidates contacted from a certificate indicated that they wanted to be considered for the vacant position.

One reason for low candidate availability is a lack of timeliness in inactivating the scores of candidates who declined or failed to reply to the "inquiry of availability" letters sent from agencies in association with previously issued certificates. As a result of this untimely inactivation of scores, State Civil Service issues certificates containing names of candidates who should have already been inactivated. Factors that affect this timeliness include agencies not notifying State Civil Service promptly after

determining availability and pilot agencies not always updating candidate availability themselves. We found that the average time departments took to return the certificates to State Civil Service for updating after eligibility had been determined was 70 days. The pilot agencies updated candidate availability for only nine of the 30 certificates they used in our sample.

Another reason for low candidate availability may be that certificates sometimes contain a total of five or fewer candidates. We found that eight (13%) of the 60 certificates included in our sample contained five or fewer candidates.

Candidate unavailability may also be due to a poor fit between the job and/or agency and the candidate. An average of 22% of the inactivations as a result of candidate declining or failing to reply to the "inquiry of availability" letters request to be placed back on the registers. This indicates that about a third of these candidates are interested in employment, but not in that particular job and/or agency.

State agencies are dissatisfied with the availability of candidates on certificates. Of the 111 respondents to our survey, only 12% (13) reported that they are satisfied with candidate availability, while the remaining respondents were split between neutral and dissatisfied (43% and 44%, respectively).

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### **Recommendations**

- 2.2 State Civil Service should require agencies to provide candidate availability to State Civil Service as soon as it is determined.
- 2.3 State Civil Service should require the pilot agencies to update candidate availability themselves.
- 2.4 State Civil Service should determine if the level of recruiting could be increased in order to provide agencies with an adequate number of candidates to fill their vacancies.

- 2.5 State Civil Service should provide applicants with a choice of agencies they wish to work for on the Civil Service application. This may result in a better match between candidates and agencies.**

*(See pages 24-26 of the report.)*

### **Pilot Program Is Faster But Needs Improvement**

The pilot program allowing agencies to update candidate availability is quicker than the traditional process; however, pilot agencies do not always update candidate availability as soon as it is determined. In our sample, pilot agencies took an average of 27 days to update candidate availability from the date availability became known. When State Civil Service performed this step, the process took an average of 78 days for the candidates in our sample.

Even though the updating of candidate availability takes longer when State Civil Service performs this step, on average only approximately 10% of the time spent in the updating process in our sample was directly attributable to State Civil Service's activity (an average of seven of 78 days). The remaining time in the process was primarily attributable to the activities of the departments themselves before returning the certificates to State Civil Service.

According to our survey, a majority (68%) of the respondents from the pilot agencies reported that they are satisfied with the process of updating candidate availability themselves (13 of 19). For the remaining survey respondents, 13% were neutral and 19% were somewhat dissatisfied.

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### **Recommendations**

- 1.6 State Civil Service should expand the pilot program to include all state agencies with the capability to access the State Civil Service computer system.**

- 2.7 State Civil Service should require the pilot agencies to update candidate availability as soon as it is determined.**

*(See pages 27-28 of the report.)*

### **Incorrect Processing of Reactivation Requests**

State Civil Service incorrectly processes some reactivation requests received from candidates during its register purges. This problem exists because State Civil Service does not verify the data entry step of the reactivation process. As a result, State Civil Service and the other state agencies incur additional expenses and candidates possibly miss employment opportunities.

We reviewed a sample of reactivation requests for the March 1999 Professional Entry Test (PET) register purge. Of the 125 scores that were included in our sample, we found that 15 (12%) were processed incorrectly. These errors occurred during the data entry step of the reactivation process.

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### **Recommendation**

- 2.8 State Civil Service should create a process to verify the reactivation data entry to ensure that it is being performed correctly.**

*(See pages 29-30 of the report.)*

### **Oversight of Alternative Hiring Methods Is Weak**

State Civil Service does not provide sufficient oversight of the alternative hiring methods. We found that State Civil Service does not collect information about how long it takes agencies to fill vacancies when using alternative hiring methods such as certifiable scores and non-competitive jobs. Therefore, it cannot make comparisons between different time periods and look for trends among the different hiring methods. In addition, we found that for job titles designated as "shortage," State Civil Service does not monitor the number of candidates applying for these jobs to

determine if the jobs continue to have shortages of qualified candidates. Therefore, State Civil Service cannot be assured that these alternative methods are efficient and hire the highest quality applicants.

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### Recommendation

- 3.9** State Civil Service should develop a formal process for gauging the timeliness of alternative hiring methods and the appropriateness of shortage job designations.

*(See pages 30-31 of the report.)*

### State Civil Service's Manuals Are Not Current

State Civil Service's manuals (both internal and those provided to the other state agencies) contain information that is outdated because no policy exists to ensure that the manuals remain current. The manuals cannot be relied upon as valid training tools or as references to guide State Civil Service and agency Human Resource personnel.

Less than half (47%) of the respondents to our survey reported that they are satisfied with the user-friendliness and organization of the State Personnel Manual (SP of 214). The remaining respondents are split between neutral and dissatisfied (53% and 23%, respectively).

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### Recommendation

- 3.10** State Civil Service should ensure that each of its manuals is completely updated and that procedures are established to keep these documents current.

*(See page 32 of the report.)*



## Performance Planning and Review

State Civil Service's oversight of the Performance Planning and Review (PPR) system is not adequate. The present system does not ensure that classified state employees receive appraisals in a timely manner and that these appraisals capture employee performance over the period rated.

### Large Number of "Satisfactory" by Default PPR Ratings

Over 20% of classified state employees do not receive timely PPRs and were therefore given "satisfactory" by default ratings. In addition, we sampled personnel files of employees who had received "satisfactory" by default ratings and found that 65% received merit increases without first receiving PPR ratings. These merit increases totaled \$133,108. If our sample is representative of all "satisfactory" by default rated state classified employees, these merit increases without PPR ratings translate into a total of \$8,123,768 over a one-year period. While many of these employees probably deserve merit increases, receiving merit increases without a formal review of job performance indicates a lack of accountability to Louisiana taxpayers for the use of their tax dollars.

Some agencies have not developed procedures to ensure that PPRs are completed on time and that classified employees are given performance ratings before receiving merit increases. Our survey of Human Resource directors corroborated this situation by revealing frustration on the part of agency Human Resource personnel at getting supervisors to complete PPR forms on time.

In our review of documentation from the technical assistance visits conducted by State Civil Service, we found that in the initial 18 months over which the visits have been conducted, only 18 have occurred. In addition, no formal follow-up has been conducted to see if any recommendations have been adopted. Also, there are currently no sanctions taken against agencies found to be out of compliance with the Civil Service rules regarding the PPR system.

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**Recommendations**

- 3.1 All agencies should develop procedures to ensure that PFRs are completed on time.
- 3.2 Agencies should not give merit increases to employees until they have a PFR rating.
- 3.3 State Civil Service should strengthen enforcement of PFR rules by reviewing agency PFR records more frequently, developing follow-up procedures to ensure agencies are making progress, and imposing penalties on agencies with serious deficiencies.

*(See pages 33-35 of the report.)*

**Incorrect Use of PFRs by Supervisors**

Supervisors are not using PFRs to accurately capture past performance by employees. This results in inadequate and inconsistent formal feedback to employees about their performance.

A sample of employees who received disciplinary action showed that in almost half of the cases (28 out of 62), supervisors did not mention the problem that led to the disciplinary action in the employee's subsequent PFR. In addition, State Civil Service, through its technical assistance visits, has found instances where PFR ratings are inconsistent with the comments provided on the PFR. These inconsistencies may result in higher ratings than are deserved (with the same layoff implications for the agency outlined previously) and undeserved merit increases.

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**Recommendations**

- 3.4 Agencies should ensure that all supervisors have access to PFR training and written procedures on how to use the PFR system.
- 3.5 Agencies should monitor their supervisors' use of the PFR system to correct any problems.

- 36 State Civil Service should increase the number of technical assistance visits to monitor agency use of the FPM system.

*(See page 28 of the report.)*

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

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## Audit Initiation and Objectives

This performance audit was conducted under the provisions of Title 24 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended. In accordance with these statutes, the Office of the Legislative Auditor scheduled an audit of the Department of State Civil Service (the Department). This audit was approved by the Legislative Audit Advisory Council on March 12, 1998.

We conducted our performance audit on the services provided by State Civil Service to other state agencies through its Human Resource Management Program. We concentrated our work on the services provided to state agencies attempting to hire new permanent employees (i.e., original appointments to permanent positions). In addition, we evaluated the effectiveness of State Civil Service's oversight of the new state employee appraisal system. This appraisal system is called the Performance Planning and Review (PPR) system. Specifically, the objectives of this audit were to:

- Determine the effect sizes of the following activities conducted by State Civil Service related to hiring new employees:
  - Providing and maintaining certificates (i.e., lists) of eligible candidates
  - Authorizing and administering the principal hiring methods used as alternatives to certificates
- Determine if State Civil Service's oversight of the PPR system assures that classified state employees receive appraisals in a timely manner and that these appraisals capture employee performance over the period rated
- Determine if state agencies are satisfied with the services and oversight provided by State Civil Service in the areas of hiring new employees and the PPR system

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## Report Conclusions

State Civil Service has strengths and weaknesses in terms of the effectiveness of the services and oversight it provides to state agencies related to hiring new permanent employees. Specifically, we found that when State Civil Service continuously maintains a database of qualified candidates for a job, it quickly issues lists of candidates to be used by agencies to fill the vacancies. However, in cases where State Civil Service does not maintain a database of eligible candidates, it fails to issue lists of eligible candidates in a timely manner. We also found that State Civil Service provides agencies with lists of eligible candidates containing many candidates who do not wish to be considered for the vacant position.

