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December, 2011
GREETINGS

From the Dean

For over seventy years, leadership in public child welfare has been a hallmark of the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work. Beginning in 1938, the School of Social Work has been at the forefront of specialized education and training devoted toward the development of child welfare professionals. The accomplishments of our continued efforts to strengthen the public child welfare workforce through professional education are highlighted in this Annual Report of the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) and the Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) programs. This report completes the work of the tenth year of the CWEB program and the sixteenth year of the CWEL program. The work described here illustrates the ongoing commitment of the Department of Public Welfare and the University to vulnerable children, youth, families and communities. Pennsylvania remains a national leader in child welfare education, training and practice improvement.

The School of Social Work remains committed to best practices in child welfare through education, training and research. Strong partnerships and a shared vision are the foundation of our success. I want to thank the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators for their ongoing support. As children, families and communities face new challenges and a changing economic and political landscape, our work together remains a critical element in promoting safety, permanency and well-being. I look forward to continuing our partnership in public child welfare workforce development.

Larry E. Davis, Ph.D.
Donald M. Henderson Professor
Dean, School of Social Work

From the Principal Investigator

We are proud of the achievements of the CWEB and CWEL programs and for the contributions we continue to make to the public child welfare system in Pennsylvania. Seven hundred and forty-eight (748) CWEB students have entered into the county agency system and nine hundred and sixty (960) students have graduated from the CWEL program. All have work commitments in the counties. Eighteen (18) recent CWEB graduates are awaiting positions. At the same time, approximately 217 CWEB and CWEL participants are currently engaged in social work studies. We have established an educational ladder within child welfare and continue to see an increasing number of eligible CWEB graduates entering the CWEL program after fulfilling their initial agency work commitment. We have seen our graduates emerge as leaders and have witnessed their positive impact upon child welfare practice.

The contributions of many others are what guide, sustain and shape our programs. We salute our students with sincere admiration for their energy, vision, and productivity. We acknowledge the sacrifices made in their own lives and within their own families in order to support the children and families who are served through the child welfare system. The long-term benefits of their commitment to Pennsylvania’s children, families and communities, and their impact upon the child welfare system through practice, advocacy and leadership, will be realized for many years to come.

Helen Cahalane, Ph.D., ACSW, LCSW
Principal Investigator
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CHILD WELFARE EDUCATION FOR BACCALAUREATES
AND
CHILD WELFARE EDUCATION FOR LEADERSHIP

MISSION AND GOALS

OUR MISSION

The Child Welfare Education and Research continuum includes two degree education programs, Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) and Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL). Administered by the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth and Families, and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, the mission of these programs is to strengthen child welfare services to Title IV-E eligible children and families in Pennsylvania by increasing the number of educated professionals and equipping them to deal with the increasingly complex demands of public child welfare practice.

OUR GOALS

- Addressing the vacancy and turnover rates among public child welfare employees and the recruitment and retention problems in Pennsylvania;
- Recruiting undergraduate students throughout widely dispersed locations in order to prepare persons for public child welfare employment;
- Assisting in the retention of public child welfare staff already serving Title IV-E eligible children and families by making graduate education with a focus on child welfare studies more readily available;
- Providing academic and curricular support for child welfare studies to university programs;
- Providing a career ladder within public child welfare and assisting in the long-term career development of child welfare professionals;
- Engaging in efforts to promote the development of evidenced-based practice skills for child welfare professionals;
- Conducting research and evaluation focused on evidence-based child welfare practice and the impact of social work education;
- Advocating for practice improvement within the child welfare system through education, ongoing training, transfer of learning, technical assistance, organizational development, and support provided by competent, committed, and confident child welfare professionals.
Introduction

Recruitment and retention of public child welfare personnel has been recognized as a problem not only in Pennsylvania, but nationwide for more than two decades. National studies have concluded that “insufficient training” is one of the major factors contributing to the difficulties in retaining child welfare personnel. Research findings document that professional education is one of the factors that can reduce turnover, improve services, and reduce costs.

This report marks the completion of the tenth full academic year of operation for the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates program (CWEB) and sixteen (16) full academic years of operation for the Child Welfare Education for Leadership program (CWEL) in Pennsylvania. Both have become remarkably integrated into the fabric of public child welfare throughout the state, with approximately 97% of the counties in the Commonwealth participating in CWEB and CWEL. To date, twenty-eight percent of all the caseworkers, managers, supervisors and administrators of the county agencies in the state have been enrolled in CWEL. There are many other factors to be included when addressing morale, recruitment and retention problems, but CWEB and CWEL have demonstrated their effectiveness in addressing the significant issue of preparatory and advanced education for the child welfare workforce.

The need for both the baccalaureate and graduate-level child welfare education programs and their basic designs are included in Pennsylvania’s federally approved Title IV-B plan. Federal financial participation is based upon federal Title IV-E regulations contained in 45 CFR, Ch. II, Part 235 and Ch. XIII, Parts 1355 and 1356.

Background

Child welfare has been an important component of education for social work practice at the University of Pittsburgh since 1938. While it has been addressed in a number of curricular formats, the preparation of professionals to serve society’s most vulnerable children and their families has always been of central importance. The following timeline provides an historical overview of key events in child welfare education and training at the University.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>School of Social Work introduced a master’s level curriculum focused on child safety and well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Children and Youth Concentration is introduced at the master’s level and becomes a curriculum model adopted by other schools of social work across the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Three-year grant received from the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect to establish the Interdisciplinary Child Abuse and Neglect training program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Five-year competency-based, interdisciplinary training grant received from the United States Children’s Bureau to advance the Title IV-B interdisciplinary agenda of building a child welfare curriculum, enhancing school/agency partnerships, and providing training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Faculty members from Child Development and Child Care, Nursing, Medicine, Law, Psychology, Public Health, and Social Work participate as a team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Title IV-E pilot projects initiated with several Western PA counties to assist in developing a Title IV-E training model to address child welfare workforce issues and shape the School’s curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>The Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) program is established to provide long-term educational opportunities for public child welfare employees in PA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Funding received from the United States Children’s Bureau for a two-year project designed to demonstrate the efficacy of developing a state-wide opportunity for potential child welfare employees (“persons preparing for employment” in the federal Title IV-E regulations).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2001 | • The Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) program initiated to provide child welfare education and training to persons preparing for a child welfare career.  
• School of Social Work assumed leadership and administrative responsibility for Pennsylvania’s Child Welfare Training Program providing pre-service and in-service training to all public child welfare employees and many private agencies. |
| 2003 | Pennsylvania’s child welfare training and education model acknowledged as being “…the most comprehensive, integrated and sophisticated program seen to date” by the Administration for Children and Families. |
| 2004 | Pennsylvania’s child welfare and education and training programs described as an outstanding model for other states to emulate by the Administration for Children and Families. |
| 2005 | Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program receives the National Staff Development and Training Association Quality Award. |
| 2008 | • School of Social Work received its 110th grant of external funding since 1971 expressly for child welfare education training, research, faculty development and curriculum development.  
• CWEB, CWEL and the PA Child Welfare Training Program (CWTP) highlighted as one of Pennsylvania’s key strengths during the second round of the CFSR. |
Program Descriptions

Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates Program

Designed to recruit and prepare students for a career in the public child welfare field, the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) Program is offered to undergraduates at fourteen (14) schools throughout Pennsylvania. Undergraduate students who are official social work majors in any of the fourteen approved, participating undergraduate schools are eligible to apply for the CWEB program. Figure 1 below illustrates the program requirements.

Figure 1.

Application Requirements
Applicants must:
- Be a junior or above, in good academic standing, enrolled at an approved university
- Have a satisfactory grade point average
- Submit academic transcript(s)
- Have the recommendation of the social work faculty of the program in which they are enrolled
- Provide a written statement regarding interest in public child welfare
- Not be in default of any outstanding federal or state educational loan
- Sign a legally binding agreement which requires a work commitment following completion or termination of their studies

Requirements as a Student
Students must:
- Complete child welfare course work
- Enroll in Charting the Course
- Complete an internship at a public child welfare agency

Requirements as a Graduate
Graduates must:
- Gain and maintain, for one year, employment at a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency

Qualified students can receive substantial financial support during their senior year in return for a commitment to work in one of Pennsylvania’s county public child welfare agencies following graduation. Students must satisfactorily complete child welfare course work and an
internship at a public child welfare agency. During the course of the internship, most students are able to complete some of the competency-based training required for all public child welfare caseworkers. Upon graduation, students also receive assistance with their employment search.

Over 760 students have graduated from CWEB during the program’s first ten years. CWEB graduates have completed internships and have been employed in 82 percent of Pennsylvania counties. Once in the field, they are able to draw on a solid background of agency experience as well as required training and educational preparation. County child welfare agencies benefit immensely from the program because it addresses a critical child welfare workforce need.

**Figure 2. Admissions to CWEB by Gender**

![Admissions to CWEB: Gender](image)

The majority of CWEB students are full-time, with only three part-time students in the program’s history thus far.

**Child Welfare Education for Leadership Program**

The Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) Program provides substantial financial support for graduate-level social work education for current employees of public child welfare agencies. Caseworkers, supervisors, managers or administrators of any Pennsylvania county children and youth agency are eligible to apply to participate in the CWEL program. (See Figure 4 for all program requirements.) All persons enrolled meet these criteria as
determined by their CWEL applications, résumés, agency approvals, notifications of admission from one of the approved schools, and signed agreements.

**Figure 3. Admissions to CWEL by Status and Gender**

![Admissions to CWEL: Status & Gender](image)

CWEL has funded students from 62 counties and twelve Pennsylvania schools of social work on both a full- and part-time basis. Twenty-eight percent of all caseworkers, supervisors, managers, and administrators of Pennsylvania’s county child welfare agencies have enrolled in CWEL to date. Additionally, CWEL serves as an educational and career ladder for public child welfare employees. Overall, approximately 15 percent of CWEB graduates have entered the CWEL program thus far. The active CWEL student enrollment during the 2010-2011 program year consisted of nearly 20% CWEB alumni.

