



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Chandrasekhar
Botcha, Administrative Analyst 4,
Information Systems (PS3769P) and
(PS1172P), Department of Law and
Public Safety

CSC Docket Nos. 2025-719 and
2026-2401

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

Examination Appeals and
Request for Stay

ISSUED: August 12, 2026 (KMG)

Chandrasekhar Botcha appeals the administration of the promotional examinations for Administrative Analyst 4, Information Systems (PS3769P and PS1172P), appeals his score on the PS3769P examination, and requests a stay of the PS1172P eligible list. These appeals have been consolidated due to the common issues presented by the appellant.

PS3769P Examination Appeal

The PS3769P examination was administered at this agency's Station Plaza location via the Supervisor Test Battery (STB) on September 25, 2024.¹ The STB uses multiple-choice test questions that are presented to candidates on a computer via a web platform concerning issues, tasks and situations associated with their role as a supervisor in a fictitious organization. Candidates were required to achieve a raw score of at least 51.2 in order to pass the examination with a percentage average score of 70. The appellant attained a raw score of 50.4 on the examination and did not achieve a passing score. The PS3769P eligible list promulgated on October 10, 2024, and expires on October 9, 2026.

In his appeal, dated September 26, 2024, and postmarked September 27, 2024, the appellant requested review of his test paper and asserted that technical

¹ The appellant was initially scheduled to take the PS3769P examination on September 17, 2024. However, he requested a make-up examination, which was administered on September 25, 2024.

difficulties may have affected his score. He further asserted that a search engine page opened unexpectedly in another browser tab and he expressed concern that the sensitivity of the computer mouse could have caused unintended changes to his selected answers. The appellant did not indicate that he filed an appeal with the Center Supervisor or monitor, or otherwise raised the aforementioned issues at the testing site on the September 25, 2024, examination date.

In response to the appellant's appeal, Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs (DARA) staff advised the appellant by letter, dated February 4, 2025, that his score of 50.4 had been confirmed as correct upon review. DARA's letter stated that, to the extent his submission challenged the manner in which the examination was administered, that challenge was untimely, as he did not file a written objection at the examination site on the day of the examination, but instead filed a written appeal on September 27, 2024.

The appellant subsequently requested that the matter be reopened for a determination by the Civil Service Commission (Commission). In his request to reopen his appeal regarding the PS3769P examination, he claims that immediately after completing his examination, he "reported the challenges [he] faced to the testing center representative" who informed him that he could either report the issue immediately or call this agency on the following day. He states that he chose the latter option and called this agency on September 26, 2024, before formally submitting an appeal on September 27, 2024. Furthermore, he requests that his name be added to the PS3769P list based on an evaluation of his education and experience, rather than his STB score, because of the circumstances he presents, and because he maintains that the Commission had previously waived the STB examination requirement during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is noted that a review of the monitor's notes and the Center Supervisor's Report on the Conduct of the Examination from Station Plaza on September 25, 2024, does not indicate that the appellant reported any issues with the administration of the examination on that date.

PS1172P Examination Appeal

The appellant's PS1172P examination was administered at Middlesex College on April 23, 2026,² utilizing the STB. Candidates were required to achieve a raw score of at least 51.2 in order to pass the examination with a percentage average score of 70. The appellant achieved a raw score of 50.4 on the examination and did not achieve a passing score. The PS1172P eligible list promulgated on June 18, 2026, and expires on June 17, 2028. One certification (PS261144) was issued on June 22, 2026, containing the names of six eligibles, and is still outstanding.

² The appellant's correspondence variously references April 23 and April 26, 2026; agency records reflect that the subject examination was administered on April 23, 2026.

On the date of the examination, after completing the STB, the appellant advised the monitor assigned to his testing room and the Center Supervisor that the web browser the STB was administered through was not locked down and that it was possible to access a search engine with an artificial intelligence feature. The appellant also filed an appeal of the examination administration at the test site.

It is noted that a review of the monitor's notes and the Center Supervisor's Report on the Conduct of the Examination from April 23, 2026, indicates that the appellant requested that the examination be invalidated because of the aforementioned issue and that the appellant demonstrated the ability to access the search feature on a separate computer using an unrelated, non-test, webpage and stated that he had observed other candidates using the feature during the examination. The Center Supervisor's and monitors reports do not indicate that any other candidate was observed accessing anything other than the examination on the computers in the appellant's examination room.

In response to the issues raised by the appellant at the test site and his subsequent appeal, the Division of Test Development, Analytics, and Administration (TDAA) reviewed the conduct of the subject examination administration. TDAA advises that monitors regularly walked around each testing room on the examination date to ensure that candidates did not utilize any unapproved resources during the administration of the STB and that the monitors did not observe any improper computer usage by any other candidates at the testing center. The Center Supervisor further advises that the appellant was seated towards the front of the examination room and that it would have been difficult for him to see any computer to the side of him based upon where he was seated. TDAA further presents that it regularly reviews examination security protocols and revises security protocols based upon the feedback it receives from candidates, monitors and Center Supervisors, and that it has taken appropriate action to further enhance the security of STB examination administration.

Request for Stay

The appellant requests a stay of the PS1172P eligible list based upon the issues presented in his appeals regarding both the PS3769P and PS1172P examinations. He further requests that the Commission order that all candidates for the PS1172P be rated based upon a rating of their education and experience as of the closing date, order a retest on a "secure platform," or "grant [him] a passing score" on the PS1172P examination and place his name on the eligible list to "remedy the prejudice caused by this administrative error."

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-6.3 provides, in pertinent part, that in examination items, scoring, and administration appeals, the appeal shall include the specific objection being appealed and that the appellant shall have the burden of proof. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-6.3(b) provides that the appellant has the burden of proof in examination appeals.