State Civil Service has developed a pilot program in response to the problem of lists of eligible candidates with large numbers of disinterested candidates. We found that while the pilot program helps, the program is not working as effectively as it should.

We also found that State Civil Service does not have adequate controls in place for the procedures it uses to purge names from the databases of eligible candidates. We reviewed a sample of records from a recent purge and found that many data entry errors were made, causing candidates to be incorrectly removed from or added to the databases and subsequent lists of eligible candidates.

Our survey of state agency officials found mixed results in terms of the timeliness and quality of the lists of eligible candidates provided by State Civil Service and used by agencies to fill vacancies. Agency officials are generally satisfied with the timeliness of the lists, except when a database of names is not maintained by State Civil Service. They are dissatisfied with the availability of the candidates on the lists.

In our review of hiring methods used as alternatives to lists of eligible candidates, we found that State Civil Service does not track how long it takes to fill vacancies. For job titles designated as "shortage" because of a consistent lack of available candidates, State Civil Service does not monitor the activity within these job titles to determine if the jobs continue to have shortages of qualified candidates. Thus, State Civil Service cannot be assured that these alternative methods are efficient (in terms of the time it takes to fill a position) and that agencies are hiring the highest quality applicants.

State Civil Service's manuals (both internal and those provided to the other state agencies) contain information that is outdated. In addition, we found that agencies are dissatisfied with the user-friendliness and frequency of updates to the State Personnel Manual. As a result, the manuals cannot be relied upon as valid training tools or as references to guide State Civil Service and agency human resource personnel.

State Civil Service's oversight of the PFR system is not adequate. The present system does not ensure that those state employees covered by the system receive appraisals in a timely manner and that the appraisals capture employee performance over the period rated.

According to reports from state agencies, over 38% of state employees covered by this appraisal system do not receive timely ratings. Within some agencies, over 50% of covered employees are not receiving timely PFRs. We found that many of these employees receive merit increases without first receiving PFR ratings. We also found that supervisors are not using PFRs to accurately capture past performance by employees. For almost half of the employees sampled who had received disciplinary action, the problem that led to the disciplinary action was not mentioned on their subsequent PFR forms.

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## Background

This section outlines the Department budget and organization and describes the State Civil Service system and the role of the State Civil Service Commission. Also, since our audit focused on services provided by the Human Resource Management Program under State Civil Service, there is a brief description of this program and its responsibilities.

## Department Overview

The Department consists of five autonomous entities: the State Civil Service, the Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service, the Ethics Administration, the State Police Commission, and the Division of Administrative Law. In the 1998/2000 executive budget, the Department is divided into six programs. State Civil Service is divided into two programs, and the remaining four entities each consist of one program. Total expenditures of the

Department for fiscal year 1998/1999 were \$10,052,488, with approximately 68% going to State Civil Service. The legislature appropriated \$11,279,374 to the Department for fiscal year 1999/2000.

Exhibit 1-1 shows each entity's actual expenditures for fiscal year 1998/1999, and the appropriated amounts and authorized positions for fiscal year 1999/2000. Exhibit 1-2 on the following page shows the organization of the Department.

**Exhibit 1-1**  
**Expenditure and Appropriation by Program**  
**Department of State Civil Service**

Program	Fiscal Year 1998/1999	Fiscal Year 1999/2000	
	Actual Expenditures	Appropriated	Authorized Positions
<b>State Civil Service</b>			
Administration	\$2,752,708	\$5,194,434	29
Human Resource Management	3,200,861	3,282,681	76
<b>Subtotal State Civil Service</b>	<b>5,953,569</b>	<b>8,477,115</b>	<b>105</b>
Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service	825,354	895,614	17
Ethics Administration	1,143,371	1,334,323	23
State Police Commission	279,441	478,453	4
Division of Administrative Law	1,848,353	2,094,869	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,052,489</b>	<b>\$11,279,374</b>	<b>182</b>

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using the 1998-1999 department financial statements and the Appropriations Act of the Regular Session of 1999.

**Exhibit 1-3**  
**Department Organization Chart**  
**Fiscal Year 1999/2000**



*Source:* Prepared by legislators using information provided by the Department.

### The State Civil Service System

State Civil Service administers the Civil Service system and functions as the central personnel organization for the state of Louisiana. All state employees and appointed and elected officials are members of the Civil Service system. Article X of the Louisiana Constitution categorizes these employees as either classified or unclassified. Examples of unclassified employees are elected officials, heads of each principal executive department appointed by the governor, and teachers at state colleges and universities. Those positions that are not included in the unclassified service are in the classified service. There are approximately 66,000 classified and 24,000 unclassified civil servants in Louisiana.

The Civil Service Commission is a seven-member body that serves as the executive head of the Civil Service System. The commission serves as an impartial review board that enacts and adjudicates Civil Service rules to regulate state personnel activities.



and hours appeals from state employees and agencies. The Louisiana Constitution charges the Commission to appoint and promote classified civil servants based upon merit, efficiency, fitness, and length of service.

### **The Human Resource Management Program**

State Civil Service consists of two programs: the Administration Program and the Human Resource Management program. The Administration Program consists of three sections: Administrative Support, Appeals, and Management Information Systems. The Human Resource Management Program consists of three divisions: Personnel Management, Classification and Pay, and Examining. Following is a description of the three divisions within the Human Resource Management Program.

The *Personnel Management Division* interprets the Civil Service rules and oversees their general application. The division serves as liaison with personnel offices in state agencies to generally assist them with Civil Service rules and policies.

The *Classification and Pay Division* is responsible for the allocation and reallocation of all state jobs. The division performs pay studies to assure proper alignment of state jobs within the pay structure and to assure that state job pay levels are comparable to other jurisdictions. The division also manages the job evaluation system and writes job specifications for each state job title.

The *Examining Division* is responsible for many aspects of hiring for state jobs. Its functions include developing employee selection procedures, administering these selection procedures, maintaining databases of qualified job applicants, querying these databases and sending the results to state agencies with job vacancies, recruiting candidates for employment, and counseling candidates at the time of their application for employment.

State Civil Service has two primary methods available for hiring classified state employees. These are:

- Certificates of eligible candidates
- Certifiable scores

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### **Overview of the Hiring Process**

- Non-competitive job classifications (including shortage and low-skilled jobs)
- 3.5 grade point average (GPA) provision
- Certified public accountant (CPA) provision

State Civil Service considers the methods other than certificates of eligible candidates to be alternative methods. This section describes the procedures for each of the primary hiring methods.

### **Certificates of Eligible Candidates**

State Civil Service maintains databases of qualified applicants called registers. Each register contains candidates for at least one job title, but may contain candidates for a group of similar job titles with the same minimum qualifications. When an agency needs to fill a vacancy, it can request a certificate from State Civil Service listing the names of eligible candidates for a particular job title and geographic location. The certificate contains the results of a query of the register at a particular point in time. State Civil Service tries to provide agencies with at least 30 names for a single vacancy and, in the case of multiple vacancies, 10 additional names for each additional vacancy.

To be placed on a register, an applicant must pass an examination or submit experience and training information, whichever is required. Test results or the evaluation of the applicant's experience and training provide a score for that applicant. State Civil Service uses that score to rank all applicants on the registers. Scores are valid for one year from the effective date for non-state employees and are non-expiring for permanent state employees.

The hiring process begins with the agency's request to State Civil Service for a certificate to fill one or more vacancies. If the position is continuously open for application (State Civil Service constantly maintains a register), State Civil Service prints a certificate and delivers it to the agency. If the position is not continuously open for application (State Civil Service does not maintain a register), State Civil Service advertises the vacancy on a special announcement. These announcements are produced twice a month. Job titles with five vacancies are usually placed on a special announcement in order to solicit a sufficient number of applications.

Special announcements usually remain open for two weeks. Candidates must submit their applications to State Civil Service by the closing date of the announcement. Applicants are scored by either examination or experience and training rating and ranked according to their scores. State Civil Service issues the certificate after all the applications are scored.

Once the agency receives the certificate, it is the agency's responsibility to determine if the candidates listed on the certificate are available for the particular job vacancy by sending out "inquiry of availability" letters to candidates, to interview candidates, and to hire an individual to fill the vacant position. Agencies are not required to send letters to all the candidates on a certificate. The agency is required by Civil Service rules to fill the vacancy from the candidates within the five highest final grade groups on a certificate. A final grade group consists of all the available candidates on a certificate with the same score (or grade). If an agency is filling multiple vacancies from the same certificate, Civil Service rules allow agencies to consider candidates from one additional final grade group for each additional vacancy filled.