CWEL reimburses salary and benefits for full-time CWEL students and covers tuition, fees, and other expenses for both full- and part-time students in return for a commitment to the employing county child welfare agency upon graduation. During the first 16 years of the program 960 child welfare professionals have earned graduate social work degrees. These individuals occupy various positions, ranging from caseworker to administrator. The program
has a remarkably successful record of retention, with retention rates averaging 92 percent.

**Figure 4.**

*Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare and CWEB/CWEL Enrollment*

It is well known that children of color are overrepresented in the United States child welfare system\(^1\). In 2009, for example, African American children made up 15% of the U.S. child population but represented 30% of the foster care population\(^2\). Disproportionate representation is striking across all levels of child welfare service and is particularly evident in substitute care. Pennsylvania is the sixth most populated state in the country, with a total population of 12.7 million people. According to a recently issued (2011) report by Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, there are more than 27,000 Pennsylvania children living in foster care. Forty-six percent of these children are African American, yet African American children comprise only 11% of the state’s child population. Caucasian children make up 80% of the state’s child population and comprise approximately 52% of Pennsylvania’s foster care

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\(^2\) Administration for Children and Families, 2010.
population. Within the CWEB and CWEL programs combined, African Americans represent 19% of participants. While the causes and solutions for the disproportionate representation of children of color in the child welfare system are complex, we believe that it is crucial that the workforce be reflective of the populations served. Figure 5 below illustrates the demographic characteristics of the Pennsylvania child population and those of CWEB/CWEL participants.

**Figure 5. Demographics of PA Child Population and CWEB/CWEL Participants**

![Bar chart showing demographic characteristics]

**Administration**

The CWEB and CWEL programs have been administered by the School of Social Work at the University of Pittsburgh since their inception in 2001 and 1995, respectively. [Refer to Part III-A of the Project Description and Implementation.] In addition to providing undergraduate and graduate level social work degree programs on both a full-time and part-time basis, the School of Social Work provides academic and curriculum support for the other thirteen (13) undergraduate universities and eleven (11) graduate schools eligible to participate in the CWEB and CWEL programs. The total number of participating school programs is sixteen (16),

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with four schools at the undergraduate level only, ten university programs enrolling both undergraduate and graduate students, and two programs at the graduate level only.

The CWEB and CWEL faculty conduct annual site visits with each university program, including branch campus locations, and maintain ongoing contact to discuss academic programs, issues, and progress. The legal agreement for each student contains a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) waiver which permits the sharing of academic information. The CWEB and CWEL faculty and staff have hundreds of contacts with faculty and students from the other fifteen schools throughout the year.

Fiscal administration includes reimbursement to county employers of full-time graduate students for salaries and benefits; reimbursement to students for books, payment of tuition and fees at all approved educational institutions and, where appropriate, travel expenditures and stipends. These payments are advanced by the University as they become due. The University, in turn, invoices the Commonwealth and is reimbursed from a combination of state and federal funds.

A series of formal agreements provides the mechanism for the operation of the programs. These include the Intergovernmental Agreement between the Department of Public Welfare and the University of Pittsburgh; a series of agreements between the University and each of the other fifteen (15) approved institutions of higher education; and, agreements between CWEB students with the University or among CWEL students, their respective county employer and the University. These agreements provide for the students’ enrollment arrangements, reimbursement for allowable expenses, and the required post-education work commitments. Also provided for are the CWEL employers’ responsibilities to maintain benefits and grant educational leave to full-time students. Reimbursement to employers for CWEL student salaries and benefits is also included.

To accomplish all of these tasks, approximately nine (9) full-time equivalent faculty and staff have been engaged. All program faculty teach regular credit courses, provide academic advising to students, and oversee student internships. In addition, the CWEB and CWEL faculty
are responsible for assisting in program evaluation. The faculty and staff listing is contained in Appendix M.

**Academic Program Approval and Curriculum**

All of the schools participating in the CWEB and CWEL programs are fully accredited by both the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSACS) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The sixteen (16) approved schools and their accreditation dates are listed in Appendix A, Table I. A graphic representation showing the location of the participating schools is included in Appendix B.

All approved undergraduate schools are required to offer at least one (1) child welfare course and internships in county child welfare agencies. Approved graduate programs are required to offer at least two (2) graduate-level child welfare courses and child welfare internships. The continuing availability of these courses and internships is verified by the CWEB and CWEL Academic Coordinators who consult regularly with the approved schools regarding field assignments, specific courses, student registrations, and student progress.

The graduate level offerings of the University of Pittsburgh and their enrollments are listed in Appendix C, Table II. The 2010-2011 course offerings of the fourteen undergraduate schools participating in CWEB and the other eleven graduate school programs participating in CWEL are shown in Appendix D, Table III (CWEB) and in Appendix E, Table IV (CWEL). These course listings above do not include internships, for which a minimum of four hundred (400) clock hours is required at the baccalaureate level and nine hundred (900) at the master level.

At the undergraduate level (CWEB), the range of field or internship hours is from 400 to 600 with a mean of 475. However, the CWEB students are encouraged to participate in the Pennsylvania State Civil Service County Social Casework Intern program in conjunction with their school and the county agency in which they are completing their placements. This option requires 975 hours of internship. The advantage to the student and the agency of this option is that upon completion of the official County Social Casework Intern program and graduation, the
student is eligible to begin work immediately in the agency, typically as a Caseworker II, without the requirement of a Civil Service examination. Of the forty-two (42) CWEB students who graduated during the 2010-2011 academic year, twenty-three (23), or 55% exercised the State Civil Service Social Casework Intern option.

At the graduate level, nearly all placements exceed the 900 hour minimum with the average being over one thousand (1000) hours. At the University of Pittsburgh, there are three hundred and sixty (360) hours of internship for first year students, in addition to a fifteen week field seminar. Second year students are required to complete seven hundred twenty (720) hours, resulting in a grand total of 1080 internship hours. Comparable hours are required at the other eleven graduate school programs.

CWEB county participation is included in Appendix F. CWEL county participation is included in Appendix H.

**Commitment and Recoupment of Funds**

All students enrolled in the CWEB and CWEL programs must repay the educational benefits they have received. This is accomplished in one of two ways. For CWEB graduates, the repayment by service is one calendar year of service for one academic year of support. For CWEL graduates, the length of this service is an amount of time equal to the length of their educational leave for full-time CWEL students and equal to the proportion of the full-time length of the degree program they have completed as part-time students. Students who received support for only a portion of their program have a *pro rata* work commitment proportional to the support they received. During the period of this report, eighty (80) CWEL students completed their degree programs and were graduated. This brought the total number of CWEL graduates to nine hundred and sixty (960) as of summer, 2011. All graduates returned to their counties of origin following graduation.

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4 45 CFR, Ch. II, §235.63 (b) (5)
5 45 CFR, Ch. II, §235.63 (b) (1)
The full amount of the cash paid to the student or on the student’s behalf must be reimbursed whenever a CWEB or CWEL graduate fails to complete his or her commitment. This provision is contained in the agreement each student signs either with the University (as in the case of CWEB students) or with the University and the county of their employment (as in the case of CWEL students). During the tenth program year, nine (9) CWEB students withdrew or were terminated from the program after receiving financial benefits, some after beginning their period of commitment payback. Our experience with the program over this ten-year period shows that those who withdraw discover early that child welfare was not what they had anticipated and not what they want to pursue as a professional career. We believe that this important discovery is to be anticipated in a certain number of instances among undergraduate students and is better learned before great time, training, and costs have been expended. A graphic summary of the CWEB departures and their status appears on the following page.

In sixteen years of program operation, it is notable that approximately six percent of the students admitted to the CWEL program have resigned or been terminated from the program. These departures are for various reasons, represent widely distributed counties, and include most schools. These situations, together with the actions being taken, are summarized below. The employment (retention) of all students exiting the program will continue to be monitored as required in Section III, G, 13 of the Project Description and Implementation, and by PL 103-432 which was enacted by the United States Congress during the first CWEL program year and which applies to graduates funded after October 1, 1995.

Retention has two aspects in the CWEB and CWEL programs. The first is the retention of students just noted. In this group, the loss rate of 12% among the undergraduates and 6% among the graduate students is most reasonable considering the large number of academic, work and personal factors that can affect the decision to withdraw. Table 1 shows these program departures and the status of recoupment proceedings.
Table 1. Student Departures from Programs and Recoupment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School</th>
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<th>CWEB</th>
<th>CWEL</th>
<th>Employment</th>
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<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Chester University</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widener University</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>158</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second aspect is the retention of graduates after they have completed their work commitment. Since the beginning of the CWEB program through the summer of 2011, seven hundred and forty-eight (748) students accepted employment after graduation. Of those who have most recently satisfied their legal work commitment, seventy-three percent (73%) remain in the agencies. Overall a great many have exceeded their commitment by over two years. Increased familiarity with the program, more focused selection criteria and stronger case management has contributed to improved outcomes.

For the CWEL program, only thirteen (13) individuals out of a total of 960 graduates have not completed their employment commitment after graduation. The percent of graduates who have resigned for all reasons over the life of the program averages 7.5% per year. This figure includes death, retirement, total and permanent disability, transfer of spouse’s employment out of state, and other routine changes of employment. In some instances, CWEL graduates have been offered retirement incentives to reduce county payrolls, essentially resulting in the departure of some of the counties’ most experienced and best-educated professional staff.

