

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMPETENCY REVIEW PANEL

INTO THE TEACHING PRACTICES OF

MR. JAMES WOZNOW

NOVEMBER 30, 1990

I N D E X

A.	JURISDICTION.....	1
B.	EMPLOYMENT HISTORY.....	4
C.	EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT OF "UNSKILLED OR INCOMPETENT".....	6
D.	ISSUES CONSIDERED.....	6
1.	Did Mr. Woznow Encourage And Foster Learning In Students?.....	7
2.	Did Mr. Woznow Maintain, Under The Direction Of The Principal, Order And Discipline Among The Students While In His Classroom?.....	11
3.	Was Mr. Woznow Given An Opportunity To Improve His Skills As A Teacher?.....	18
E.	CONCLUSION.....	19
F.	RECOMMENDATION.....	21

A. JURISDICTION

Pursuant to s. 5 and 6 of the Department of Education Act R.S.A. 1980, c. D-17 the Minister of Education passed the Practice Review of Teachers Regulations 153/87, as amended; concerning the certificates of teachers and procedures relating to the cancellation and suspension of teaching certificates. Pursuant to s. 7(5)(b) of the Regulation, a Competency Review Panel was empowered to review the teaching practices of Mr. James Woznow.

By letter dated May 2, 1988 to Mr. Woznow from [REDACTED] [REDACTED], Associate Superintendent of the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (the "Board"), Mr. Woznow was notified of a meeting of the Conference Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Board to consider the termination of his employment contract. The specific reasons for his termination were stated as follows:

- "(1) Failure to establish a learning environment which instills confidence in students;
- (2) Failure to organize effectively;
- (3) Failure to prepare and plan effectively;

- (4) Failure to develop appropriate instructional strategies;
- (5) Failure to provide accommodation for learner differences;
- (6) Failure to maintain effective classroom management."

Following the termination of Mr. Woznow's employment contract notification was sent to [REDACTED], Registrar of Alberta Education, by letter from [REDACTED] dated August 25, 1988 in accordance with the provisions of s. 5(2) of the Practice Review of Teachers Regulations.

Mr. James Woznow was given notification of the Competency Review Panel hearing on Monday, September 10, 1990 on being served, by personal service, with the Notice of Hearing and particulars of the complaint against him. The panel heard from 6 witnesses being [REDACTED], Registrar of Alberta Education; [REDACTED], presently an Education Consultant with the [REDACTED] Regional Office of Alberta Education; [REDACTED], currently principal with [REDACTED] School and formerly a consultant with the [REDACTED] Public School Board; [REDACTED], currently Vice-Principal of [REDACTED] School, previously the

principal of [REDACTED] School during a time when Mr. Woznow was teaching at that school; [REDACTED], principal of [REDACTED] School and [REDACTED], Associate Superintendent with the [REDACTED] Public School Board.

Mr. James Woznow was not in attendance at the opening of the hearing but did appear while counsel for the Registrar was in the middle of presenting [REDACTED] case. Mr. Woznow asked to interrupt the proceedings in order that he could make some brief submissions. Mr. Woznow was asked to wait until the Registrar's presentation had been made in full and all Registrar's witnesses had been heard. Mr. Woznow then left the hearing room and did not return. Mr. Woznow did leave three reference letters for consideration by the panel which the Registrar's counsel objected to being introduced into evidence. After hearing argument from the Registrar's counsel and following consideration by the panel the letters were entered into evidence in these proceedings.

Oral evidence was received and documents entered as Exhibits during the proceedings of the panel on October 10th and the morning of October 11, 1990. The panel re-convened on November 7, 1990 for the purpose of hearing evidence of [REDACTED], an Associate Superintendent with the [REDACTED] Public School Board. Following the testimony of [REDACTED] the hearing was concluded on November 7, 1990.

This written decision sets out the findings made by the Competency Review Panel, the reasons for those findings and the recommendation of the panel.

B. [REDACTED]

Mr. James Woznow began teaching with the [REDACTED] Separate School Board. He taught [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] until 1969 when he began working with the [REDACTED] Public School Board at [REDACTED] School. Mr. Woznow then began a career of teaching mathematics and worked for approximately one-half year when he apparently resigned from that position. He taught [REDACTED] in various schools operated by the [REDACTED] Public School Board for the next 18 years.