If fewer than five candidates are available for employment, an agency may hire a candidate not on the certificate who meets the minimum qualifications of the job on the condition that the newly hired employee will take and pass the required examination within six months.

### **Updating Candidate Availability**

Once a vacancy is filled, the agency must return the certificate to State Civil Service for approval. State Civil Service verifies the qualifications of the new employee and updates each candidate's availability status. State Civil Service insinuates the scores of those candidates who declined or failed to reply to the "inquiry of availability" letters, thus removing their names from the register. State Civil Service notifies those candidates by mail that their scores were insinuated. Candidates may request in writing to be placed back on the register.

### **Pilot Program**

In March 1998, State Civil Service began a pilot program granting certain agencies the authority to issue certificates to fill vacancies for jobs continuously open for application and to update candidate availability through the OPEN system. (The OPEN system is a database maintained by State Civil Service that provides state agencies with access to candidate information.) One

of the purpose of the pilot program is to update availability as soon as it has been determined in order to remove unavailable candidates from the registers as soon as possible. The pilot began with three state departments:

- Department of Public Safety and Corrections - Corrections Services
- Department of Revenue and Taxation
- Department of Transportation and Development

Currently, 13 state agencies (hereinafter referred to as pilot agencies) are participating in the pilot program. In addition to the three state departments listed above, the pilot program includes:

- Department of Agriculture and Forestry
- Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
- Department of Economic Development
- Department of Environmental Quality
- Department of Labor
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Division of Administration
- Louisiana State University - Baton Rouge
- State Employees Group Benefit Program

Some state agencies in the New Orleans area participate in a hybrid of the pilot program. They do not update candidate availability themselves; instead, they fax the results of the inquiry of availability to the New Orleans Information Officer of State Civil Service, which updates the availability. Some of the participants in this process are:

- Medical Center of Louisiana at New Orleans
- University of New Orleans
- LSU Medical Center

- Port of New Orleans
- Leonard J. Chabert Medical Center

### Purging the Civil Service Registers

Periodically, State Civil Service purges the scores of those candidates who do not wish to remain on the most active registers. The frequency of the purges is dependent on the number of certificates requested from the register and is at the discretion of State Civil Service officials. Before conducting a purge, State Civil Service sends a notice to every candidate on the register informing him that his score will be inactivated. If the candidate wishes to remain on the register, he must return the notice to State Civil Service within two weeks. State Civil Service inactivates all scores on the register, then reactivates the scores of those candidates who responded to the notice. Reactivations are completed immediately after the inactivations so that those candidates are not excluded from any certificates.

### Alternative Hiring Methods

To streamline the hiring process, State Civil Service established some alternatives to the certificate of eligible candidates hiring method. These alternative methods provide for hiring based on non-competitive job classifications (including low-skilled and shortage jobs), certifiable scores, the 3.5 grade point average (GPA) provision, and the certified public accountant (CPA) provision. These methods are described in the following paragraphs.

The State Civil Service Commission enacted a Civil Service rule in 1953 to allow state agencies to use non-competitive employment procedures for low-skilled jobs including unskilled labor, custodial workers and attendants. Non-competitive employment procedures allow agencies to hire any candidate who meets the minimum qualifications for the job without going through the certificate process. The Commission amended this rule in March 1990 to include shortage jobs. Shortage jobs are those that consistently result in certificates with an insufficient number of candidates.

The certifiable score is a procedure enacted by the State Civil Service Commission in October 1987 that allows state agencies to hire any candidate who earns the designated certifiable score on a Civil Service exam, without regard to the top five final

grade groups. State Civil Service attempts to set the certifiable scores to correspond to the average scores of new employees hired through the traditional certificate of eligibles method. Therefore, on average, the same candidates are eligible for hire; however, the required paperwork is reduced because the agency does not have to assess candidate availability. A subset of the certifiable score provision is the "eligible" rating. State Civil Service has established registers of unranked candidates who possess the minimum qualifications of the job but who are not scored. These eligible ratings provide agencies with a pool of candidates to select from when filling vacancies.

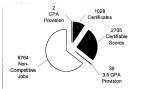
The *3.5 GPA provision* allows state agencies to fill vacancies in jobs that require only a baccalaureate degree with any individual who possesses a baccalaureate degree and a GPA of 3.5 or higher, without requiring a Civil Service score. The State Civil Service Commission enacted this rule on January 6, 1993. The rule was amended in 1996 to include jobs requiring three years or less of professional level experience beyond the degree.

The *CPA provision* allows state agencies to appoint to any job-filled from test series 1800 or 1908 (accounting-type jobs) any individual who possesses a CPA certificate, without requiring a Civil Service score. The State Civil Service Commission enacted this rule on November 20, 1996.

### **Number of Appointments**

According to State Civil Service, there were 10,538 new classified employees hired to permanent positions in 1998. Exhibit 1-3 on the following page categorizes these employees by the hiring method used. A majority (64%) of the employees filled non-competitive jobs (State Civil Service does not distinguish between the types of non-competitive jobs in its data collection). Certifiable scores were used to fill 28% of the positions and certificates were used to fill 18%. The 3.5 GPA provision and the CPA provision were used to fill less than 1% of the positions.

**Exhibit E-3**  
**Permanent Classified Positions Filled in 1998, by Method**



Source: Prepared by legislative monitor's staff using information provided by State Civil Service.

Even though certificates were used to fill only 10% of the positions, this filling method requires the largest amount of State Civil Service involvement to fill each position.

### **Overview of the Performance Planning and Review System**

The Performance Planning and Review (PPR) system is an employee appraisal system used to evaluate classified state employees. It consists primarily of a planning session, a rating, and a review. The system took effect on July 1, 1997, with the first ratings given in late November 1997.

At the start of each employee's employment and at each anniversary date, supervisors are to hold planning sessions with the employee informing him of the factors on which he will be rated and the performance levels that will be expected of him during the coming rating period. Within 45 days of the employee's next anniversary date or at the time a new employee becomes eligible for a merit increase, the supervisor completes a PPR form rating the employee on each of the factors using one of five levels.

Possible ratings are "outstanding," "very good," "satisfactory," "needs improvement," and "poor." The ratings are given point values and then averaged into one overall rating for the employee. The supervisor and employee meet to discuss the rating.

A person within the supervisor's supervisory chain of command reviews the PFR form and ratings and signs and dates the form. The form is then delivered to the agency's Human Resource office. If the PFR form is not completed within 45 days before an employee's anniversary date, the employee is given an overall rating of "satisfactory" by default.

State agencies are required to report to State Civil Service the number of classified employees rated during a specified time period. The number of employees receiving each rating level (with "satisfactory" by default reported separately) is also reported. Initially, agencies were required to report this information monthly. This was soon changed to quarterly reporting. Currently, agencies are only required to report this information at the end of each fiscal year.

Periodically, State Civil Service conducts PFR training classes for supervisors. These classes are held in different parts of the state throughout the year so that supervisors have an opportunity to learn how the PFR system is to be used.

State Civil Service also conducts technical assistance visits at state agencies. During these visits, State Civil Service and agency Human Resource personnel meet to discuss how the PFR system is administered at the agency. State Civil Service also reviews a random sample of personnel records. The PFR forms within the personnel records are reviewed for completeness and timeliness. The quality of expectations and performance comments on the forms are also reviewed. Following the visit, State Civil Service sends a letter to the agency's Human Resource Director. The letter summarizes the results of the review of the PFR forms, explains any findings discovered during the visit, and usually makes recommendations to the agency on how it can improve its administration of the PFR system.

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## Scope and Methodology

As stated previously, the Department of State Civil Service consists of five autonomous entities: the State Civil Service, the Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service, the Ethics Administration, the State Police Commission, and the Division of Administrative Law. We interviewed officials and reviewed documents related to



all five entities. We decided to focus on State Civil Service because it is by far the largest entity within the Department. We conducted our performance audit on the services provided by State Civil Service to other state agencies through its Human Resource Management Program. We focused on these services because other state agencies are the primary customers of State Civil Service and we wanted to determine how well State Civil Service was meeting those customers' needs. We concentrated our work on the services provided to state agencies attempting to hire new permanent employees. In addition, since State Civil Service has recently revised the employee appraisal system it uses for classified state employees (the PPR system), we evaluated the effectiveness of State Civil Service's oversight of this new system. For the hiring work, this audit covered vacancies filled in 1998. For the PPR work, the period covered was from April 1998 through March 1999.

To achieve the first objective of determining the effectiveness of activities conducted by State Civil Service related to hiring new employees, we evaluated State Civil Service's administration and oversight of the following hiring methods: certificates of eligible candidates, non-competitive job classifications (including low-skilled and shortage jobs), certifiable scores, the 3.5 CPA provision, and the CPA provision. These methods include all of the major processes used by state agencies to hire new permanent classified employees. We evaluated effectiveness in terms of the timeliness and quality of the services provided by State Civil Service to other state agencies and the level of satisfaction those agencies have with the services provided. We evaluated customer satisfaction by conducting a survey of state agencies. This survey is described later in this section.