Despite the loss of some senior level staff, it is doubtful if there is any other program designed to retain highly skilled employees that has such a strong record. Nevertheless, there are real reasons behind each of the post-commitment departures. We describe these in our previous annual reports, have presented them to the state-wide Recruitment and Retention Committee, at meetings of the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators Association, at national professional meetings and include additional information about them later in this report. Fortunately, most of the root causes of turnover can actually be remedied, though some are more difficult to address than others. We are committed to working with county agencies to focus on solutions that go beyond the scope of the CWEB and CWEL educational programs.
Deliverables

Extensive efforts to inform all interested parties about the CWEB and CWEL programs are ongoing. The entry of seven hundred and forty-eight (748) CWEB students into the agency system and the return of nine hundred and sixty (960) CWEL graduates to a total of sixty-five (65) counties have been very helpful in continuing to make the value of the program visible. Current and former students are a valuable source of recruitment, as are county agency directors and school faculty members. The volume of inquiries and applications, and involvement of nearly all of the counties in the state of Pennsylvania suggest that information about the program is reaching those eligible to participate as students or employers. To further facilitate inquiries and calls for assistance, a toll-free line was installed. The number, 1 (866) ASK - CWEL, [1 (866) 275-2935], has been well received and has had steady use. The CWEB and CWEL websites have been updated to include “Frequently Asked Questions” in order to clarify program information and address common concerns. Additionally, our websites include student pictures and personal comments from participants. This first-hand information is helpful to prospective students and illustrates the interpersonal connection both programs develop with participants.

The following efforts and products were delivered by the University during 2010-2011 in accordance with the approved Project Description and Implementation plan:

- The 2009-2010 Annual Report was provided to all county administrators, DPW officials, CWEB and CWEL academic partners and other interested state and federal officials
- CWEB and CWEL program and application materials were posted on the CWERP website for all counties, participating schools and interested parties
- Dr. Cahalane attended the summer and fall meetings of the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators
- Drs. Bradley-King and Cahalane and Professor Donohue continued to serve on the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators’ Recruitment and Retention Committee
- Dr. Cahalane continued collaboration with the Pennsylvania Youth and Family Institute (PYFI) and continued to serve on the Leadership Council of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC). These ongoing partnerships are important in strengthening the child welfare workforce through cross-systems collaboration and advocacy.
• Dr. Cahalane and Dr. Rauktis participated in the 14th Annual National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium, which included child welfare practitioners and program evaluators from across the country.

• Dr. Cahalane participated in the Child Welfare IV-E Partnership Meeting at the 56th Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education, which includes representatives from IV-E programs across the country as well as federal officials.

• Dr. Winter participated in the National IV-E Roundtable addressing management and outcomes for IV-E educational partnerships.

• Dr. Bradley-King participated in the 28th Annual Meeting of the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors, which includes representatives from undergraduate IV-E programs across the country.

• Program evaluation instruments were mailed to all participating counties, schools, current students, and a sample of graduates from both CWEB and CWEL as part of the annual program evaluation, the results of which are described later in this report.

• Faculty visits were held with each participating school program beginning in the fall of 2010 and continuing through the spring of 2011. These visits are summarized in Table 2 below and include meetings with prospective students, current students, academic faculty, and academic program administrators. Focus groups were held with CWEL students regarding professional development for public child welfare workers, the details of which are described in the Evaluation section of this report.

• In addition to the specific activities noted above, hundreds of telephone and e-mail inquiries were handled from potential students, agency administrators, county commissioners, other states, and other colleges and universities.

Campus Meetings

There was excellent attendance and participation of the CWEB and CWEL constituencies at all of the campus sites. Students discussed and asked questions related to many aspects of child welfare education and practice as well as the CWEL and CWEB programs. Wide ranging discussions of policy issues, academic concerns, administrative procedures, and other matters were frank, constructive and overwhelmingly positive. As in previous years, undergraduates discussed their beginning exposure to child welfare by sharing experiences of their county
agency field practica. More experienced, graduate-level participants were helpful to program
new-comers and were able to encourage and support first year students. Students at several
campuses who were nearing the end of their degree programs gave presentations which
demonstrated the integration of their studies and their child welfare practice. Once again, two
main groupings emerged during CWEL student meetings, namely full and part time students
whose experiences were quite different in a number of ways.

Table 2. Campus Meetings with CWEB and CWEL Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Program</th>
<th>Date of Visit</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bloomsburg University</td>
<td>2/10/11</td>
<td>CWEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryn Mawr College</td>
<td>10/26/10</td>
<td>CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California University</td>
<td>1/26/11</td>
<td>CWEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California University</td>
<td>5/4/11</td>
<td>CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutztown University</td>
<td>2/8/11</td>
<td>CWEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lock Haven University</td>
<td>9/23/10</td>
<td>CWEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield University</td>
<td>9/23/10</td>
<td>CWEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marywood University, Central PA Program</td>
<td>10/29/10</td>
<td>CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marywood University, Lehigh Valley Program</td>
<td>10/25/10</td>
<td>CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marywood University, Reading Program</td>
<td>10/28/10</td>
<td>CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marywood University, Scranton campus</td>
<td>10/30/10</td>
<td>CWEB &amp; CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millersville University</td>
<td>2/9/11</td>
<td>CWEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shippensburg University</td>
<td>11/10/10</td>
<td>CWEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slippery Rock University</td>
<td>9/16/10</td>
<td>CWEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple University, Philadelphia</td>
<td>10/4/10</td>
<td>CWEB &amp; CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple University, Harrisburg</td>
<td>04/26/11</td>
<td>CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>10/6/10</td>
<td>CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Chester University</td>
<td>10/27/10</td>
<td>CWEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widener University, Chester</td>
<td>10/27/10</td>
<td>CWEB &amp; CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widener University, Harrisburg</td>
<td>04/25/11</td>
<td>CWEL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation**

**Introduction**

The CWEL and CWEB programs have several critical stakeholder groups: schools
participating in the educational programs, current students and those who have recently
graduated, and the county agencies that employ them or provide field placements. Because these
are such important constituents they are surveyed annually; their responses provide valuable information about the usefulness and quality of the curriculum and field work, as well as what areas offer opportunities for improvement. These constituents also provide us with information about the value that CWEL and CWEB students bring to their schools and child welfare organizations. In addition, we ask those who have graduated and been working for at least a year about the climate of their work environment. This information helps us to better understand what aspects of organizational climate are associated with positive outcomes such as commitment to the field, job satisfaction, and personal achievement. This year we also included a survival analysis of graduates of the CWEL and CWEB program in order to better understand the retention of the graduates in their child welfare organizations. Another addition to the report is information obtained from seven focus groups conducted with current students as part of the annual school visits. All of this information is shared with CWEL and CWEB stakeholders including agency administrators, school faculty, and CWERP faculty and staff to inform and help improve the quality of the services, curriculum and working environment.

What follows are the findings from the 2010-2011 evaluation. The first two sections summarize the results from current students and recent graduates of the CWEL and CWEB programs. The third section summarizes what long-term program graduates say about the climate of the child welfare agencies in which they work, and includes the survival analysis retention study. The final section highlights the findings from the faculty of the schools and agency administrators who have employees currently participating in or have graduated from the CWEB or CWEL programs.

All of the surveys are web-enabled, with the exception of the long term graduate survey which is a self-administered paper survey. Throughout the year emails, letters, and instructions are sent to to current students, recent graduates, and CWEL/CWEB schools and counties with
instructions on how to access their surveys located on a secure server. A standard follow-up protocol is in place in order to obtain at minimum a 50% response rate for each group of respondents. Response rates are reported in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Return Rates by Survey Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Group</th>
<th>Response Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Students</td>
<td>91% CWEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88% CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent Graduates</td>
<td>46% CWEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81% CWEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term Graduates</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWEL/CWEB Schools</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Students

Survey procedures and methods

An email with a link to the survey was sent to all CWEB and CWEL students currently enrolled in the program. The CWEB students were sent notices in December 2010 and had until April 2011 to complete the survey, whereas the CWEL students were surveyed during the period of April to September 2011. One hundred and twenty three students responded although three surveys were not used due to a high percentage of missing information. The return rate for the CWEB students was 91% and was 88% for CWEL students. The survey asked the students to rate their experiences with (1) the CWERP program and processes (e.g. website, communication, student contract, faculty and staff helpfulness); (2) their relationship with the faculty and the University that they attend, and the quality of the courses they take; (3) the process of arranging and the value of their field/internship placement; (4) the agency/field interface; and (5) their beliefs about the value of their education to child welfare practice, and their commitment to the field. The statements are positively worded and the rating scale is from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with higher ratings suggesting a greater degree of satisfaction.
Most of the questions are common to both programs, such as “I received good supervision in my field or internship placement.” Some items were unique to the program and to the student’s status. For example, the full-time CWEL students are asked about their return to the agency in the summer, and the part-time students are asked questions about their ease in arranging time for field and classes. CWEB students were asked if their field site agency is familiar with the requirements of the CWEB program. If students were currently in their field placement, they were asked about the focus of their responsibilities and their agency type. Finally, because we are interested in the career paths of professional child welfare caseworkers, the current CWEL students were asked if they had been a CWEB student, and if they were still in the agency in which they had done their CWEB work commitment. Two open-ended questions were included about the positive aspects of the program and what areas could be improved. A new open-ended question was added this year about what qualities prospective CWEB/CWEL students should have in order to be successful in the program.

**Description of the survey respondents**

Seventy-nine of the 123 surveys were from CWEL students but three surveys were not used in the analysis due to missing information. Of the CWEL students who responded, 65% were part-time students and 35% were full-time. All of the 41 CWEB respondents were full time. Of the students currently in the CWEB program who responded to the survey, 82% were female; 68% were white, 23% were African-American, 3% were Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and 8% did not report their race. In addition, three individuals said that they were of Hispanic ethnicity. CWEL respondents were also primarily female (91%) and white (88%). A small percentage was African-American (11%) and two individuals reported to be of Hispanic ethnicity.

In terms of field placements for the CWEL students, 65% (n=51) of those surveyed responded that they were currently in a field placement, and of this group, 45% said that their
field placement had been in their agency. A little over half said that their field placement was in a public agency (55%) and the primary focus was direct client services. The client groups most worked with included abused and neglected children and their families (35%), the next largest group was “other” (16%), followed by working with parents with addictions (10%).