In the 1970-71 school year he worked at the [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Composite Schools. In 1971-72 he worked at [REDACTED] School where he was declared surplus and was employed later in that year at [REDACTED] School. From 1972 to 1977 he worked at [REDACTED] High School where he was declared surplus. In 1977 Mr. Woznow went to work at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] High School where he remained until June of 1986 when he volunteered to be declared surplus. [REDACTED], who gave evidence before the Panel, became principal of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in 1982. In September of 1986 Mr. Woznow had a 4

month temporary assignment at [REDACTED] High School under the Principalship of [REDACTED]. While at [REDACTED] Mr. Woznow requested re-assignment to a High School setting or, alternatively, an Elementary School. From January of 1987 to the end of March, Mr. Woznow worked as an Internant Supply Teacher and in April he began work as an instructor in the Institutional Services program providing individualized tutoring in [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Commencing in September of 1987 Mr. Woznow was again assigned to [REDACTED] Junior High School where he worked until the end of January, 1988. On February 1, 1988 Mr. Woznow returned to [REDACTED] High School where he taught until April 5, 1988 when he was given a leave of absence with pay. On June 9, 1988 his contract with the [REDACTED] Public School Board was terminated. Mr. Woznow appealed his termination to a Board of Reference but following a Board of Reference hearing, the termination of his contract was upheld by a decision rendered on February 24, 1989.

Following the termination of his contact with the [REDACTED] Public Board, Mr. Woznow worked as a substitute teacher with the [REDACTED] Catholic Board for 13.5 days from September 1, 1989 to December 31, 1989 and for 2.0 days in the spring of 1990. He also worked for 1.5 days in the fall

of 1989 for the [REDACTED] School Board. Mr. Woznow also produced three reference letters to the panel indicating that he had taught as a substitute teacher at [REDACTED] Junior/Senior High School in [REDACTED]; the [REDACTED] School in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] High School in [REDACTED], Alberta.

C. EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT OF "UNSKILLED OR INCOMPETENT"

The Panel considered, at some length, the wording of s. 13 of the Regulation with regard to the concept of a teacher being "unskilled or incompetent". The Panel is of the view that competency involves the acquisition and application of knowledge, skills and judgment. This depends directly on the desire or will of the person to acquire and then apply knowledge and the person's ability to do so. A teacher may have teaching skills, may be knowledgeable in the subject area and may have been taught the necessary principles of classroom management, but if the teacher does not have the desire or will to utilize those concepts or does not have the ability to use them then this Panel would conclude that the teacher was not competent to teach.

D. ISSUES CONSIDERED

In evaluating the evidence before it the panel identified three questions to be considered, as follows:

1. Did Mr. Woznow encourage and foster learning in students? (reference s. 13(d) School Act)
2. Did Mr. Woznow maintain, under the direction of the principal, order and discipline among the students while in his classroom? (reference s. 13(f) School Act)
3. Was Mr. Woznow given an opportunity to improve his skills as a teacher?

Those three issues will now be examined in detail.

1. Did Mr. Woznow Encourage And Foster Learning In Students?

Being successful at teaching requires an ability to establish a learning environment which instills confidence in students. Such an environment includes having friendly mannerisms, respect for the individual rights of the students, keeping a clean and orderly work place, creating an atmosphere of understanding and caring and opportunities through which students can achieve success. A positive learning environment also includes aspects of sound planning and preparation, organizational skills, instructional strategies, accommodation of individual learner differences and effective classroom management. Evidence was presented

to the panel which clearly indicated that Mr. Woznow was unable to develop an environment conducive to student success and confidence in a number of different teaching placements. Information received and reviewed by the panel suggests that these problems were apparent long before Mr. Woznow's dismissal from the [REDACTED] Public School Board in 1988. There was brief reference made to the fact that Mr. Woznow had difficulty relating with students as early as 1972. Mr. Woznow was teaching a [REDACTED] but requests were made that he be transferred out of that program because of his lack of success and problems in getting along with both students and parents. While at [REDACTED] School from 1972 to 1977 Mr. Woznow again had difficulty getting along with students and a number of requests arose from students wishing to be taken out of his class. In 1982 Mr. Woznow was made aware that students felt intimidated by his abrupt teaching style but Mr. Woznow appeared to be unable to relate to his students in any effective way so as to encourage learning. As these events took place over a considerable period of time ago little significance was given to them by the panel but these instances were indicative of a pattern of difficulties that became much more pronounced in the year or two prior to the termination of his contract with the [REDACTED] School Board.