We also reviewed state laws and Civil Service rules and regulations. We evaluated State Civil Service's hiring processes to identify the potential for problems and examined personnel files maintained by state agencies to determine the efficiency of the hiring processes. In addition, we assessed State Civil Service's oversight activities by reviewing documentation maintained by State Civil Service and by interviewing State Civil Service personnel. We compared State Civil Service's oversight activities with its policies and identified any differences.

Our review of personnel files was not performed for all state agencies because of the large number of entities. Rather, we narrowed our population from which to sample to six departments that made large numbers of appointments using the hiring methods

under review. Since State Civil Service has created a pilot program delegating certain hiring functions related to certificates to some agencies, we selected three departments participating in the pilot study (pilot agencies) and three departments not participating in the pilot study (non-pilot agencies) to compare the timeliness of the hiring process. We selected the following departments from which to sample:

- Department of Public Safety and Corrections - Corrections Services
- Department of Revenue and Taxation
- Department of Transportation and Development
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Public Safety and Corrections - Public Safety Services
- Department of Health and Hospitals

For each department, we identified the five most frequently filled positions for each hiring method and selected a random sample of vacancies filled in those positions in calendar year 1998. We attempted to review 10 vacancies filled by certificates and five vacancies filled by each of the alternative hiring methods at each of the six departments. This would have resulted in a sample of 60 certificates and 30 of each alternative hiring method. But, because some methods are not frequently used, we were not able to obtain 30 vacancies filled for each alternative hiring method. Our sample included 60 vacancies filled by certificates (30 at pilot agencies and 30 at non-pilot agencies), 38 by certifiable scores, 22 to low-skilled jobs, 25 to shortage jobs, and 18 by the 3.5 GPA provision. The six departments we selected did not make any appointments in calendar year 1998 using the CPA provision.

To determine the timeliness of the hiring process, we gathered data on key dates in the process by reviewing documentation maintained by the departments and by State Civil Service. These documents included requests to fill vacancies (used internally by some departments), inquiry of availability letters (required by State Civil Service to determine candidate availability when a certificate is used), certificates (if used), and personnel action forms (required by State Civil Service to fill vacancies). We were interested in following the flow of paperwork between state departments and State Civil Service. We were unable to gather

complete data on every vacancy filled in our sample because departments and/or State Civil Service did not always record this information. Our results are based on the information that was available.

We calculated the percentage of candidates contacted on each certificate who wished to be considered for the position in order to determine the quality of the certificates. We also calculated the percentage of candidates with the top five scores who wished to be considered for the position. In addition, we reviewed documents from the March 1998 Professional Entry Test (PET) register purge to determine the effect that purges have on the quality of certificates.

To achieve the second objective of determining if State Civil Service's oversight of the PFR system ensures that classified state employees receive appraisals in a timely manner and that those appraisals capture employee performance over the period rated, we interviewed State Civil Service officials and agency Human Resource personnel. We also reviewed agency reports to State Civil Service and examined documents from technical assistance visits conducted by State Civil Service at other state agencies.

In addition, we reviewed a sample of personnel records (including PFR forms, if available) from four agencies with large percentages of "satisfactory" by default ratings. We randomly selected a sample of 200 state classified civil servants within these agencies who had received ratings of "satisfactory" by default during the period of April 1998 through March 1999. We also sampled employee records for 60 civil servants who had received disciplinary action for incidents or behaviors that occurred since the new PFR system was implemented in July 1997. We reviewed the subsequent PFR forms to see how these incidents (if mentioned in the PFR) impacted the employees' ratings.

To achieve the third objective of determining the level of satisfaction state agencies have with the services and oversight provided by State Civil Service in the areas of hiring new employees and the PFR system, we sent questionnaires to the Human Resource directors at state agencies that hire classified civil servants. Some agencies have decentralized hiring authority (each entity within the agency conducts its own hiring); therefore, we sent questionnaires to the Human Resource director at each entity with hiring authority. We developed our list of 85 Human Resource directors using information provided by State Civil Service. We also sent questionnaires to the administrators of the

20 major state departments that hire classified civil servants, with the exception of State Civil Service. We encouraged the administrators and Human Resource directors to forward the questionnaire to the person(s) in their offices who are most familiar with the areas surveyed. As a result, we received 121 responses.

It should be noted that some survey respondents oversee the personnel operations of large agencies with thousands of classified civil servants, while others perform personnel functions for less than 100 state employees. The Human Resource directors at large agencies with centralized personnel functions have much more interaction with State Civil Service. However, in reporting the results of the survey, we did not give the responses of these Human Resource directors more weight than the other respondents. (See Appendix A for the survey results.)

We did not examine Information Systems controls. We relied on State Civil Service's computer systems to provide overall statistics on hiring and to provide the population from which we selected our hiring and disciplinary action samples. We conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards as promulgated by the Comptroller General of the United States.

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## Report Organization

The remainder of this report is divided into the following chapters and appendices:

- **Chapter 2** describes our findings regarding the audit objective related to hiring.
- **Chapter 3** describes our findings regarding the audit objective related to the PFR system.
- **Appendix A** contains the results of our survey of Human Resource directors and major department heads.
- **Appendix B** contains the Department of State Civil Service's response to the report.



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# Chapter 2: Hiring

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## Chapter Conclusions

Overall, the effectiveness of services and oversight that State Civil Service provides to state agencies relating to hiring new permanent employees needs improvement. While State Civil Service often performs its functions quickly, the lists of eligible candidates that it provides to state agencies contain mostly uninterested or unavailable candidates. Specifically, we found that State Civil Service issues certificates for continuously open jobs quickly, but fails to issue certificates for jobs requiring special announcements in a timely manner. We also found that State Civil Service does not require state agencies to send in candidate availability as soon as it is determined. As a result, the updating of candidate availability is delayed and State Civil Service provides agencies with certificates containing many candidates who do not wish to be considered for the vacant position and few candidates who do wish to be considered.

State Civil Service has developed a pilot program in response to the problem of certificates with large numbers of disinterested candidates. We found that while the pilot program helps, the program is not working as effectively as it should.

We also found that State Civil Service does not have adequate controls in place for its register purging procedure. We reviewed a sample of records from a recent purge and found that many data entry errors were made causing candidates to be incorrectly removed from or added to the register and subsequent certificates.

Our survey of state agency officials found mixed results in terms of the timeliness and quality of certificates. Agency officials are generally satisfied with the timeliness of certificates except when a special announcement is required. They are dissatisfied with the availability of the candidates listed on certificates.

In our review of hiring methods used as alternatives to certificates, we found that State Civil Service does not have monitoring methods in place to effectively administer its alternative programs. For shortage jobs, State Civil Service does not monitor the activity within these job titles to determine if the jobs continue to have shortages of qualified

candidates. Thus, State Civil Service cannot be assured that these alternative methods are efficient and hire the highest quality applicants.

State Civil Service's manuals (both internal and those provided to the other state agencies) contain information that is outdated. In addition, we found that agencies are dissatisfied with the user-friendliness and frequency of updates to the *State Personnel Manual*. As a result, the manuals cannot be relied upon as valid training tools or as references to guide State Civil Service and agency Human Resource personnel.

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### State Civil Service Issues Certificates for Continuously Open Jobs in a Timely Manner

State Civil Service issues certificates in a timely manner for vacancies in jobs where State Civil Service continuously maintains a database of qualified candidates. This occurs because State Civil Service is able to query the database upon receipt of the certificate request and issue the certificate usually by the next day. As a result, many department administrators and Human Resource directors are satisfied with the amount of time taken by State Civil Service to issue certificates.

As explained in Chapter 3, jobs for which a database of candidates is continuously maintained are called continuously open jobs. In our sample of 68 vacancies filled using certificates, 56 were for continuously open jobs. For 44 of those 56, we obtained complete data on when State Civil Service received the certificate request and when State Civil Service issued the certificate. State Civil Service issued 17 (39%) of the 44 certificates within one day of receiving the request, and 37 (83%) within three days. Exhibit 2-1 shows the amount of time State Civil Service took to issue certificates for continuously open jobs in our sample. Note that we did not adjust our analysis for weekends. Thus, for example, a request received on Friday with a certificate issued on Monday (the next workday) would be categorized in our analysis as taking three days to issue. Also, according to State Civil Service, one certificate took more than seven days to issue because the requesting department had an outstanding certificate for the same job and geographic location. State Civil Service required the department to return the outstanding certificate before issuing another.

**Exhibit 2-1: Sample Results**  
**Time to Issue Certificate Upon Receipt of Certificate**  
**Request for Continuously Open Jobs**

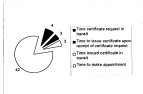
Elapsed Time	Frequency	Percentage of Total	Cumulative	
			Frequency	Percentage of Total
Same Day	3	7%	3	7%
1 Day	24	55%	27	61%
2 Days	4	9%	31	70%
3 Days	6	14%	37	84%
4 Days	1	2%	38	86%
5 Days	3	7%	41	93%
6 Days	1	2%	42	95%
7 Days	1	2%	43	98%
> 7 Days	1	2%	44	100%

*Source:* Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information provided by State Civil Service.