Approximately 46% of the student respondents were associated with a branch campus of their University, with most of these being students attending branch campuses of either Marywood University or Weidner University, although smaller numbers were attending branch campuses of Temple University and the University of Pittsburgh.

Almost 100% of the CWEB students were doing their field placement in a public agency, primarily working with abused and neglected children and doing direct practice. All of the CWEB students were attending classes at the Main campuses of their Universities.

*Is there a career ladder?*

As in past years, we ask the current CWEL students if they participated in the CWEB program. The proposed career ladder for a child welfare professional looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rung 3</th>
<th>Career Ladder for CWEB and CWEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Return to agency for commitment after graduating from CWEL and assume a supervisory or clinical mentoring position in agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Rung 2 | |
|--------| |
| Apply to CWEL program post commitment & while in agency and matriculate to full or part-time in CWEL |

| Rung 1 | |
|--------| |
| Matriculate and graduate from the CWEB program & employed for commitment period & beyond |

“CWEB afforded me the opportunity to have a child welfare internship—this helped me get hired at the place I am now. CWEL is now affording me the opportunity to further my education without the high cost.”
“I am a CWEB graduate from Kutztown University and am now attending the University of Pennsylvania for my MSW. Thanks to the CWEL program it allows for financial assistance to a school that I would not have been able to attend without the help from this program. CWEL has been amazing and given me an opportunity for social change to improve not only myself as a professional but my clients and co-workers around me each and every day. I love it and continue to advocate for caseworkers to take this opportunity for social change.”

Fifteen (19%) of the current CWEL students who responded said that they received their degrees through the CWEB program. All 15 (100%) remain at the agency in which they did their post-CWEB work commitment. We have observed this CWEB to CWEL progression pattern for the last four years and it suggests that Rungs 1 and 2 are in place, and that the career ladder supports agency retention. Moreover, agency directors have told us in prior evaluations how much their organizations benefit when these well-trained and seasoned caseworkers remain in their agencies while continuing their education. However, it is important that the agency and the worker carefully consider whether the worker should enroll in the CWEL program. For example, one student wrote: “…It is difficult to imagine being at my current employer for another three years putting together the rest of the time it will take me to achieve my master’s plus the time I have to give back. I have had difficulties in my agency since I started six years ago and I am very ready for a change but I feel I am stuck here until my contract is up.” Therefore, before continuing on the ladder, both the student and the agency should carefully consider whether further commitment to the agency is in both parties’ best interests.

How do the students perceive their program?

“… CWEB is GREAT for the state because it provides the child welfare system with QUALIFIED, EDUCATED, SKILLED WORKERS…”

“Without CWEL, I would probably not have decided to pursue a Master’s degree. The things that I have learned through my MSW studies have already helped me to become a better caseworker.”

CWEB and CWEL students highly value their professional education. Using a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 having the lowest value and 10 the most value, respondents were asked, “What is
the value of the CWEB or CWEL program to the public child welfare system?” The average score for the CWEB students was 8.27 (SD=1.46) and the average score for the CWEL students was 9.19 (SD=1.17.) Responses to this question, as well as each of the survey items (rated on the 1-5 scale) can be found in Table 1, Appendix J. This table displays the responses of the CWEB students, as well as both the full-time and part-time CWEL students. All three subgroups report being quite satisfied with the processes, the degree program, and the interface with the agencies; they also feel that their participation in the professional degree programs has helped them professionally and personally. Their aggregate responses are graphically displayed below.

Figure 7. Current Student Satisfaction with CWEB/CWEL Programs

In general, the CWEB students are less satisfied with the CWERP program processes than the CWEL students. The CWEB students are also less likely to use the handbook than the CWEL students (t=-3.11, p<.01), report lesser degrees of satisfaction with the responsiveness of faculty (t=-4.07, p<.01) and staff (t=-4.30, p<.01) and feel that faculty (t=-4.66, p<.01) and staff have
not helped with problems ($t=-5.00, p<.01$) (see Table 1 in Appendix J). However, these items had standard deviations greater than 1.0, suggesting some variation among student experiences. The CWEB students are younger than the CWEL students and this trend could be the result of younger students having an expectation of immediate attention to their requests or needs. The widespread use of texting and smart phones has changed how students communicate and what the expectations are for responsiveness. This finding suggests that the program may need to either manage the expectations of the students or find additional avenues for more “real-time” communication with them.

The CWEB students report lower levels of satisfaction with the process of arranging their field placements compared to the previous year: in the 2009-2010 survey the average was 4.33, compared to the 2010-2011 CWEB average of 3.95. The CWEL students reported similar levels of satisfaction to the previous year (CWEL FT=3.96; CWEL PT=3.77). There were no significant differences in this item between the CWEL and CWEB students or between the full-time and part-time CWEL students. Again, the experiences seemed to vary among students as suggested by the standard deviations. However, it does suggest that the CWEB experience in finding field placements may be more challenging as agencies experience additional budget shortfalls, or as school faculty positions are decreased and there are less faculty and/or staff positions devoted exclusively to field education. As in prior years, the part time CWEL students report that they are not easily able to arrange time away from work to complete their field placement requirements ($M=3.04, SD=1.46$). Unlike last year, however, no significant differences in the average score items were observed between the full-time and part-time CWEL students. One item “The CWEL program gave me an educational opportunity that I would not have had otherwise” was approaching significance, with the full-time students scoring higher than part-time students.
The qualitative information provided by the students through the survey and focus groups provides us with useful information about the agency, school and CWERP factors that assist students in their pursuit of a MSW or a BSW. Not surprisingly, the financial support is one of the most frequently cited supportive factors for both CWEB and CWEL students. As one CWEL student wrote: “I had done some work on an advanced degree a number of years ago and found it very difficult to juggle a home life, job and school. Being able to concentrate on school has been a wonderful opportunity…the fact that CWEL pays my salary, tuition and books has been a true blessing.” The CWEB students identify a supportive factor to be their field instructors and the support for learning the necessary skills in a child welfare agency: “My supervisor has helped me adapt to the environment and learn how to be a good social worker in practice.”

Support from their agency leadership as well as coworkers were identified as critical as illustrated by this comment from a CWEL student. In fact, she felt that the support was a parallel process by which she was able to support and empower the families that she works with:

“I feel that having the support from my home agency was a plus because my director is a product of CWEL and understands that social work practice has a place in child welfare. It was really important to have support from the top as well as support from coworkers who understand the importance of social work practice. Learning specific social work practices (ecological systems, interactional skills, strengths perspective, code of ethics) helps with how we work with clients; from engagement to empowerment to promoting self determination”

One agency factor that seems to be experienced as unsupportive is the caseload size and work-related policies for part-time students. When students were only allowed to take classes using vacation or holiday time, or when agencies count students as part of their “staff ratio” rather than as learners, this is perceived as not being supportive of their education. As one CWEL student wrote: “…this has nothing to do with CWEL, but I wish we had more support from our administration at my agency for CWEL students. They do not cut case loads and expect us to keep up with the expectations of student and caseworker life.”
During the focus group discussions held in the fall of 2010, the CWEL students were asked how they were different now in terms of how they see their role with families. The students talked of how being in school transformed them. They described their experience as “going deeper in understanding”, “looking for solutions not deficits”, “starting to see things differently” and also recognizing their own personal areas of vulnerability that may make them less effective and “feeling more self confidence” in the work. CWEL students also reported how they see their practices with families changing from one of authority to motivating and empowering families to change. One student said “now I can take what I do to the next level... do it well, not cause more trauma and grief and loss—use my skills help me to remain focused and stay positive.” The CWEB students were asked to reflect on what has changed them as a result of their experiences. The students reported that their field placements have been a transforming experience. Their field work takes them into jails, homes, rural and urban communities, court rooms and hospitals. One day they may be meeting with an incarcerated mother and the next, investigating a referral in an Amish community. As newly developing social workers, this diversity of experience has both challenged and changed them. They also feel that they have benefitted from the relationships that they have developed with their field supervisors. Finally, their experiences have strengthened their commitment to helping children and families.

“I have found my field placement very positive. I find my work as an Intake Caseworker fast-paced, challenging, rewarding and very educational. My supervisor has helped me adapt to the environment and learn how to be a good social worker in practice.” (CWEB current student)

“Being able to work in a county agency, the tuition payment and living stipends are very helpful....the Charting the Course classes are extremely valuable to the internship....they make skills easier to learn and understand, and make it related to the field.” (CWEB current student)
Recent CWEB and CWEL Graduates

Survey procedures and methods

An email with a link to the survey was sent to the CWEB and CWEL graduates in the late fall of 2010 and again in the spring of 2011. The return rate for the CWEB graduates was 43% and 84% for the CWEL graduates. The total number of usable surveys was 81: 9 were 2010 graduates and 72 were spring, 2011 graduates. Eighty percent \( (n=65) \) of the total number of respondents to the survey were CWEL graduates and 20% \( (n=16) \) were CWEB graduates. Additionally, 26% (17) of the CWEL graduates identified themselves as former graduates of the CWEB program, and, of those, 94% (16) were still working at their CWEB commitment agency at the time of graduation from the CWEL program.

Description of the survey respondents

The majority of the CWEL respondents were white (75%) and female (89%). Most CWEL respondents reported working in Caseworker II positions (62%) or Caseworker III positions (21%); others are supervisors (16%) or analysts (2%). Most CWEL graduates are working in units responsible for ongoing care (45%) or intake (23%). Smaller percentages are working in substitute care (12%), administration (5%) or other direct services (8%). The remaining respondents reported working in adoption (3%), independent living (3%) or non-clinical work (2%). CWEL respondents managing a caseload reported an average of 15 families or 34 children. However, there was a large standard deviation suggesting wide variation regarding the number of families and children on their caseloads. Figure 8 reflects the current job titles of those recent CWEL graduates who responded to the survey.
CWEB respondents were also primarily white (67%) and female (80%). The CWEB respondents were primarily employed as a Caseworker II (71%). Smaller percentages were employed as a Caseworker I (14%) or Supervisor (7%). One CWEB respondent reported being unemployed at the time the survey was completed. The majority of CWEB respondents were working in ongoing services (47%). The remainder were working in intake (27%), in substitute care (20%), or in independent living (7%). The CWEB graduates were working with smaller caseloads than CWEL graduates, reporting an average of six families and ten children on their caseloads. The difference between CWEB and CWEL graduates was statistically significant for number of children ($t=2.05, p=.049$) on their caseload. The standard deviations were also smaller than those seen with the CWEL graduates. This smaller range of cases suggests that agencies are using some measure of discretion in assigning caseloads to junior versus more senior
caseworkers. Figure 9 reflects the current job titles of those recent CWEB graduates who responded to the survey.