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-6.4(c) provides that an examination candidate wishing to challenge the manner in which the examination was administered must file an appeal in writing at the examination site on the day of the examination.

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-6.4(e) states that in order to maintain the security of the examination process, the Chairperson or designee may, on a particular examination, modify or eliminate the review of examination questions and answers. Candidates shall be notified of any such restrictions at the time that the examination is administered.

N.J.A.C. 4A:2-1.2(b) provides that a request for a stay or interim relief shall be in writing, signed by the petitioner and must include supporting information for the request.

Pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-1.2(c), the standards to be considered regarding a petition for a stay are:

1. Clear likelihood of success on the merits by the petitioner;
2. Danger of immediate or irreparable harm if the request is not granted;
3. Absence of substantial injury to other parties if the request is granted; and
4. The public interest.

PS3769P Examination Appeal

Initially, regarding the appellant's request to review his answer sheet from the PS3769P examination, the review of test questions and keyed answers will not be permitted due to security concerns. In this regard, examination review procedures are governed by the provisions of *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-6.4(e). However, the Commission notes that a review of agency records confirms that the appellant's raw score of 50.4 on the PS3769P examination was accurate.

In terms of the appellant's challenge regarding the administration of the PS3769P examination, as noted above, *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-6.4(c) requires a candidate wishing to challenge the manner in which an examination was administered to file an appeal in writing at the examination site on the day of the examination. In *In the Matter of Kimberlee L. Abate, et al.*, Docket No. A-4760-01T3 (App. Div. August 18,

2003), the court noted that the obvious intent of this same-day appeal process is to immediately identify, address, and remedy any deficiencies in the manner in which the competitive examination is being administered.

The record reflects that the appellant did not file a written objection to the manner of the PS3769P examination administration at the test site on September 25, 2024. Rather, he presents that he called this agency the following day, and filed a written appeal³ dated September 26, 2024, and postmarked September 27, 2024. As such, the appellant's challenge to the administration of the examination is untimely and does not provide a basis to grant his requested relief concerning the PS3769P examination or eligible list.

Furthermore, regarding the appellant's request to be placed PS3769P list based on an evaluation of his education and experience, rather than his STB score. The STB has been extensively reviewed by supervisors and managers from various occupations and agencies. They have served as subject matter experts to determine that the test content accurately represents competencies that are required in supervisory positions. The STB tests some of the major competency areas Problem Solving, Leadership, Decision Making, Interpersonal Skill, Communication, Team Building, and Conflict Management. The STB is a work simulation. Candidates are asked to assume the role of a supervisor in a fictitious organization. Further, no special knowledge regarding the work of this fictitious organization is required in advance. The purpose of the STB is to test a candidate's competencies in areas associated with supervisory positions. Thus, the STB is the *sole* selection instrument administered for primary or secondary level supervisory titles unless it is determined that candidates for the examination have not been tested or evaluated sufficiently in prior positions for other important worker characteristics not measured by this examination. While it is unfortunate that the appellant did not achieve a passing score, his other experience *cannot* be used to substitute for not passing the STB or as a factor to modify the passing score for the examination. *See In the Matter of Karen Callahan* (CSC, decided August 16, 2017).

PS1172P Examination Appeal

With the PS1172P examination, the record reflects that the appellant timely raised his objection to the examination administration in writing at the test site on the day of the examination, in accordance with *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-6.4(c). Accordingly, this matter is properly considered on its merits, and the appellant bears the burden of proof. *See N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-6.3(b). Critically, no report from examination staff corroborates the appellant's statement that other candidates were observed using the feature during the examination; on the contrary, the assigned monitor did not report observing any candidate access any resource other than the examination. Further,

³ It is noted that the appellant's PS3769P appeal did not allege that any other STB candidates improperly utilized the alleged search engine access capability.

the Center Supervisor has presented that because the appellant was seated towards the front of the examination room it would have been difficult for him to see any of the other candidates' computer screens. The appellant's assertion that the potential availability of an unauthorized aid invalidates the examination regardless of proof of use is untenable, as the appellant's burden is to demonstrate an actual irregularity that affected the administration of the examination or the validity of his score, not the theoretical availability of an unauthorized aid. As such, the appellant has not met his burden of proof, and there is no basis to disturb the results of the subject examination.

To the extent the appellant requests that the Commission substitute an evaluation of his education and experience for the examination, order a retest, or grant him a passing score, those requests are denied. All candidates for the subject title were required to demonstrate their qualifications, using the same competitive examination administered under the same conditions, the knowledge, skills, and abilities identified by a job analysis for the duties of the title, and their results were uniformly applied to the resulting eligible list. The appellant's education and experience, while relevant to his eligibility to compete, cannot substitute for that competitive demonstration or be used to modify his score. Moreover, once a candidate has been exposed to the test, it would be unfair to the other eligible candidates to permit that candidate to retest or otherwise adjust his score. *See In the Matter of Bria Bost, et al.* (CSC, decided November 5, 2025).

Additionally, the Commission emphasizes that while it has found that the appellant has not sustained his burden of proof in this matter, it recognizes the critical need to ensure the integrity of the examinations administered by this agency. With this in mind, it appreciates that TDAA has indicated that it has taken concrete steps to ensure the continuing security of the STB based upon the issues raised in the appellant's appeals and that TDAA is continuously reviewing security protocols based upon the feedback it collects from candidates, monitors, and Center Supervisors with each examination administration.

Request for Stay

Finally, because the Commission has denied the appellant's appeals in this matter, his request for a stay of the PS1172P eligible list is moot, as pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 4A:2-1.2(c)*, he cannot demonstrate a likelihood of success on the merits.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that the appellant's examination appeals be denied and that his request for a stay of the PS1172P eligible list be dismissed as moot.

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

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 12TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2026



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