As a result of its quick certificate issuing process, State Civil Service was responsible for a relatively small share of the time spent in filling vacancies in continuously open jobs. For our sample of continuously open jobs, we calculated the average number of days from the department's request for a certificate until the new employee started work. On average, approximately 5% of the time was directly attributable to State Civil Service's activity (an average of three of 51 days). The remaining time in the process was primarily attributable to the activities of the departments themselves. Exhibit 2-2 shows the average number of days in the hiring process spent by State Civil Service and the departments, according to our sample. (See Chapter 1 for an overview of the hiring process.)



**Exhibit 2-2: Sample Results**  
**Average Number of Days in Hiring Process Attributable to**  
**State Civil Service and the Departments**  
**for Continuously Open Jobs**



Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information provided by State Civil Service and the departments.

Because State Civil Service does not usually delay state departments in their efforts to contact candidates when filling vacancies, a majority (58%) of the respondents to our survey reported that they are satisfied with the amount of time taken by State Civil Service to issue certificates (56 of 114). The remaining respondents were split evenly between neutral and dissatisfied. It should be noted that our survey did not distinguish between certificates issued for continuously open jobs and those requiring special announcements. As will be discussed in the next section, some of the dissatisfaction with the timeliness of issuing certificates is probably attributable to those requiring special announcements. [See Appendix A, Question 2 for complete survey results.]

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**State Civil Service Does Not Issue Certificates for Jobs on Special Announcements in a Timely Manner**

State Civil Service does not issue certificates in a timely manner when a special announcement is required before a certificate can be issued. The current process used by State Civil Service to issue certificates from a special announcement typically takes six weeks. This process increases the time it takes an agency to fill a vacancy.

As explained in Chapter 1, State Civil Service does not continuously maintain a database of candidates (i.e., registers) for jobs with few vacancies. When vacancies need to be filled, these jobs are placed on special announcements to develop names of eligible candidates to list on the certificates. Under the current process, certificate requests for jobs that require a special announcement must be received by State Civil Service at least two weeks before the opening date of the announcement. The announcement is finalized at least one week before the opening date to allow for printing and distribution. State Civil Service prints 1,381 copies of the announcement and mails them to state agencies, state senators and representatives, and subscribers. Special announcements usually remain open for two weeks, allowing candidates to submit their applications. State Civil Service attempts to score the applications within two weeks of the closing date of the announcement and issues the certificate after all the applications are scored. As a result, the process of issuing a certificate from a special announcement typically takes six weeks.

Under current policy, State Civil Service has only one special announcement open at a time. Therefore, if an agency requests a certificate for a job that requires a special announcement and misses the deadline for the announcement, the agency must wait up to an additional two weeks to be included in the next announcement.

In one sample of 68 vacancies filled using certificates, four required special announcements. In one case, an announcement was already open when State Civil Service received the request from the agency. This allowed State Civil Service to reduce the typical lead time it needs to issue a certificate. This certificate was issued in 18 days. For the remaining special announcements, State Civil Service took from 29 to 75 days to issue the certificate after receiving the request. The average for the four vacancies was 49 days. These vacancies were filled and the new employees began work an average of 66 days after the certificates were issued. Therefore, in these cases, over 40% of the time spent in filling the vacancies was spent by State Civil Service in issuing the certificates, and almost four months passed before the employees began working.

We did not specifically ask about the timeliness of certificates that required special announcements in our survey of state administrations and Human Resource directors. However, 10 of the 121 respondents commented that it takes too long for State Civil Service to issue certificates in these cases. This indicates a need for improvement on the part of State Civil Service in this area.

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## Recommendation

**2.1 State Civil Service should study the special announcement process to determine how the processing time could be shortened. Possibilities include:**

- Issuing special announcements on a weekly basis to shorten the time agencies must wait between deadlines
- Issuing special announcements electronically to reduce processing time by one week and to save the costs of printing and distribution

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## State Civil Service Does Not Provide Agencies With Adequate Certificates

State Civil Service provides agencies with certificates containing many candidates who do not wish to be considered for the vacant position and few candidates who wish to be considered. Reasons for low candidate availability include the untimely inclusion of scores, too few candidates on the certificates, and a poor fit between candidates and the job and/or agency. Contacting candidates who are not interested in the position wastes agency time and resources, thus making it difficult for agencies to fill vacancies in a timely manner.

In our sample of 60 classified civil service positions filled using certificates in calendar year 1998, we noted that on average only 26% of the candidates contacted from a certificate indicated that they wanted to be considered for the vacant position (an average of nine of 35). On average, 22% of the candidates with the top five scores wished to be considered for the position (two of nine).

## Untimely Inactivation of Scores

One reason for low candidate availability is a lack of timeliness in inactivating the scores of candidates who declined or failed to reply to the “inquiry of availability” letters sent from agencies in association with previously issued certificates. As a result of this untimely inactivation of scores, State Civil Service issues certificates containing names of candidates who should have already been inactivated. Factors that affect this timeliness include agencies not notifying State Civil Service promptly after determining availability and pilot agencies not always updating candidate availability themselves.

In our observations, we found that the average time departments took to return the certificates to State Civil Service for updating after eligibility had been determined was 30 days. Therefore, while candidate availability was usually determined within the first two weeks after a certificate was issued, the names of unavailable candidates for the 33 certificates in our sample with complete data were not sent to State Civil Service for an average of ten weeks. If State Civil Service required agencies to return candidate availability information as soon as it is determined, the time to update candidate availability would have been shortened by 30 days, or nearly two and a half months.

In addition, the pilot agencies updated candidate availability for only nine of the 30 certificates they used in our sample. (State Civil Service does not force pilot agencies to update candidate availability themselves.) When the pilot agencies do not update candidate availability themselves, this step is not performed until State Civil Service receives the certificates.

The updating of candidate availability is delayed in both of these situations. Meanwhile, State Civil Service issues certificates that contain the names of candidates who should have already been inactivated. The number of candidates on certificates who are unavailable is significant. According to data provided by State Civil Service, an average of two-thirds of the 2,829 candidates declining or failing to reply to the “inquiry of availability” letters each month do not request to be placed back on the register.

## Too Few Candidates

Another reason for low candidate availability may be that certificates sometimes contain a total of five or fewer candidates. We found that eight (17%) of the 60 certificates included in our sample contained five or fewer candidates. In such cases, agencies

are forced to hire individuals from a small pool of candidates or rely on their own recruiting efforts to fill their vacancies.

### **Poor Fit Between Candidates and Jobs/Agencies**

Candidate unavailability may also be due to a poor fit between the job and/or agency and the candidate. As previously stated, candidates' scores are inactivated from the registers when they decline or fail to reply to an "inquiry of availability" letter. Candidates may decline or fail to reply for a number of reasons; however, the percentage of those candidates wishing to be placed back on the registers indicates that they are interested in employment, but not in that particular job and/or agency. According to data provided by State Civil Service, the average number of score inactivations as a result of candidates declining or failing to reply to the "inquiry of availability" letters was 2,829 per month in fiscal year 1998/1999. The average number of score reactivations as a result of candidates requesting to be placed back on the registers was 893 (32%) per month.

State agencies are dissatisfied with the availability of candidates on certificates. Of the 111 respondents to this question on our survey, only 17% (15) reported that they are satisfied with candidate availability, while the remaining respondents were split between neutral and dissatisfied (43% and 44%, respectively). (See Appendix A, Question 3 for complete survey results.)

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## **Recommendations**

- 2.2 State Civil Service should require agencies to provide candidate availability to State Civil Service as soon as it is determined.
- 2.3 State Civil Service should require the pilot agencies to update candidate availability themselves.
- 2.4 State Civil Service should determine if the level of recruiting could be increased in order to provide agencies with an adequate number of candidates to fill their vacancies.
- 2.5 State Civil Service should provide applicants with a choice of agencies they wish to work for on the Civil Service application. This may result in a better match between candidates and agencies.

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**Pilot Program Is  
Faster But Needs  
Improvement**

The pilot program allowing agencies to update candidate availability is quicker than the traditional process; however, pilot agencies do not always update candidate availability as soon as it is determined. In addition, these agencies frequently defer the updating step to State Civil Service because State Civil Service does not require pilot agencies to update availability themselves. Thus, the pilot program is not operating as efficiently and effectively as intended.

In our sample, pilot agencies took an average of 27 days to update candidate availability from the date availability became known. When State Civil Service performed this step, the process took an average of 78 days for the certificates in our sample. As stated earlier, the untimely updating of candidate availability is one of the causes of inadequate certificates.

Although the pilot agencies took less time to update candidate availability than when State Civil Service performed this step, the fact that it took pilot agencies almost four weeks, on average, to complete the updates indicates that the pilot program is not operating effectively. As stated in Chapter 1, one of the goals of the pilot program is to update candidate availability as soon as it is determined in order to remove the names of unavailable candidates from the registers as soon as possible. Pilot agencies updated candidate availability for only nine of the 30 certificates they requested in our sample. In addition, less than half of the certificates that pilot agencies updated were completed within two weeks (four of nine).

Even though the updating of candidate availability takes longer when State Civil Service performs this step, State Civil Service was only responsible for a relatively small share of the time spent in the process. On average, approximately 18% of the time spent in the updating process in our sample was directly attributable to State Civil Service's activity (an average of seven of 38 days). The remaining time in the process was primarily attributable to the activities of the departments themselves before returning the certificates to State Civil Service.