**Figure 9. Job Titles Among Recent CWEB Graduates**

![Figure 9: Job Titles Among Recent CWEB Graduates](image)

The survey includes questions about preparation, perceived skill levels, the opportunities to advance within their agencies and their commitment to their agency and the field of child welfare. The statements are positively worded and the rating scale is from 1 “Strongly Disagree” to 5 “Strongly Agree” with higher scores indicating a greater degree of agreement. The mean responses to each of the questions by CWEL and CWEB groups can be found in Table 2 in Appendix J. Few statistically significant differences were observed between the CWEL and CWEB students on these items; additionally, these differences should be interpreted with caution, as the two groups were of unequal size (65 CWEL graduates and 16 CWEB graduates). CWEL graduates reported having a better understanding of complex problems typical of the
families with whom they work than did CWEB graduates ($t=2.86, p=.006$) and felt more strongly that their education helped them to find new solutions to families’ problems ($t=2.77, p=.001$).

Additionally, CWEL graduates more strongly agreed with the statement, “My long term career plan is to work with children and families” than did CWEB graduates ($t=2.68, p=.003$). These findings reflect the higher levels of experience and commitment that one would expect to find in graduate versus undergraduate students.

A factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis) conducted for the 2009-2010 Annual Report indicates that there are four subscales captured by these items. These include: (1) agency utilization of the student’s education; (2) educational preparation of CWEB and CWEL; (3) career advancement; and (4) commitment to child welfare. Alpha subscales with this years’ data ranged from .74 to .90. Average subscale ratings for recent CWEB and CWEL graduates can be seen in Figure 10.

**Figure 10. Recent Graduates’ Perceptions: CWEB and CWEL**
Recent graduates of both programs feel that their agencies utilize their experience. Additionally, graduates of both programs feel that their respective programs have prepared them for working in the child welfare system. Ratings were slightly lower for CWEB graduates than for CWEL graduates on this subscale, but this is understandable and appropriate given the developmental stage of most CWEB graduates. Recent CWEB graduates are slightly more optimistic about their opportunities to advance in the field than CWEL graduates, and feel slightly more committed to the child welfare system. Ratings on the Opportunity to Advance subscale and the Commitment to Child Welfare Services subscale were lower for both groups this year than last year; this likely continues to be reflective of the current economic climate and the budget constraints in most county agencies.

Recent graduates were asked a number of open-ended questions. Question content included positive aspects of the CWEB/CWEL programs, things they would change about the programs, how the CWEB/CWEL program contributed to their professional development, and recommendations that they would give prospective CWEB/CWEL students. Responses to these open-ended questions are summarized below.

Please describe the aspects of the CWEB or the CWEL program that are particularly positive.

I felt more prepared than other social workers entering the working field. (CWEB graduate)

The positive part of the CWEB program was getting the actual experience of working in the child welfare profession. (CWEB graduate)

CWEL is a great opportunity for those interested in advancing in their careers in social work and receiving a solid experience with child welfare. CWEL staff and administration has always been very helpful. (CWEL graduate)

The program was well organized and a positive experience. The education received helped in work performance and in working with children and families. Communication was positive and there was someone always available to answer questions. Requirements were easy to follow. The flexibility of the program and the focus of the studies have helped me professionalize my practice. (CWEL graduate)
The CWEL program helped me to ensure that my workers and other staff are learning and utilizing the skills necessary for working with families. I am better equipped to teach and support staff as a result of my CWEL education. (CWEL graduate)

I had a very positive experience with the CWEL program. If the CWEL program were not available, I would not have been able to pursue my MSW, so it is particularly valuable to me. I also believe that it adds credibility and professionalism to my practice – with families, other service providers, the legal system, etc. Both CWEB and CWEL ensure that those working in the child welfare field are trained as social workers, which is beneficial to families as they navigate the overwhelming child welfare system. (CWEL graduate)

These responses illustrate how a professional child welfare educational program can help both novice and experienced child welfare workers. Although both CWEB and CWEL students value the financial assistance that these programs provide, they are also appreciative of other aspects of the program. Respondents generally valued the CWERP faculty and staff – their organization and responsiveness to student questions and needs. CWEB students appreciated getting experience in the child welfare field, and the support they received from both agency staff and CWERP faculty/staff. CWEL students appreciated the opportunity to connect and network with other child welfare professionals in their classes and valued the knowledge and skills they gained in the program.

Although many respondents answered “nothing” or “not applicable” when asked to describe aspects of the CWEB or CWEL program that they would like to change, others had a few suggestions. These included partnering with the State Civil Service Commission to coordinate the hiring process, clearer explanation of the process and expectations of the programs, the desire for higher pay and/or a shortened commitment period, and the opportunity to take classes outside of child welfare and/or the addition of on-line classes.

Respondents were asked specifically about what courses they felt would be helpful to them, but were not offered or available. These varied depending on school, campus, and program status (i.e., CWEB or CWEL), but some themes emerged. Students wanted courses on
addiction/substance abuse, trauma, cultural diversity, mental health, psychotropic medications, human sexuality, grief and loss, gerontology/geriatrics (particularly as it relates to working with grandparents who may be providing kinship care), and juvenile law. CWEB students, in particular, wanted more courses training them on child welfare in general; for example, “what to expect, how to work with non-compliant families” and “there should be more teaching on working with non-cooperative clients, engaging clients, developing plans for families. A course that is specifically child welfare…talking of what those in child welfare do, the demands, the limitations…discussion of legal aspects.” CWEL students also frequently wanted courses on providing quality supervision.

What aspects of the field or internship placement contributed the most to your professional development as a child welfare professional?

The aspects that contributed most to my professional development were going out to see families, attending various meetings, and court. (CWEB graduate)

My field work experience provided me with an opportunity to understand a part of a population that I had not worked with as a child welfare worker. It broadened my knowledge which I have tried to pass on to the child welfare workers that I supervise. Supervision with the agency administrator also provided me with an opportunity to see aspects of the agency administration that I had not seen before. (CWEL graduate)

Being able to work with a variety of case workers and being challenged to do things on my own and receive feedback and clarification after. (CWEB graduate)

It really showed me the importance of supervision and the learning that should take place there. (CWEL graduate)

Field placement was important for me because it allowed me to experience areas of child welfare in which I don’t normally practice. My field experiences made me more confident and competent in my practice, making me an overall better social worker. (CWEL graduate)

In general, CWEB graduates appreciated the hands-on learning opportunities that their internship placements provided them. This was often their first experience working in the child welfare field, and they appreciated being able to see and practice the skills and knowledge they were gaining in the classroom. They also valued the opportunity to shadow other caseworkers.
and the supervision that they received in their placements. CWEL graduates appreciated having
the opportunity to work in a different department or with a different population than they had
worked with in the past. They felt that this gave them new perspectives, allowed them to learn
and implement new skills, and often gave them a renewed energy and commitment to the field.

What advice would you give a CWEL or CWEB student who is beginning their program?

Make sure you know what has to be done and be willing to do whatever you can at your
internship to learn from others. (CWEB graduate)

Be an active participant in your field and supervision to get the most out of the experience.
(CWEL graduate)

To take advantage of the program to commit to child welfare and count yourself as a member of
a prestigious group of individuals who are afforded this fantastic opportunity. (CWEL graduate)

Do it as soon as they are eligible for the program, not wait like I did for 15+ years because the
learning curve would have been expedited. Consider the sacrifice that academics and the
program will require with normal routine, particularly family and current workload. Be
realistic, pace yourself, and build a support system to help you maintain. Draw from the
emotional support and creative energy of colleagues and fellow graduate students. (CWEL
graduate)

At times it may seem like you can’t possibly balance everything…but you can and the outcome is
worth every second of the hard work. (CWEL graduate)

As illustrated by the above comments, recent graduates encourage new enrollees to learn
as much as they can about the program and the child welfare field before committing. They want
new enrollees to understand that the program will be demanding, and will require persistence,
dedication, and hard work. However, graduates also want new CWEB and CWEL students to
cherish this opportunity, and to learn as much as they can from it. Recent graduates are, for the
most part, very grateful for the opportunity they were given and feel that it has made them better
social workers. They encourage new CWEB and CWEL students to actively participate in their
learning in order to gain as much as possible from this opportunity.
Long Term Graduates

What do the long-term CWEB and CWEL graduates say about the climate of child welfare agencies?

Research shows that organizational culture and climate are significant factors in explaining an employee’s intention to stay in or leave a workplace (Cahalane & Sites, 2008; Shim, 2010). Graduates of the CWEB and CWEL programs are a fitting group of individuals to use as a barometer for assessing the climate of child welfare agencies across Pennsylvania. The Children’s Services Survey (Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998) was sent to 106 individuals who had graduated from the CWEB program during the period of 7/1/09 to 6/30/10 and those who graduated from the CWEL program 12/1/09 to 8/31/10. Sixty-eight valid surveys were returned for a response rate of 64%. The Children’s Services Survey includes 121 items that measure work environment characteristics such as fairness, clarity of employees’ role in the organization, level of cooperation among co-workers, job satisfaction, feelings of personal accomplishment, and the extent to which employees see opportunities for advancement and growth within the agency. The respondents were asked to rate their work climate on these items using a 5-point Likert Scale from “Not at All” to “To a Great Extent.” The 121 items reflect 14 subscales of work climate (7 positive and 7 negative) such as “emotional exhaustion” and “cooperation.” For the purposes of this report, all of the items were re-coded so that higher scores indicate a more positive work climate. The characteristics of the respondents by CWEB and CWEL status are detailed in the next section followed by an overview of the graduates’ ratings of their organizational culture and climate. Finally, climate data from the last four years are shown, providing a long term look of agency climate across Pennsylvania over time.