In 1986, Mr. Woznow was assigned to [REDACTED] School for a 4 month term and problems became apparent almost immediately upon his arrival. [REDACTED], the principal of [REDACTED] School, stated that students were concerned and unhappy with Mr. Woznow's teaching style and weak explanation of math concepts. Explanations were given hastily and without regard for the students' ability to keep pace. The hasty delivery would continue even when students persisted in asking for further explanation or for explanations to be repeated.

Classroom noise levels were found by [REDACTED] to be unacceptable and likely distractive to most students. Students wishing to work would not be able to do so efficiently. Mr. Woznow had a practice of calling upon one student and aggressively questioning that student to the exclusion of all others. While questioning one student in that way the rest of the class would not be paying attention and several would participate in disruptive behavior such as loud talking and boisterous behavior such as throwing paper balls at one another.

Mr. Woznow was described as being a "power teacher". His rules and guidelines about [REDACTED] concepts were to be followed without variation. Students who would not follow his methods risked not receiving marks even though they may have been able to demonstrate an understanding of the concept

and complete the questions satisfactorily. From September of 1987 to January of 1988 at [REDACTED] School, Mr. Woznow was teaching in several different classrooms. Teachers using the rooms after Mr. Woznow consistently complained of paper litter, desks in disarray, food on the floor and names or obscenities scratched in the furniture. [REDACTED], the principal of [REDACTED] School described Mr. Woznow's management style as occasionally involving politeness although generally reverting to an authoritarian manner. Classroom control was described as minimal. Even while consultants and other observers were in the classroom Mr. Woznow appeared to be unable to manage the class in an orderly fashion. Attendance in Mr. Woznow's class was unacceptably low, students arriving late to class were not challenged for their late behavior and [REDACTED] said that students would miss Mr. Woznow's classes more frequently than other teachers' classes. Students were described as being in a state of exasperation. There were numerous requests from junior high students at [REDACTED] to be placed in other classes. The reasons given by students included unfair treatment, belittling, comments that Mr. Woznow could not teach, that students could not learn from him, as well as a feeling that extra tutorial help was really of no additional benefit because of unsatisfactory initial class presentation.

There seems to be no doubt that significant and manifest problems existed. These were clearly identified by [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Each took steps to make help and assistance available. In 1986, [REDACTED] was involved in having [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] Consulting Services work with Mr. Woznow to provide help with management techniques. Some short term gains occurred but no long-term improvements were noted. [REDACTED] reported that almost half of [REDACTED] time as principal was spent working with and helping Mr. Woznow in the fall of 1987. Another assistance program was established with [REDACTED] as the consultant. Assistance was offered on at least 12 occasions from October 13 to November 26, 1987. By agreement between Mr. Woznow and [REDACTED] these sessions concluded as of November 26, 1987. Mr. Woznow returned to [REDACTED] School in the spring of 1988 and received 5 further sessions of counselling and advice from education consultants. Unfortunately, positive modifications to Mr. Woznow's behavior were minimal or non-existent. In conclusion, this panel finds that Mr. Woznow failed to encourage and foster learning in students under his supervision.

2. Did Mr. Woznow Maintain, Under The Direction Of The Principal, Order And Discipline Among The Students While In His Classroom?

One of the duties of a teacher as outlined in s. 13 of the School Act, is to "maintain, under the direction of the principal, order and discipline among students while they are in the school or on the school grounds and while they are attending or participating in activities sponsored or approved by the board;"

Evidence introduced before this Panel showed that as early as September of 1985 order and discipline was a problem in Mr. Woznow's classrooms. On September 19, 1985 Mr. Woznow received a letter from [REDACTED], Vice Principal at [REDACTED], concerning a student complaint. The student had met with Mr. Woznow after class and had attempted to explain [REDACTED] unsatisfactory behaviour in class but was told by Mr. Woznow to "shut up fat head". In a subsequent letter on September 23, 1985, [REDACTED] further identified student relations and classroom management as areas needing attention.

In September of 1986 Mr. Woznow began teaching at [REDACTED] Junior High as a temporary placement. [REDACTED], then Principal of [REDACTED] School, testified that problems began to show up within the first three weeks of his arrival. A noisy, littered classroom with a significant amount of damage to property in the form of graffiti and

carved up desks were clear indicators of a problem with classroom management.

