

Response to Questions on the FY 2013 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Foust

Question: How much was spent in FY 2011, is projected to be spent in FY 2012 and is included in the FY 2013 Advertised for School Health Aide substitutes?

Response: The Health Department's cost for running the School Health Aide Substitute pool has been consistent for several years. In FY 2011, actual expenses were \$376,157 and approximately \$380,000 is projected for FY 2012. The reduction proposed for FY 2013 would reduce available funding for the School Health Aide Substitute pool by \$143,470. In recent years, position vacancy management, reduced position turnover, and personnel savings in the overall School Health and other Health Department cost centers have mitigated previous reductions in funding for the School Health Aide substitute pool. That flexibility, however, cannot reliably be predicted and/or expected to continue.

The cost of managing the School Health Aide Substitute pool is driven primarily by existing vacancies among the merit School Health Aide positions. For FY 2011, the position vacancy rate for merit School Health Aides was 16.4 percent. For FY 2012, it is currently 12.4 percent. The average School Health Aide vacancy spans a period of 49 school days (or 2.6 months) during which coverage needs to be drawn from the School Health Aide Substitute pool. Further, while vacant positions create the greatest demand for substitute School Health Aides, illness, annual leave, and Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitlements also increase demand for the pool of substitute School Health Aides.

It should be noted that, even with the substitute pool as currently staffed in FY 2012, there are still occasions when no substitute School Health Aide is available to cover all merit School Health Aide absences. Updated consultation with the Health Department also indicates potentially increased need for the School Health Substitute pool in the upcoming school year due not only to increased student enrollment, but also due to pending legislation at the State level related to trained staff needing to be available at all times to administer epinephrine injections in the event of severe allergic reactions while students are in-school. Staff believes that instead of the elimination of 10 substitute positions as included in the FY 2013 Advertised Budget Plan, eliminating 5 positions at a cost of \$71,735 would leave the School Health Program with adequate resources to meet most staffing requirements.