Seventeen (25%) of those who responded to the survey were graduates of the CWEB program. Their average age was 26; the majority of the respondents were White (82%), while
12% were African American and the smallest percentage (6%) described themselves as being of “other” ethnicity. Nearly all respondents were female (88%). The majority (71%) of CWEB long term graduates who responded are still working at their commitment agency. On average, CWEB graduates had been working in their agency for less than one and a half years ($M=1.27$, $SD=0.60$). Just under half (47%) were working in urban areas; the remainder were working in rural (41%) or suburban (12%) areas. Respondent were located throughout Pennsylvania: 33% were in the Central region, 33% in the Northeastern region, 27% in the Southeastern region, and just 7% in the Western region.

In terms of their current positions, almost all (94%) CWEB graduates are currently employed at a county children and youth agency; CWEB graduates all reported working in direct services (e.g., intake, ongoing, substitute care, etc.). Figure 11 illustrates the current positions of the CWEB graduates including Caseworker I, Caseworker II, and “other”.

Figure 11. Current Job Titles: CWEB Long-term Graduates
The majority of those responding to the survey were CWEL graduates (51 or 75%).

Fittingly, they were a slightly older group, with an average age of thirty-five. They were predominately female (86%); the majority (88%) were White, 10% were African-American, and 2% endorsed other races/ethnicities. CWEL long-term graduates are experienced workers, with slightly more than half having nine or more years of service in child welfare ($M=8.53$ years, $SD=3.41$). Compared to CWEB graduates, more CWEL graduates report working in suburban (35%) areas than in rural areas (20%). A comparable percentage (45%) is working in urban areas. CWEL graduates also had a slightly different pattern of regional distribution, with 34% located in Central Pennsylvania, 26% in the Southeast, 23% in the Northeast and 17% in the Western region.

Figure 12 illustrates the current positions of the CWEL graduates, including the largest category of supervisor, as well as smaller percentages of “other”, specialists, and analysts.

**Figure 12. Current Job Titles: CWEL Long-term Graduates**
All CWEL graduates who responded to the survey still work at a CYF agency and almost all (96%) are involved in direct services (with the remaining 4% serving as administrators). A quarter (25.5%) report being promoted since they received their MSW degree. Table 4 shows the average ratings on key work environment items by type of graduate (as well as for the total sample). The scale ranges from one to five; all items have been re-scaled so that higher ratings indicate more positive work environments.

Table 4. Average Ratings of Organizational Climate Dimensions by CWEB and CWEL Long-term (1+ years) Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>CWEB (n=17)</th>
<th>CWEL (n=51)</th>
<th>Total (n=68)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive work qualities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace cooperativeness</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role clarity</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of personal accomplishment</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to organization</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for growth &amp; advancement</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative work qualities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalization</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routinization</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional exhaustion</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role overload</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role conflict</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both CWEB and CWEL graduates are predominately neutral about their work climate. The most positive climate scores are for personal accomplishment (\(M=3.56\)) and not feeling that they are “depersonalized” (\(M=3.82\)), meaning that these respondents do not feel hardened emotionally or find that they sometimes don’t care what happens to the children and families on their caseload. The graduates also report above average scores on workplace formalization.
(M=3.15), workplace cooperation (M=3.19), clarity of their role (M=3.36), commitment to the organization (M=3.31) and cooperation (M=3.37). Graduates report the least positively about opportunities for growth and advancement (M=2.39) and role overload (M=2.28).

Organizational climate ratings were compared according to respondents’ tenure in public child welfare (fewer than five years or more than five years). The results showed no difference on eleven of the fourteen subscales according to tenure. Longer tenured graduates rated the climate more poorly in terms of formalization (p<.05), indicating that they feel slightly more constricted by the rules and regulations of their workplace. Longer tenured graduates also rated the climate more poorly in terms of opportunities for growth and advancement (p=.01), suggesting that they feel more limited in these areas. Finally, longer tenured graduates rated the climate more poorly in terms of role clarity (p<.05) indicating that they are less clear than more recent graduates in the responsibilities and expectations associated with their positions. The lack of significant differences between longer- and shorter-tenured respondents on the majority of climate indicators illustrates that organizational climate is rated moderately (around 3 on a 5-point scale) regardless of whether one just began as a worker or has been at the agency for a longer period of time.

Finally, the climate scores for the past four reporting periods are displayed in Figures 13 and 14. It is important to note that the date in the chart reflects the reporting period rather than graduation year. Therefore “2008” reporting year is the graduate pool from 2007. Each year a new cohort is selected, and as a result, not all the same agencies are represented year to year.

What is most striking is the consistency of the climate as perceived by the graduates. With some minor differences, the score values and the patterns are quite similar even though there is a new sample of graduates (and also a different sample of agencies) for each year’s survey. This suggests that the organizational climate of child welfare agencies in Pennsylvania is
stable, and not influenced to a large degree by individuals, by the agencies or regions in which they work, or by the economy. Therefore interventions that target problem areas such as “role overload” and “opportunities for advancement” are likely to be effective regardless of agency or region. However, it is possible that that this particular measure does not capture the strengths of our child welfare agencies or that these are such stable organizations that change is slow and incremental and not easily detected by the instrument.

**Figure 13. Positive Work Climate Factors: 4 Years**

![Mean rating of positive work factors](chart)

- 2011 Total \(n=68\)
- 2010 Total \(n=87\)
- 2009 Total \(n=72\)
- 2008 Total \(n=76\)
In summary, CWEB and CWEL graduates work primarily in direct services in a variety of communities throughout the state of Pennsylvania. They report a relatively high level of personal accomplishment and feel a personal connection to their work. However, the work climate in child welfare agencies across the state has consistently been rated as moderate at best, and this has been stable over time (Cahalane & Sites, 2008). Areas of work climate strain have consistently been role overload - feeling that they can’t accomplish what they need to in a day - and lack of opportunities for promotion. In addition, graduates’ climate ratings did not improve when considering the amount of time that they have spent in the child welfare workforce. While still regarding public child welfare practice positively, seasoned workers rate the climate similar to less experienced workers, and in some cases, they feel that the climate is more challenging in some aspects (i.e., role clarity, opportunity for growth & advancement, and formalization).
Retention of Graduates in Child Welfare

One important question is whether the graduates stay or leave in the five years following their required commitment period. Five years is not a magic number, but we hypothesized that most social caseworkers will have become competent and qualified caseworkers by this period. Difficulties maintaining an experienced workforce are not unique to child welfare. Recruitment and retention of trained direct care workers have been investigated in the long term care industry (Rosen, Stiehl, Mittal & Leana, 2011), early care and education (Leana, Applebaum & Shevchuk, 2009) and primary and secondary public education (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). In this set of analyses we were trying to answer the question “For CWEB and CWEL graduates whose commitment period has ended and have had the potential for five years of post commitment practice, how many are still working in a public child welfare agency at the end of this period (“stayers”)? For those that left (“leavers”) in that five year period, how long did they stay before leaving public child welfare? If a graduate left their commitment agency and went to work for another county child welfare agency, they were considered a “stayer”. Survival analysis, typically used in medicine, nursing and public health is a helpful tool in studying the time to an event such as leaving child welfare, even when some have not achieved that “event” (i.e. leaving public child welfare). The administrative database maintained at the University of Pittsburgh was the source of data for this analysis; information is collected about a graduate’s employment in public child welfare during and after the commitment period.

Description of the Sample

The number of graduates used in this set of analyses was 127 CWEB graduates, 119 CWEL graduates and 2 CWEL graduates that had been former CWEB students (n=249). For the survival analyses, these 2 individuals were treated as CWEL graduates. This sample was
primarily female (87%). Since only CWEL students can be part time, a little over half 56% \((n=68)\) were full-time students and 44% \((n=53)\) were part-time students. As a total group (CWEB and CWEL), 39% \((n=98)\) fell into the “stayers” subgroup and 61% \((n=150)\) in the “leavers” subgroup. A little over half (51%) of the CWEL graduates were “stayers” compared to 28% of the CWEB graduates. The two CWEB to CWEL graduates were in the “stayers” category. Although women proportionately outnumber men in this sample, 41% of the women in the sample were “stayers” compared to 31% of the men.

**Graduation and Time to Leaving**

Output generated from survival analysis allows us several ways to visually examine time to leaving. The first is through a life table which shows the cumulative percentages of “leavers” in the five year period. Information from the life table is presented Table 5.

**Table 5. Percent Leaving by Time Intervals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>All Graduates ((n=246)) (%)</th>
<th>CWEB Graduates ((n=125)) (%)</th>
<th>CWEL Graduates ((n=118)) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-29</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-41</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-47</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-53</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54-59</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative percentage “leavers”</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(n=246\). **Note:** there were three cases where employment ended before commitment and these cases were not included in this analysis.  
**Note:** The 2 CWEB to CWEL graduates were considered to be CWEL graduates.
When the entire group is analyzed, about 40% are “stayers”; however, when this group is examined by type of graduate, CWEB graduates leave at a faster rate during the five year period and were more likely to be a “leaver” than a “stayer”. The findings in this chart are also graphically presented in Figure 15. What becomes apparent is the steeper rate of leaving for the CWEB graduates. While both groups of graduates have a steep drop right after the end of their commitment and a percentage leave, it takes almost 5 years for the proportion of CWEL leavers to hit close to 50%, whereas the CWEB graduates hit the 50% proportion at about 20 months, which was the median length of retention for the CWEB students.