Further to this, in a letter dated November 3, 1986, [REDACTED] describes Mr. Woznow's dealings with students as aggressive and intimidating. [REDACTED] further indicated to Mr. Woznow that his "power" approach to teaching was not working and that [REDACTED], would meet with him to explore other alternatives. During the months of November and December of 1986 Mr. Woznow was given special assistance by [REDACTED], an instructional consultant. This assistance covered a range of concerns, one of which was classroom management. In a further letter of December 16, 1986, [REDACTED] notes that adverse relationships with students and classroom management still continued to be problems. [REDACTED] further notes that [REDACTED] would recommend to the Supervisor of Instructional Processes that Mr. Woznow receive continued assistance in developing "winning strategies" in his next assignment.

After a brief assignment with institutional services, Mr. Woznow returned to [REDACTED] High School in September of 1987. In a letter of September 2, 1987, [REDACTED] refers to the difficulties outlined in [REDACTED] letter of December 6, 1986 and indicates that [REDACTED] would be actively seeking assistance for Mr. Woznow.

Assistance was provided in the form of visits and coaching by [REDACTED] also an instruction consultant. There were at least three visits made during Mr. Woznow's stay at [REDACTED] (October 13, November 12 and November 23, 1987).

However, in a letter of November 20, 1987, [REDACTED] commented on the poor condition of the room and noted that [REDACTED], Vice Principal, was also available to offer assistance. Apparently, Mr. Woznow did not avail himself of that opportunity. In a further letter of December 8, 1987, [REDACTED] concluded that Mr. Woznow was not achieving the goals for classroom management which had been established. On January 22, 1988, [REDACTED] noted in an evaluation of Mr. Woznow's performance that Mr. Woznow's classroom was unruly and that he was guilty of manhandling a student. [REDACTED] again indicated that Mr. Woznow needed to develop appropriate management skills.

A comment regarding the charge of manhandling a student is necessary. According to testimony given to the Competency Review Panel by [REDACTED], a student came to the office after the end of classes in the fall of 1987 very distraught over the fact that a fight was taking place in Mr. Woznow's room. [REDACTED] went to investigate and found that Mr. Woznow had

kept the entire class in after school because of the misbehavior of a few students. [REDACTED] learned that after a few minutes of the detention, a [REDACTED] student tried to leave and was stopped by Mr. Woznow. In the process, the young [REDACTED] ended up sprawled over a desk. Information received by [REDACTED] indicated that Mr. Woznow had pushed the young [REDACTED] back to [REDACTED] desk and attempted to force [REDACTED] to sit down. In the transcript of his testimony before the Board of Reference, Mr. Woznow admitted to taking the young [REDACTED] by the arm and escorting [REDACTED] back to [REDACTED] desk. The [REDACTED] student's mother withdrew [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from the school shortly after this incident.

In February of 1988 Mr. Woznow returned to [REDACTED] where assistance from [REDACTED] continued. These visits terminated in March when both Mr. Woznow and [REDACTED] concluded that nothing was being accomplished. In [REDACTED] testimony, [REDACTED] noted that at first Mr. Woznow tried and experienced a measure of success. The successes, however, lasted for only a short period of time. Mr. Woznow, in testimony before the Board of Reference, stated that while the techniques shown to him did work, he reverted to what was "inside" when pressure increased.

Difficulties surfaced early after his return to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. A fellow teacher wrote Mr. Woznow a letter on

February 18, 1988 obviously upset over the fact that Mr. Woznow was allowing students open access to student files, thereby compromising the confidentiality of information. On February 24, 1988, [REDACTED] observed that Mr. Woznow often times confronted students, which resulted in power struggles. A further comment by [REDACTED] was that, in [REDACTED] opinion, students did not feel that they were working in an emotionally safe environment in that they felt that Mr. Woznow was emotionally unstable.

In notes of March 1, 1988 [REDACTED], Vice Principal, noted the following in a regular classroom visit:

- Mr. Woznow does not treat students like adults. The tone is quite elementary;
- inappropriate behaviour went unobserved;
- students finished their work or stopped working 2 or 3 minutes before the period was over and stood by the door despite the teacher's wishes and instruction to the contrary.

[REDACTED] stated that classroom management and conflict resolution were unacceptable. After hearing that Mr. Woznow was reading student marks out loud while returning papers, [REDACTED] visited a class on March 7, 1988 and actually observed this practice. Students were obviously upset.

Two reports were written by [REDACTED]: one on March 2, 1988 and the second on March 21, 1988. Comments on the first include such statements as:

- classroom management skills are inadequate;
- judgment is inappropriate when dealing with discipline situations;
- constant debate arises between the teacher and students;
- there seems to be no differentiation between minor and major offenses, and
- the teacher often seems unaware of inappropriate behavior and often times misinterprets classroom activity among students.