We noted that 13 (77%) of the 43 certificates in our sample for which complete data were available were updated within one week of the receipt of the certificates by State Civil Service, and 39 (91%) were updated within two weeks. State Civil Service updated all the certificates within six weeks. Exhibit 2-3 on the following page shows the elapsed time to update candidate availability for our sample.

**Exhibit 3-3: Sample Results**  
**Time to Update Candidate Availability From the Date of**  
**Determination**

Elapsed Time	Pilot Agencies		State Civil Service	
	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percentage	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percentage
1 week	3	53%	0	0%
2 weeks	4	64%	1	3%
3 weeks	5	80%	1	3%
4 weeks	5	80%	2	5%
5 weeks	7	78%	3	13%
6 weeks	7	78%	10	26%
7 weeks	7	78%	16	42%
8 weeks	8	89%	19	50%
9 weeks	8	89%	23	61%
10 weeks	8	89%	27	71%
11 weeks	9	100%	29	76%
> 11 weeks	9	100%	28	100%

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information provided by State Civil Service and state departments.

According to our survey, a majority (68%) of the respondents from the pilot agencies reported that they are satisfied with the process of updating candidate availability through the OPM system (13 of 19). (See Appendix A, Question 7 for complete survey results.)

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**Recommendations**

- 2.6 State Civil Service should expand the pilot program to include all state agencies with access to the OPEN system.
- 2.7 State Civil Service should require the pilot agencies to update candidate availability as soon as it is determined.

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**State Civil Service  
Incorrectly  
Processes Score  
Reactivation  
Requests**

State Civil Service incorrectly processes score reactivation requests received from candidates during its register purges. This problem exists because State Civil Service does not verify the data entry step of the reactivation process. As a result, State Civil Service and the other state agencies incur additional expenses and candidates possibly miss employment opportunities.

As explained in Chapter 1, before the register purges, State Civil Service sends letters to all candidates with scores on the register informing them of the purge and advising them to notify State Civil Service if they wish some or all of their scores to be reactivated after the purge. We reviewed a sample of reactivation requests for the March 1999 Professional Entry Test (PET) register purge. Of the 125 scores that were included in our sample, we found that 110 (88%) were processed correctly, and 15 (12%) were processed incorrectly. These errors occurred during the data entry step of the reactivation process. Of the 15 scores processed incorrectly, 11 were reactivated after the candidates requested to be removed from the register and four were not reactivated even though the candidates requested to be kept on the register. When candidates remain on registers they requested to be removed from, they continue to receive "inquiry of availability" letters from the agencies. As a result, agencies incur unnecessary expenses related to contacting a candidate for a job in which the candidate is not interested. When candidates are removed from a register they requested to remain on, they miss employment opportunities. These inaccuracies exist because State Civil Service does not have a process for verifying the data entry.



### Overnight of Alternative Hiring Methods Is Weak

#### Recommendation

- 2.8 State Civil Service should create a process to verify the reclassification data entry to ensure that it is being performed correctly.

State Civil Service does not provide sufficient oversight of the alternative hiring methods. Therefore, State Civil Service cannot be assured that these alternative methods are efficient and hire the highest quality applicants.

As stated in Chapter 1, State Civil Service has alternatives to the use of certificates of eligible candidates for filling vacancies. The primary methods are:

- Certifiable scores
- Non-competitive job classifications (including shortage and low-skilled jobs)
- 1.5 GPA provision
- CPA provision

When State Civil Service implemented these alternative hiring methods, they limited the direct involvement of State Civil Service and streamlined the paperwork involved in filling vacancies. However, these methods did not discharge State Civil Service from its constitutional requirement to assure that newly hired classified civil servants are hired within a system that considers efficiency as well as the abilities of the selected employees. When State Civil Service creates alternative hiring methods, it should monitor the new method to ensure that it operates efficiently and better than the old system it replaced.

When agencies use certificates of eligibles to fill vacancies, State Civil Service knows the date the agency requested the certificate and the date the new employee began work. It can, therefore, determine how long the process took. We found that State Civil Service does not collect information about when agencies begin to look for a new employee when agencies fill vacancies using the alternative methods. Therefore, State Civil Service cannot monitor the efficiency (in terms of time) of these

methods. It cannot make comparisons between different time periods to look for trends among the different hiring methods.

In addition, we found that for job titles designated as "shortage," State Civil Service does not monitor the number of candidates applying for these jobs to determine if the jobs continue to have shortages of qualified candidates. As described in Chapter 1, the shortage job designation allows agencies to hire any candidate with the minimum qualifications for a job. In situations where there are not enough candidates applying for positions, hiring any qualified applicant is appropriate. However, if the number of qualified candidates applying for a job title is sufficient, competition should be reinstated so that the most qualified candidates are hired. Since State Civil Service does not track the number of applicants that apply to shortage jobs, it cannot determine if and when competition should be reinstated in these job titles.

It is true that agencies may inform State Civil Service about how long it takes to fill vacancies with alternative methods and when jobs are no longer shortage. In addition, State Civil Service does review counts of the number of vacancies filled using the different hiring methods. These methods, however, are problematic. First, agencies may only report selected information. Second, changes in the number of vacancies filled with each hiring method are subject to varying interpretations that may not indicate the root of any problem.

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## Recommendation

- 2.9** State Civil Service should develop a formal process for gauging the timeliness of alternative hiring methods and the appropriateness of shortage job designations.

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**State Civil Service's Manuals Are Not Current**

State Civil Service's manuals (both internal and those provided to the other state agencies) contain information that is outdated because no policy exists to ensure that the manuals remain current. The manuals cannot be relied upon as valid training tools or as references to guide State Civil Service and agency Human Resources personnel.

We reviewed the following internal manuals provided by State Civil Service's Examining Division:

- *Orientations to Examining Manual*
- *Certification Unit Manual*
- *Assessment Unit Manual*

We also reviewed the *State Personnel Manual*, used as a guide for agencies when performing duties such as hiring, and the *SP-2 Tracking and Certification Issuing Manual*, used by pilot agencies to issue and update certificates. All of these manuals contain outdated information such as organizational charts, steps in the hiring process, steps in the approval of newly hired employees, pilot program policies, and Civil Service rules.

Less than half (47%) of the respondents to our survey reported that they are satisfied with the use-friendliness and organization of the *State Personnel Manual* (33 of 214). The remaining respondents are split between neutral and dissatisfied (33% and 35%, respectively). (See Appendix A, Questions 24 and 25 for complete survey results.)

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**Recommendation**

- 2.10** State Civil Service should ensure that each of its manuals is completely updated and that procedures are established to keep these documents current.

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# Chapter 3: Performance Planning and Review System

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## Chapter Conclusions

*State Civil Service's oversight of the Performance Planning and Review (PPR) system is not adequate. The present system does not ensure that classified state employees receive appraisals in a timely manner and that these appraisals capture employee performance over the period rated.*

*According to reports from state agencies, over 38% of classified state employees do not receive timely PPRs. Within some agencies, the percentage of classified employees not receiving timely PPRs is over 50. We found that many of these employees receive merit increases without first receiving PPR ratings. We also found that supervisors are not using PPRs to accurately capture past performance by employees. For almost half of the employees sampled who had received disciplinary action, the problem that led to the disciplinary action was not mentioned in their subsequent PPRs. This results in inadequate and inconsistent formal feedback to classified employees about their performance.*

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## Large Number of Satisfactory by Default PPR Ratings

*Over 38% of classified state employees do not receive timely PPRs. Many of these employees receive merit increases without first receiving PPR ratings. Some agencies have not made timely PPRs a priority and State Civil Service has not been assertive enough in requiring agencies to follow the Civil Service rule requiring annual PPRs for all classified state employees. Civil Service rules regarding layoffs may have a negative effect on agencies that have large numbers of employees with "satisfactory" by default ratings.*

*We found that 12,854 (22%) of the reported 59,825 classified state employees who received PPR ratings during the period of April 1998 to March 1999 were "satisfactory" by default. The percent of "satisfactory" by default ratings, however, varied greatly across agencies. For example, 15 agencies reported that more than half of their classified employees received "satisfactory" by default ratings, while another 21 agencies reported that fewer than 5% of their classified employees received "satisfactory" by*

default ratings. (See Chapter 1 for an overview of the PFR system.)

In our examination of the personnel files of 200 classified state employees who had received “satisfactory” by default PFR ratings during the period under review, we found that 118 of the employees had not been given a PFR; another 76 had their PFRs completed on or after their anniversary date; and the remaining five had their PFRs completed more than 45 days before their anniversary date (i.e., too early, based on Civil Service rules). In addition, we found that 130 of the employees received merit increases before receiving or without having received a PFR rating. These merit increases totaled \$138,108. In the interest of time and due to data limitations, we did not randomly select agencies from which to draw our sample. Therefore, our results may not necessarily apply to all classified state employees with “satisfactory” by default ratings. However, if our sample is representative of all “satisfactory” by default rated state classified employees, these merit increases without PFR ratings translate into a total of \$8,323,269 over a one-year period. While some of these employees probably deserve merit increases, receiving merit increases without a formal review of job performance indicates a lack of accountability to Louisiana taxpayers for the use of their tax dollars.