Figure 15. Retention Post-Commitment
This analysis does not provide the answers for why a graduate will become a “leaver” rather than a “stayer” and why a greater proportion of CWEB graduates leave CYS. Some employee turnover is desirable and unpreventable (retirement or illness). This analysis did not control for retirees or termination due to illness or misconduct. It is also important to put these findings into a developmental context. CWEB students are younger, and younger workers are more likely to leave their jobs or change professions. Arnett (2000) describes this period as a time of “emerging adulthood” and it is characterized by frequent moves, changing partners and jobs. This survival curve for the CWEB graduates may be similar to other young bachelor degreed professionals in the “helping” professions (e.g. teachers, nurses). However, young caseworkers are also subject to a different kind of work culture, stressors and salary than teachers and nurses, so comparisons across these professions would be enlightening. As the pool of CWEB to CWEL graduates increases, their survival in CYS should be followed to see if having the professional career ladder increases retention beyond the median length of time estimated for CWEB graduates in this study. It may be that when young, early career caseworkers have a known career path, and are supported in this path through ongoing mentorship, they may be more likely to stay in a public child welfare agency. Closely associated with this is quality of supervision and attention to the primary and secondary trauma experienced by child welfare workers and organizations (Pryce, Shackelford & Pryce, 2007).

In order to contextualize these findings, we looked to information that we collected from recent graduates about their commitment to child welfare following their obligation period. For graduates who indicated a low level of commitment, we asked “What would convince you to stay in the field of public child welfare?” Responses often included the desire for higher salaries; additionally, respondents wanted smaller caseloads, more opportunity for advancement, better
supervision and administration, and more focus on practice instead of paperwork and deadlines.

Overall, respondents’ lack of commitment was less about the field of child welfare, and more about their experiences with the bureaucracies and lack of support and opportunities within their agencies. Many respondents talked about wanting to use the knowledge and skills that they gained in the programs, but not having the opportunity to do so. This frequently resulted in planning to leave to go and work for a private agency or other environment where they felt those skills would be valued and utilized. This was particularly true for CWEL graduates as illustrated by this response from a CWEL student as to what would convince her to stay following her commitment.

“Increased opportunity to use and share newly acquired CWEL/MSW skills. Increased opportunity for advancement. Increased level of influence on agency policy and protocol decisions. Increased systemic focus on evidence-based family preservation programs and services. Increased pay. Increased opportunity to train entry level workers. Increased opportunity for introducing culturally sensitive interventions for use in agency programs. Increased agency support to workers who are experiencing low morale, burn-out, and general disillusion with agency employment resulting from departmental and county level bureaucracy. Increased agency focus on employee retention.”

The steep increase in leaving immediately after the CWEB commitment period ends suggests that some may have decided that this is not the career for them. Screening and ensuring that potential CWEB applicants have a full understanding of what the work life of a caseworker entails, and being prepared for it seems to be important as evidenced by the qualitative findings reported in previous CWEB/CWEL annual reports (2009-2010) as well as prior research (Gomez, Travis, Ayers-Lopez, Schwab, 2010). We also asked the students currently in the CWEB program what we should be screening for in our CWEB applicants. The responses suggest that we should screen out individuals whose primary interest is in the stipend and tuition or those whose grades are marginal. They also felt that the best applicants were those who demonstrated maturity, dedication, and were passionate about improving the lives of children.
and families. They should also be able to multi-task, manage multiple priorities, and have low levels of anxiety with “no extra baggage”. They felt that looking for applicants who have experience in working with vulnerable populations as demonstrated by employment or volunteer work would help to identify good candidates for the CWEB program.

Finally, there may also be gender and racial differences between “leavers” vs. “stayers”. However, our sample is too small and homogenous to determine if there are any statistically significant differences. In addition, these analyses of “leavers” and “stayers” should be repeated in future years since larger contextual forces may be at work (unstable economy, fewer positions at nonprofits, positions reduced in the county).

**Schools and Agencies**

*How do child welfare agency administrators view the CWEL and CWEB programs?*

Agency directors were asked to respond to questions concerning CWEB/CWEL student presence at their agencies and the administration of the CWEB and CWEL programs. Specifically, they were asked to evaluate the caliber of a typical CWEB and CWEL graduate and the impact of the association of their agency with the CWEB and/or CWEL programs, as well as to describe any strategies used to utilize skills of graduates and encourage staff retention. All 67 Pennsylvania county agencies linked with CWEL/CWEB students and graduates were contacted for a response rate of 91%. Some counties do not have students in their agencies and do not have graduates, and these county administrators were not included in calculating the response rate.

Respondents expressed continued satisfaction with the administration of the CWEB and CWEL programs. Seven aspects of the program were rated, with the response scale ranging from “Very Negative” (1) to “Very Positive” (5). All collected responses fell between the “Somewhat Positive” (4) and “Very Positive” (5) categories, with the CWEB indicators being closer to the “Somewhat Positive” rating and the CWEL responses closer to the maximum “Very Positive”
rating. The highest ratings (4.62) for the CWEB program were in regard to the value of the program for Pennsylvania’s Children and Youth Agencies. Other high ratings of satisfaction with the CWEB program administration were given for responsiveness to questions (4.42) and accessibility (4.34). The highest ratings (4.82) for the CWEL program dealt with the administration’s responsiveness to questions. Other high CWEL satisfaction ratings regarded management of fiscal matters/reimbursement (4.81) and the value of the program for Pennsylvania’s Children and Youth Agencies (4.78).

CWEB and CWEL graduates who are currently working full-time were positively assessed on five performance indicators by the agency directors. Possible responses ranged from “Very Negative” (1) to “Very Positive” (5). Highest average ratings were for the dimensions of knowledge/skills (4.78 for CWEL, 4.68 for CWEB), ability to apply knowledge/skills to child welfare practice (4.78 for CWEL, 4.63 for CWEB), and meaningful contributions to the agency by CWEL students (4.74). All evaluation items were given mean ratings of a 4.50 and higher with the exception of CWEB students’ “preparedness for more advanced assignments” reflecting that they are new to the caseworker position.

Directors were then asked about the impact that the CWEL/CWEB programs have on their agencies in reference to retention, motivation, quality of practice, and co-worker interest in further education. The response scale ranged from “Very Negative” (1) to “Very Positive” (5). Mean ratings were at or above 4.0. The greatest positive impacts of both programs were indicated in the areas of quality of practice in the agency (4.65 for CWEL, 4.35 for CWEB) and interest in pursuing further education (4.50 for CWEL, 4.52 for CWEB).

Overall, agency administrators provided positive feedback about the value of the CWEB/CWEL programs. One individual stated “Good program…provides a more pure undergraduate degree in social work for CYS employment rather than degrees that were
something else but ended up in the CYS system.” Other responses were “They are exceptional programs for our child welfare professionals” and “Wonderful benefit to the agency.” Additional descriptors included “responsive”, “great programs”, “very helpful”, “valued”, “great opportunity”, “best practice”, and “excellent.”

Respondents also praised CWEB and CWEL students. Former CWEB and CWEL students were described as “well prepared for child welfare work and in possession of clear social work values with families”, “able to adapt to the job with ease”, and producing “clinical work (that) has been remarkable.” Another respondent described “positive change” related to graduates eagerly accepting new duties and challenging cases. Additional responses included inquiries about future doctoral opportunities, staff inability to hire new graduates due to hiring freezes and a desire to have additional CWEB/CWEL students doing field in their agencies.

As has been done in previous years, agency directors were asked how they have utilized the skills and abilities of recent graduates. Figure 16 illustrates the most common strategies.

**Figure 16. Reported Strategies for Using Skills and Abilities of Recent Graduates**
Similar to previous years, the most commonly reported strategies were the allocation of more challenging cases (70%), assignment of special projects (68%), involving graduates in planning or policy development (63%), promotion (62%) and encouraging a role in leadership (60%). It should be noted that the use of any or all of the mentioned strategies may be determined by such factors as agency structure/policy and the availability of higher level positions within a given organization. The respondents were also asked what strategies they use to encourage or improve student/staff retention. Many of the respondents identified retention as an ongoing struggle and stated that they have had limited success in retaining qualified caseworkers. They identified the retention challenges as limited managerial opportunities, minimal salary increases and reduced benefits compared to the higher pay and more flexible schedules in nonprofit organizations. However, through creativity and flexibility, agency directors have put several strategies in place to maintain their workers. These include: modest pay increases (based on education and performance rather than simply tenure), creation of new and specialty positions or titles, appointment to task forces to utilize enhanced knowledge, manageable caseloads, promotion, new projects and initiatives, respectful working environment, creation of supervisory and mentoring opportunities, task assignment determined by worker’s area of interest, flexible schedules, and specialized training.

Three additional factors were identified within the open-ended item on encouraging retention. First, many of the administrators mentioned that consideration of the individual worker and what he or she would find attractive in a position is vital for staff retention. For example, if increased pay is not feasible, a more flexible schedule may entice one worker to stay with a given agency while creation of a specialized title would persuade another to remain at the agency. Second, one respondent suggested that it would be desirable for CWEL students to focus more on “systemic social work and administration, especially if they are becoming supervisors.”
Perhaps students and their academic program are emphasizing clinical experience that address their present position and limiting the inclusion of classes with an administration and supervisory focus (e.g., grant writing, leadership, budgeting). Finally, it was stated that caseworkers, including CWEB and CWEB graduates, may not have the right temperament for agency leadership. Involvement with the CWEB and/or CWEL programs does not guarantee that a graduate is the most appropriate individual for managerial work. Therefore, he or she may struggle to attain a management position, become frustrated, and be difficult to retain despite other efforts.

**How do Pennsylvania Schools of Social Work view the CWEB and CWEL programs?**

Participating schools of Social Work were asked to complete a survey regarding their satisfaction with the University of Pittsburgh’s administration of the CWEB and CWEL programs and their perspectives on CWEB and CWEL students. All of the BSW and MSW faculty who were contacted completed the survey except for one individual, resulting in an overall response rate of 96%. A few large schools and those both BSW and MSW programs had multiple respondents. A survey was not sent to the University of Pittsburgh faculty since they administer the CWEB and CWEL programs. Three completed surveys were not usable due to excessive missing data and were not included in the analyses.