The final report of March 21, 1988 notes that the most common form of discipline used by Mr. Woznow was exclusion of the student from class. Further, students were not asked to follow basic classroom expectations and no follow-up existed with students leaving the class to go to another area in the school. In summary, problems developed due to a clear lack of understanding of student needs and abilities by Mr. Woznow.

It would appear that Mr. Woznow had significant problems with classroom management. The evidence show that assistance

was offered as early as 1985 and certainly was provided from the fall of 1986 until March of 1988. Yet reports written during this period indicate a continuation of a serious problem - poor management skills.

Based on overwhelming evidence, this Panel concludes that Mr. Woznow was not able or willing to maintain order and discipline among students as required by s. 13(f) of the School Act.

3. Was Mr. Woznow Given An Opportunity To Improve His Skills As A Teacher?

The Panel was concerned to ensure that Mr. Woznow's teaching certificate was not going to be placed in jeopardy without having been satisfied that he had been given every reasonable opportunity to improve his skills as a teacher. Mr. Woznow was employed with the [REDACTED] Public Board for some 18 years and the length of service was clearly an important factor to be considered by the Panel.

In the discussion of the first and second issues there are detailed references to the attempts made by [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and others with respect to their efforts to provide Mr. Woznow with opportunities to improve his skills while continuing in this employment with [REDACTED] Board. To briefly reiterate, some of

the efforts were made as early as 1986 when [REDACTED] arranged to have [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] Consulting Services work with Mr. Woznow to provide help with management techniques. In addition, [REDACTED] testified that almost half of [REDACTED] time as Principal was spent in working with and helping Mr. Woznow in the fall of 1987. Assistance with [REDACTED] a very experienced education consultant was provided to Mr. Woznow on at least twelve occasions from October 13th to November 26, 1987. By agreement between Mr. Woznow and [REDACTED] these sessions stopped as both parties agreed that nothing was being accomplished. Mr. Woznow received five further sessions of counselling and advice from education consultants during the spring of 1988 following his return to [REDACTED]. Many other instances and examples were given in both [REDACTED] School and [REDACTED] School of efforts to provide assistance to Mr. Woznow but he was either unwilling or unable to put these recommendations into practice.

Mr. Woznow apparently saw himself as a high school [REDACTED] teacher. It was clear that his experience at [REDACTED] School, though for a short period of four months, was not a satisfactory experience for him, the students in his classes and the Principal, [REDACTED]. The Panel recognizes that any junior high school placement can be significant departure from a high school placement and that

classroom management and discipline issues can become paramount in these settings. However, Mr. Woznow was having difficulty at [REDACTED] School as early as 1986. Even though he sought to return to [REDACTED], and did so on February 1, 1988, problems with classroom management and providing a proper learning environment continued to be significant for Mr. Woznow. A number of potential placement alternatives were available to Mr. Woznow although he wanted to go to [REDACTED] and saw himself as successful in that setting.

Unfortunately, [REDACTED], the Principal of [REDACTED], and many consultants and others brought in to provide assistance did not share Mr. Woznow's view. In addition, the students in Mr. Woznow's classes experienced severe difficulties with his teaching and classroom management style. Many very good students who did not have problems in other classes had serious problems with Mr. Woznow's teaching methods and sought to be removed from his classes.

E. CONCLUSION

It is the opinion of this Panel that Mr. James Woznow exhibits an inability to teach and provide competent instruction to students. This panel also finds that Mr. Woznow failed to encourage and foster a learning environment for students. It is the further opinion of this Panel that

Mr. James Woznow exhibits a lack of knowledge of instructional strategies and methods and that he shows a marked lack of judgment in his teaching.

The Panel also finds that in spite of considerable intervention by a number of consultants and administrators that Mr. Woznow was unable or unwilling to change his teaching methods and unable or unwilling to maintain order and discipline among students in his classroom. Therefore, this Panel concludes that Mr. Woznow is incompetent to continue teaching in the Province of Alberta.

F. RECOMMENDATION

It is the recommendation of this Panel that the Minister of Education cancel the teaching certificate of Mr. James Woznow in accordance with the provisions of s. 14(1)(f) of the Practice Review of Teachers Regulation.

Edmonton, Alberta
November 30, 1990

PANEL



70507