### **Possible Reasons for Large Number of “Satisfactory” by Default Ratings**

Some agencies have not developed procedures to ensure that PFRs are completed on time and that classified employees are given performance ratings before receiving merit increases. Our survey of Human Resource directors corroborated this situation by revealing frustration on the part of agency Human Resource personnel at getting supervisors to complete PFR files on time. This situation must be compared with agencies that have managed to complete the vast majority of their PFRs on time.

According to one State Civil Service official, one possible explanation for the high number of “satisfactory” by default ratings is that some supervisors are unclassified and do not feel the need to follow rules that apply to classified state employees. However, unclassified supervisors are required to follow and do follow State Civil Service rules regarding the hiring of classified staff, so there is no reason to believe they cannot be required to follow State Civil Service rules regarding the PFR system. In addition, we found that this explanation plays only a small role in the high number of “satisfactory” by default ratings. Of the 200 employee records

with "satisfactory" by default ratings we reviewed, only 54 had unclassified supervisors. The remaining 146 had classified employees as supervisors.

In our review of documentation from the technical assistance visits conducted by State Civil Service, we found that in the initial 18 months over which the visits have been conducted (April 1998 to September 1999), only 18 have occurred. In addition, no formal follow-up has been conducted to see if any recommendations have been adopted. Also, there are currently no sanctions taken against agencies found to be out of compliance with the Civil Service rules regarding the PFR system.

Civil Service rules regarding layoffs factor PFR ratings into the order that classified state employees are laid off. In general, the order of layoff is based on years of state service. Employees with the least amount of time with the state are the first permanent employees to be laid off. However, employees whose last two consecutive PFR ratings were "poor" are the first permanent employees to be laid off, regardless of their number of years of service. These rules have implications for agencies with employees that are rated "satisfactory" by default. If most employee PFR ratings are actually "poor" but employees receive "satisfactory" by default ratings because PFRs on these employees are not completed at the proper time, agencies could be forced to lay off other employees while having to keep these poor performers.

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## Recommendations

- 3.1 All agencies should develop procedures to ensure that PFRs are completed on time.
- 3.2 Agencies should not give merit increases to employees until they have a PFR rating.
- 3.3 State Civil Service should strengthen enforcement of PFR rules by reviewing agency PFR records more frequently, developing follow-up procedures to ensure agencies are making progress, and imposing penalties on agencies with serious deficiencies.

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### **Inconsistent Use of PPRs by Supervisors**

Supervisors are not using PPRs to accurately capture past performance by employees. This results in inadequate and inconsistent formal feedback to employees about their performance.

A sample of employees who received disciplinary action showed that in almost half of the cases (28 out of 62), supervisors did not mention the problem that led to the disciplinary action in the employee's subsequent PPR. In addition, State Civil Service, through its technical assistance visits, has found instances where PPR ratings are inconsistent with the comments provided on the PPR. These inconsistencies may result in higher ratings than are deserved (with the same layoff implications for the agency outlined previously) and undesired merit increases.

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### **Recommendations**

- 3.4 Agencies should ensure that all supervisors have access to PPR training and written procedures on how to use the PPR system.
- 3.5 Agencies should monitor their supervisors' use of the PPR system to correct any problems.
- 3.6 State Civil Service should increase the number of technical assistance visits to monitor agency use of the PPR system.

## Appendix A

### Survey of Agency Personnel Officials



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# Appendix A: Survey of Agency Personnel Officials

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We sent questionnaires to the Human Resource directors at state agencies that hire classified state civil servants. Some agencies have decentralized hiring authority; for example, hospitals under the Department of Health and Hospitals do their own hiring. In such cases, we sent questionnaires to the Human Resource director at each entity within the agency with hiring authority. We developed our list of Human Resource directors using information provided by State Civil Service, and sent questionnaires to 99 Human Resource directors. We also sent questionnaires to the administrators of the 20 major state departments that hire civil servants, with the exception of State Civil Service itself, to ask for their input. We encouraged the Human Resource directors and administrators to forward the questionnaire to the person(s) in their office most familiar with the areas surveyed. Because of this forwarding, we received more responses than the 115 questionnaires we sent out. We received 121 responses in total.

Below are the questions we asked followed by counts of the responses, which range from extremely satisfied to extremely dissatisfied. Not all questions were answered by all respondents; therefore, the percentages shown are based on the number of responses to each question. It should be noted that some respondents oversee the personnel operations of large agencies with thousands of classified civil servants, while others perform personnel functions for less than 100 state employees. The Human Resource directors at large agencies with centralized personnel functions have much more interaction with State Civil Service. However, in reporting the results of the survey, we did not attempt to give the responses of these directors more weight than other respondents.

*(Individual questionnaire responses are confidential.)*

## Hiring

*Agencies submit SF-26 (Request for Certificate of Eligibility) to State Civil Service to receive certificates of eligible candidates for original appointments. (Questions 1-4)*

1. How satisfied are you with the overall process for requesting certificates of eligible candidates by submitting an SF-26?

3 (7%)	Extremely dissatisfied
10 (9%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
33 (29%)	Neutral
55 (48%)	Somewhat satisfied
13 (11%)	Extremely satisfied

2. How satisfied are you with the timeliness of certificates of eligibles that are issued by State Civil Service?

8 (7%)	Extremely dissatisfied
16 (14%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
24 (21%)	Neutral
49 (43%)	Somewhat satisfied
17 (15%)	Extremely satisfied

3. How satisfied are you with the availability of candidates on certificates of eligibles (i.e., the percentage of candidates on the certificate who are available for appointment)?

26 (23%)	Extremely dissatisfied
23 (21%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
48 (43%)	Neutral
6 (5%)	Somewhat satisfied
7 (7%)	Extremely satisfied

4. How satisfied are you with the quality of the candidates (i.e., educational requirements, experience, and test scores) who are eligible or have been selected for appointment from the certificates of eligibles?

4 (3%)	Extremely dissatisfied
27 (23%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
48 (41%)	Neutral
37 (32%)	Somewhat satisfied
8 (7%)	Extremely satisfied

5. How satisfied are you with the oversight provided by State Civil Service of the process for requesting certificates of eligible candidates by submitting an SF-37?

3 (3%)	Extremely dissatisfied
12 (10%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
40 (35%)	Neutral
47 (41%)	Somewhat satisfied
15 (13%)	Extremely satisfied

6. How satisfied are you with the training and guidance provided by State Civil Service related to the process for requesting certificates of eligible candidates by submitting an SF-27?

3 (3%)	Extremely dissatisfied
9 (9%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
37 (33%)	Neutral
46 (40%)	Somewhat satisfied
18 (16%)	Extremely satisfied

*State Civil Service has granted authority to certain "pilot agencies" to allow them to generate certificates of eligibles and update the availability status of candidates through the Online Personnel Information System (OPEN). The following questions (7-10) apply only to those pilot agencies with this authority. If your agency does not have this authority, please proceed to Question 11.*

7. How satisfied are you with the overall process for generating certificates of eligible candidates through the OPEN system?

0 (0%)	Extremely dissatisfied
4 (21%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
2 (11%)	Neutral
5 (26%)	Somewhat satisfied
8 (42%)	Extremely satisfied

8. How satisfied are you with the oversight provided by State Civil Service of the process for generating certificates of eligible candidates through the OPEN system?

0 (0%)	Extremely dissatisfied
0 (0%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
7 (36%)	Neutral
6 (32%)	Somewhat satisfied
6 (32%)	Extremely satisfied

9. How satisfied are you with the training and guidance provided by State Civil Service related to the process for generating certificates of eligible candidates through the OPEN system?

0 (0%)	Extremely dissatisfied
1 (5%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
6 (32%)	Neutral
7 (37%)	Somewhat satisfied
5 (26%)	Extremely satisfied

10. How satisfied are you with the process for updating the availability status of candidates through the OPEN system?

1 (5%)	Extremely dissatisfied
2 (11%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
3 (16%)	Neutral
4 (42%)	Somewhat satisfied
5 (26%)	Extremely satisfied

*Creditable Scores are established by State Civil Service for certain jobs, which permit agencies to hire applicants who have attained a score within that range, without requesting a certificate of eligibility. (Question 10)*

11. How satisfied are you with the quality of the candidates (i.e., educational requirements, experience, and test scores) who are eligible or have been selected for appointment based on creditable scores?

5 (4%)	Extremely dissatisfied
11 (10%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
34 (31%)	Neutral
47 (42%)	Somewhat satisfied
19 (17%)	Extremely satisfied

*The 3.5 GPA (grade point average) rule (Civil Service Rule 8.4(c)) was promulgated by State Civil Service to permit agencies to hire qualified candidates (on a professional basis) for certain professional jobs, who have obtained a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university with an overall GPA of 3.5 or higher. (Question 11)*

12. How satisfied are you with the quality of the candidates (i.e., educational requirements and experience) who are eligible or have been selected for appointment under the 3.5 GPA rule?

