



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

In the Matter of Jonah Kozma,  
Vineland Developmental Center

CSC Docket No. 2024-156

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION  
OF THE CHAIR/  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

Classification Appeal

**ISSUED: October 5, 2023 (SLK)**

Jonah Kozma appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that the proper classification of his position with the Vineland Developmental Center is Head Grounds Worker. The appellant seeks a Superintendent of Institutional Grounds classification.

The record in the present matter establishes that the appellant's permanent title is Head Grounds Worker. The appellant sought reclassification of his position, alleging that his duties were more closely aligned with the duties of a Superintendent of Institutional Grounds. The appellant reports to Don Taylor, Engineer in Charge of Maintenance 3. In support of his request, the appellant submitted a Position Classification Questionnaire (PCQ) detailing the duties that he performed as a Head Grounds Worker. Agency Services reviewed and analyzed the PCQ, an Organization Chart, and a Performance Assessment Review (PAR) and all information and documentation submitted. Agency Services found that the appellant's primary duties and responsibilities entailed, among other things: maintaining the East Campus, West Campus cemetery, and the grass cutting in the West Campus; supervising assigned Grounds Workers by providing assignments, assessing performance by completing PARs, approving time, and recommending the hiring, firing, promoting and/or disciplining; ensuring that grass is properly cut, flower gardens, parking areas and gravesites are properly maintained, and the pruning and cutting of dead limbs and removal of dead trees; salting and removing snow from walkways and parking areas; and preparing reports and keeping and updating necessary records and files.

In its decision, Agency Services determined that the duties performed by the appellant were consistent with the definition and examples of work included in the job specification for Head Grounds Worker.

On appeal, the appellant asserts that the documentation that he submits provides evidence that he is performing the duties of a Superintendent of Institutional Grounds. He states that for the past four years, he has been supervising an Assistant Head Grounds Worker and nine Grounds Workers. The appellant presents that *In the Matter of Jonah Kozma* (CSC, decided November 10, 2016), the Civil Service Commission (Commission) noted that Assistant Head Grounds Worker and Head Grounds Worker are both in the same Employee Relations Group (ERG), which creates an inappropriate reporting relationship, which is the basis for his reclassification request. He submits documentation to show that he is supervising an Assistant Head Grounds Worker. The appellant highlights that in March 2021, there was a meeting which resulted in a reminder that the Assistant Head Grounds Worker was to report to him for daily work assignments. Further, Taylor instructed the appellant to make sure that the Assistant Head Grounds Worker's reporting relationship to him was reflected in the appellant's PAR. Additionally, a reporting structure was issued as a reminder of the proper chain of command for the Grounds Department. He notes that in September 2022, the Assistant Head Grounds Worker successfully completed his working test period and was permanently appointed to that title. Also, the appellant submits a recent purchase order which demonstrates that the Assistant Head Grounds Workers was the requester, and the appellant was the signer, to demonstrate that he currently supervises the Assistant Head Grounds Worker. The appellant states that his duties include supervising additional staff as well as performing the job duties listed in the Superintendent of Institutional Grounds job specification, including duties that are not listed as Head Grounds Worker duties. He emphasizes that he oversees and trains employees on the use of heavy equipment, a front-end loader, a backhoe, and skid steer, as well as overseeing snow and ice removal operations. The appellant notes that the overseeing of snow and ice removal operations requires him to call in employees from the Maintenance Department as he sees fit, where he signs these employees' timesheets, assigns duties, and keeps records regarding employee hours worked and materials used. Thereafter, he compiles and submits a report to his supervisor after each snow and ice removal event.

## CONCLUSION

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:3-3.9(e) states that in classification appeals, the appellant shall provide copies of all materials submitted, the determination received from the lower level, statements as to which portions of the determination are being disputed, and the basis for appeal. Information and/or argument which was not presented at the prior level of appeal shall not be considered.

The definition section of the Head Grounds Worker (R16) job specification states:

Under direction of a supervisory official in a State department, institution, or agency, has charge of the maintenance of grounds; does other related duties as required.

The definition section of the Superintendent of Institutional Grounds (S18) job specification states:

Under the direction of a supervisor in a psychiatric hospital, institution, or a State College, has charge of the operation and maintenance of the grounds, gardens, greenhouses, roads, and parking lots; supervises the operation of heavy equipment; does other related work.

In this matter, a review of the job specifications indicates that the key difference between the two titles is that incumbents in the Head Grounds Worker title are in the “R” ERG, and are first-level supervisors, while incumbents in the Superintendent of Institutional Grounds title are in the “S” ERG, and are second-level supervisors. In other words, Head Grounds Workers sign PARs for non-supervisors, while Superintendent of Institutional Grounds sign PARs for first-level supervisors. The appellant presents that he is the supervisor for an Assistant Head Grounds Worker, which is an “R” ERG or first-level supervisory title. However, there has been nothing presented in the record that indicates that this Assistant Head Grounds Worker was performing the duties of a first-level supervisor, namely signing PARs.<sup>1</sup> The mere fact that an employee is serving in a discretionary supervisory title does alone signify that the employee is a supervisor if that employee is not signing PARs, as the actual signing of PARs demonstrates that the incumbent can exercise his or her authority to recommend hiring, firing, and disciplining of subordinate employees. Simply stated, the actual authority and exercise of performance evaluation of subordinate staff is what makes a supervisor a supervisor. Performance evaluation of subordinates, and its myriad of potential consequences to the organization, is the key function of a supervisor. *See In the Matter of Alexander Borovskis, et al.* (MSB, decided July 27, 2005).

Regardless, even if at one point the appellant was supervising an Assistant Head Grounds Worker who was signing the PARs for non-supervisors, the record indicates that the appointing authority was advised that it was an inappropriate reporting relationship to have this Assistant Head Grounds Worker reporting to the appellant since employees should not be supervised by an employee in the same ERG. Further, the record indicates that at the time that Agency Services evaluated the

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<sup>1</sup> A review of the job specification for Assistant Head Grounds Worker indicates that incumbents in this title “may” supervise. Therefore, supervisory duties, *i.e.* signing PARs, are not mandatory for incumbents in the Assistant Head Grounds Worker title.

appellant's position, this Assistant Head Grounds Worker was no longer reporting to the appellant and the appellant is not signing the PAR for this employee. Therefore, the record indicates that the appellant's position is properly classified as Head Grounds Worker as he is performing first-level supervisory duties as he only signs PARs for non-supervisory employees and does not currently sign any first-level supervisor's PAR.

Concerning any argument that the appellant is making by indicating that he performs certain duties, which are in the examples of work for Superintendent of Institutional Grounds, the fact that some of an employee's assigned duties may compare favorably with some examples of work found in a given job specification is not determinative for classification purposes, since, by nature, examples of work are utilized for illustrative purposes only. Moreover, it is not uncommon for an employee to perform some duties which are above or below the level of work which is ordinarily performed. For purposes of determining the appropriate level within a given class, and for overall job specification purposes, the definition portion of the job specification is appropriately utilized. Additionally, the fact the appellant oversees snow and ice removal operations which includes employees from other departments does not signify that the appellant is performing second-level supervisory duties as the appellant is not signing the PARs for these employees.

### ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE  
THE 5<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER, 2023

*Allison Chris Myers*

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Chair/Chief Executive Officer  
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