9 (9%)	Extremely dissatisfied
5 (5%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
52 (53%)	Neutral
32 (32%)	Somewhat satisfied
13 (13%)	Extremely satisfied

*The CPA (Certified Public Accountant) rule (Civil Service Rule 2.405) was promulgated by State Civil Service to permit agencies to hire qualified candidates (in a probational basis) who possess a CPA, for certain professional jobs, without making a civil service test. (Question 13)*

13. How satisfied are you with the quality of the candidates (i.e., educational requirements and experience) who are eligible or have been selected for appointment under the CPA rule?

0 (0%)	Extremely dissatisfied
2 (2%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
64 (72%)	Neutral
15 (17%)	Somewhat satisfied
8 (9%)	Extremely satisfied

*Shortage jobs are critical jobs that historically have been difficult to fill with qualified applicants in a timely manner (see Civil Service Rule 7.2A(3)). State Civil Service allows agencies to hire qualified candidates for these jobs non-competitively. (Questions 14-15)*

14. How satisfied are you with the list of "shortage job" titles?

0 (0%)	Extremely dissatisfied
13 (11%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
34 (27%)	Neutral
43 (41%)	Somewhat satisfied
19 (17%)	Extremely satisfied

15. How satisfied are you with the process used by State Civil Service to designate a job title as a "shortage job"?

0 (0%)	Extremely dissatisfied
11 (10%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
30 (27%)	Neutral
33 (30%)	Somewhat satisfied
10 (9%)	Extremely satisfied

*Low skill jobs are jobs requiring skills not amenable to paper and pencil ability testing per Civil Service Rule 7.29(a)(3). State Civil Service allows agencies to hire qualified candidates for these jobs non-competitively. (Questions 16-17)*

16. How satisfied are you with the list of "low skill job" titles?

0 (0%)	Extremely dissatisfied
3 (7%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
42 (40%)	Neutral
42 (40%)	Somewhat satisfied
12 (11%)	Extremely satisfied

17. How satisfied are you with the process used by State Civil Service to designate a job title as a "low skill job"?

0 (0%)	Extremely dissatisfied
6 (6%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
23 (51%)	Neutral
34 (33%)	Somewhat satisfied
10 (10%)	Extremely satisfied

## Performance Planning and Review (PPR) System

*The PPR system was developed by State Civil Service and implemented in July 1997 to provide a more effective system for evaluating employee performance and to promote a productive dialogue between employees and supervisors. (Questions 18-23)*

18. How satisfied are you with the PPR system's ability to adequately measure employee performance?

4 (7%)	Extremely dissatisfied
17 (14%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
31 (26%)	Neutral
56 (47%)	Somewhat satisfied
11 (10%)	Extremely satisfied

19. How satisfied are you with the PPR system's ability to promote a better dialogue between employees and supervisors?

1 (1%)	Extremely dissatisfied
14 (12%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
24 (20%)	Neutral
63 (52%)	Somewhat satisfied
18 (15%)	Extremely satisfied

20. How satisfied are you with the oversight provided by State Civil Service of the PPR system?

2 (2%)	Extremely dissatisfied
10 (8%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
45 (38%)	Neutral
43 (36%)	Somewhat satisfied
18 (14%)	Extremely satisfied

21. How satisfied are you with the training and guidance provided by State Civil Service related to the PPR system?

1 (1%)	Extremely dissatisfied
9 (8%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
38 (25%)	Neutral
52 (43%)	Somewhat satisfied
28 (23%)	Extremely satisfied

22. How satisfied are you that your agency is using PPR effectively [i.e., ensuring that classified employees are receiving PPRs from their supervisors(s)]?

7 (6%)	Extremely dissatisfied
16 (14%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
36 (21%)	Neutral
60 (50%)	Somewhat satisfied
19 (8%)	Extremely satisfied

23. How satisfied are you overall with the PPR system?

3 (2%)	Extremely dissatisfied
14 (12%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
54 (28%)	Neutral
64 (53%)	Somewhat satisfied
5 (4%)	Extremely satisfied

## Other

State Civil Service promulgates and updates the State Personnel Manual for use by state agencies. (Questions 24-25)

24. How satisfied are you with the user-friendliness of the State Personnel Manual?

5 (4%)	Extremely dissatisfied
18 (16%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
38 (34%)	Neutral
38 (34%)	Somewhat satisfied
13 (12%)	Extremely satisfied

25. How satisfied are you that information in the State Personnel Manual is current?

5 (4%)	Extremely dissatisfied
28 (25%)	Somewhat dissatisfied
57 (51%)	Neutral
31 (28%)	Somewhat satisfied
11 (10%)	Extremely satisfied

## Comments

### Hiring

Additional comments provided by agencies include:

- DSCS should allow agencies to set pay levels and classify positions.
- Job studies take too long to complete.
- Extreme delays and inefficiencies occur with special announcements.
- The pilot study has created a hardship on the agency's Human Resource staff.
- DSCS should avoid the "rule of five" and allow agencies to any candidate who passes the required Civil Service exam.
- DSCS relies too heavily on the exams. Some candidates could perform well on the job even if they cannot pass the exams.
- Personnel actions take too long to approve. The staffing at DSCS is insufficient to meet the agencies' needs.
- Sending inquiries, waiting for responses, and trying to locate candidates whose phone numbers have changed takes too long.
- The Clerical exam is not a good predictor of job performance.
- DSCS should expand the pilot study to include all agencies with access to the OPMIS system.
- The deadline for requesting a special announcement should be shortened.



*Mixing (Cont.)*

- Applicants should be able to indicate which agencies they are interested in working for.
- The 3.5 GPA rule should be validated.
- DSCS should provide agencies with names of candidates who qualify for shortage jobs.
- Certain clerical jobs should be designated as "low-skilled."
- The expiration dates on the certificates should be extended.
- Candidate availability should be updated more promptly.
- Candidates are repeatedly put back on registers after declining or failing to reply.
- Experience and training ratings take too long to complete.
- State employees should be able to attend CFTF classes for training on the CSOJ and CPMS systems.

*PPR System*

- The PPR system is cumbersome at the executive level of management.
- DSCS should encourage supervisors to complete PPRs on their employees.
- Agency Human Resources staff has no authority to force supervisors to prepare PPRs for their employees.
- Merit increases should be related to PPR ratings.
- The success of the PPR system depends primarily on management buy-in.

*State Personnel Manual*

- The *State Personnel Manual* is outdated.
- DSCS should update the *State Personnel Manual* to include all rules and regulations and provide annual training.
- The *State Personnel Manual* should be placed on the DSCS intranet site.



## Appendix B

### Department of State Civil Service's Response



Miss E. Reynolds  
Lafayette

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL SERVICE  
P. O. BOX 9881, CAPITAL BLVD., BATON ROUGE, LA 70804-9881

RECEIVED  
EGASL DIVISION  
Executive Action  
OFFICE OF THE  
COMMISSIONER  
1000 NORTH THIRD STREET  
BATON ROUGE, LA 70802  
Telephone: 848-2421

March 1, 2000

Dr. Daniel G. Kyle  
Legislative Auditor  
1600 North Third Street  
Post Office Box 94097  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9397

Dear Dr. Kyle:

We appreciate the opportunity to review the draft performance audit on hiring and performance planning and review activities in the Department of State Civil Service.

Although the survey results indicate that users are generally satisfied with the efforts of the Department in these areas, there are some legitimate concerns. We would like to take this opportunity to describe our current efforts and our future plans to address those problems.

One of our current initiatives is designed to eliminate the certification problems noted in your report. Every certification system that involves a prescreened pool used for future vacancies has a problem with unavailable candidates. Individual availability is extremely dynamic. When we purge on a regular cycle, we find that 50% of the candidates are no longer available. The other 50% are still interested in some job on that list of eligibles. Our internal review indicates that 95-99% of all of our records are correctly entered into the computer by our staff. Because certification records are so dynamic, it is virtually impossible to such a purge unless it is done immediately after the purge - before any other actions are taken.

In the near future, the Department will install a statewide vacancy posting system on our web site that will change how agencies fill positions. Agencies will announce their vacancies and interested applicants will apply directly to the state agencies where the vacancies exist instead of applying to Civil Service. The first vacancies announced this way will be for positions that are currently announced on special announcements. Others will be added later. We believe that both processing delays and applicant availability will improve significantly with this new system.

**AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

Regarding Performance Planning and Review, the Department has made great strides in this area with the implementation of the new system in July 1997. Your survey results indicate that the agencies are extremely satisfied with the new system. But it is still a new system and before enforcing sanctions, we felt it was important to give the agencies time to learn and adjust to the new system. Rules are currently drafted to address revisions necessary to the system. In addition, our most recent numbers show significant improvements in the number of employees rated. State agencies that are not administering the system appropriately will be asked by the Civil Service Commission for explanations.

The Department has chosen in recent years to provide extensive assistance to agencies through training rather than to devote resources necessary to revamp the Civil Service Manual. We intend to eventually have all policies and procedures on our web site for state agencies to use as their personnel manual.

It was a pleasure to have your staff members with us during the period of the study. They conducted themselves in a thoroughly professional manner throughout their stay. They made an effort to fully understand our operation and the impact of actions on users. We appreciate their efforts and recommendations to improve our programs.

Sincerely,



Allen H. Reynolds  
Director