Slightly more of the respondents were associated with a CWEB program than CWEL but 71.4% indicated they have familiarity with the CWEL program and students. Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction of the CWEB/CWEL administration on 11 program dimensions. A five-point scale provides response options from “Very Poor” (1) to “Excellent” (5). Item content included the helpfulness and responsiveness of faculty and staff, collaboration between faculty/staff and participating schools, faculty support of students, and the clarity of various program requirements.
Similar to last year’s results, the respondents were very positive about both programs. CWEB item ratings averaged nearly 4.5 and CWEL ratings averaged 4.7. Thus for both programs, all aspects were rated as in between the “Good” and “Excellent” ratings, with the CWEL rated slightly higher. With regard to the CWEB program, those surveyed responded most positively to the items of faculty responsiveness to curricular questions ($M=4.69$) and contribution of students to the school’s learning environment ($M=4.69$). One individual stated “we carefully screen our CWEB students, so they tend to be among the best of their peers.”

Respondents involved with the CWEL program rated the contribution of students to the learning environment as very positive ($M=4.79$). One response was “CWEL students, compared to other MSW students, tend to have more social-work related work experience and are able to quickly relate course material to their experience in the field.” Other highly rated items included helpfulness/promptness of faculty and staff in responding to questions, the University of Pittsburgh’s responsiveness to administrative issues and questions, and collaboration between the schools and faculty/staff ($M=4.77$). Comments included “…top notch…CWEL faculty administrators from Pitt are always available and clearly committed to supporting the students” and “the responsiveness and knowledge of the staff is definitely what makes this program so special.”

Last year, 91% of respondents indicated that they were interested in development of continuing education for the CWEL students. Interest this year was lower (67%) but despite the decrease in positive responses (perhaps due to confusion or uncertainty over what such education would entail/be), continuing education remains an area in which the majority of respondents would be interested in collaboration. Peer-to-peer support, online education options, and various forms of mentoring could support such an initiative.
Open-ended comments in response to the positive aspects of CWEB program were highly complementary and fell into one of three main categories. The first group consisted of general positive descriptions of CWEB students. Responses ranged from “average/above average” to “high caliber” and “tend to be among the best of their peers.” The second category was descriptors of student traits and behaviors, such as “motivated and focused”, “mature and committed”, and having a “passion for social work”. The third category focused on GPA and academic issues and how to predict whether a student with a lower GPA could be a successful CWEB admission. When describing particular positive aspects, the quality of the field placements that students receive was identified most frequently. Aspects of strong supervision, high professionalism, exposure to practice, and an introduction to the field of child welfare were all identified. The financial incentive and team structure/networking aspects of the program were also stressed. One respondent specifically recognized the CWEB Academic Coordinator as “always helpful and responsive to our concerns or questions.” In terms of opportunities for improvement, the majority (e.g. nearly 60%) of responses stated that there were no current problems or issues associated with the CWEB program. However, a few responses discussed the need for improved collaboration between the schools and agencies about where students are or could be placed and the difficulty securing field placements for students. As one individual stated, in order to build the workforce there is a “need for more MSWs in Child Welfare agencies and the need for ALL agencies to participate in the CWEB program. It is difficult to place students when not ALL child welfare agencies will accept students.”

Two other respondents touched on the topic of proactive responses to program issues. The first expressed a diligence “to screen CWEB applicants and ensure they understand the obligations of the CWEB program and the consequences of failure to meet those obligations.” The second individual was concerned by the conflicts that arose between Charting the Course
training requirements and academic requirements/course loads. It was suggested that summer or winter break training might minimize this problem.

In terms of comments about the CWEL students, most of the responses were positive but there was greater variation. Positive descriptors included “high caliber”, “well prepared”, “top of the class”, “able to quickly relate course material to their experience in field “ and “reflect a commitment to the profession and their field of practice” as well as a range of the quality of the students (i.e. “most are solid, a few are challenging…an admirable number are outstanding”).

One concern that was expressed was how to prepare and support students to return to the classroom when they have been out of school for a long period. These respondents identified that there is a transition period from full time employment to being a student and this can be a difficult transition for some students. Respondents wrote that “some have difficulty with graduate level writing”, “(a few) did not fare well or at least needed additional support”, and “(students have) been away from school for a period of time and often had not had the richest undergraduate experiences.” Similar to the comments about the CWEB program, several positive aspects of the CWEL program were identified. The overall experience of the students in the program, and their ability to thus focus on academics and field placement without financial worries or employment stress, was recognized by nearly half of the respondents. The same proportion of comments praised the CWEL administrators by stating such comments as “the administration of the program is really top notch…the CWEL faculty administrators from Pitt are always available and clearly committed to supporting the students.” Additionally, two individuals identified student sharing of cases/knowledge in the classroom discussion as particularly beneficial to all students in their MSW programs.

Nearly half of the comments indicated there are no current problems or issues with the CWEL program. The same proportion of comments identified field placement rules and
flexibility as opportunities for improvement. Specifically, it was stated that “the rules regarding acceptable field placements need to be crystal clear, particularly with respect to students doing field placements outside their work site” and “consider requiring more flexibility among county agencies in permitting a one-year field internship outside of the child welfare agency.” Other suggestions involved the value of all counties being able to send staff to graduate school part-time and requiring a supervision class for CWEL students.

**Summary of Child Welfare Administrator and Pennsylvania Schools Surveys**

Both administrators and faculty express a high level of satisfaction with the CWEB and CWEL programs and administration, as well as a positive perception of CWEB/CWEL students and graduates. Administrators are attempting to retain their workforce using a variety of approaches, and while they are not always successful, they feel that the CWEB and CWEL graduates are important to their success in advancing the professionalization of child welfare casework. As one agency director wrote “Our CWEL graduates have had opportunities for promotion to supervisory ranks and more recently into administration. Our current administrative team is made up largely of CWEL graduates. This includes the deputy administrator, the four service administrators, the administrator for staff development and the policy/QA administrator. They are running the place!!!!!” Schools were similarly positive about the maturity, energy and commitment that the students bring into their schools and classrooms and how this enriches their schools. While problems and issues with the CWEB and CWEL programs were minimal, opportunities to improve the program were increased clarity of requirements and policies, as well as ways to assist with difficult student transitions to school or back to work. However, both groups of stakeholders are in agreement that CWEB and CWEL is an opportunity for Pennsylvania to create a well-educated child welfare workforce.
Overall Summary

The Title IV-E professional education programs continue to be greatly valued by all of the stakeholders. The students feel that they are receiving a quality education and are grateful for the financial assistance. The graduates feel that they are prepared for practice, and many expressed that they grew professionally and personally as a result of their matriculation as a CWEB or CWEL student. The faculty at the participating colleges and universities view these students as some of the most committed and accomplished in their classes. Agencies place a high value on the expertise and social work values that the CWEB and CWEL graduates bring into their workplaces.

The long term graduate and the retention study findings suggest that the practice climate has been consistent across the years, regardless of cohort, agency, economic climate, and state leadership. This suggests an entrenched and stagnant practice climate. The retention study supports the agency directors’ concerns about retention, but identifies that the group that is the most likely to leave after the obligation period is the bachelor’s degree students. This is understandable, given the age and maturity level of most CWEB students. However, this is also a critical issue, as the BSW students are often the caseload carrying professionals. One way of reducing the “drain” of these workers may be to sharpen the screening protocols for admissions. Current CWEB students suggested that students interested only in financial benefit should be screened out. However, efforts should be made to actively recruit students with high levels of persistence and commitment to vulnerable populations; further, these students should have a good idea of what child welfare practice will entail. Any way that they can be shown what a caseworker does should be reinforced through video presentations, shadowing, and/or student testimony. The CWEL students are somewhat different. They do know what practice is like but are dissatisfied with what they can do when they return, and this concern is reflected in the
“recent graduate” findings of concern even before they return to their agencies. Before they begin matriculating as an MSW student, agencies and the potential students should discuss what they both want out of this education. That is, how will the agency utilize this new level of expertise? What are the expectations of the student? How will they feel if their new skills are not utilized? What if promotion is not possible—can they manage the disappointment? Honest communication and a plan-full approach are needed at the beginning of the educational journey.

In sum, CWEB and CWEL students feel well equipped for their positions in the field, and the agencies in which they work generally value the experience and training they bring with them. However, agency climate remains moderate at best, with role overload and lack of opportunity for promotion as the most common complaints. In recent years, workers have also voiced concerns about the abundance of documentation in their jobs, feeling that time spent documenting their work takes away from the work itself. Mobile technology has been introduced in many counties, with the intention of easing the burden of documentation needs; hopefully as the learning curve for these tools plateaus, workers will utilize them efficiently and see their benefit.

Looking toward the future, ideally we can improve retention rates for both former CWEB and CWEL students. More work needs to be done in order to more fully understand the factors involved in why child welfare workers leave or remain in the field. However, there is enough information to make a few suggestions that may impact retention. For example, it may be beneficial for prospective CWEB students to learn more about the day-to-day work of child welfare workers before committing to the CWEB program. Additionally, it may be helpful for students in both programs to be more intentional in career planning, creating a more prospective plan than just the time spent in the program. This would also entail agencies working together with potential CWEL students to not only agree on a plan involving when and where the student
will enroll in school, but also what will happen when s/he returns to the agency. The CWEB and CWEL programs produce a solid, skilled workforce; perhaps some incremental changes in the screening and transition processes will positively impact the length of time graduates stay in the field.

References


Discussion

**CWEB**

After just ten years of operation, the CWEB program has made remarkable gains. Fourteen (14) universities, fifty-three (53) counties and seven hundred and sixty-six (766) graduates have made major investments in its operational success. The Department of Public Welfare, the State System of Higher Education, the State Civil Service Commission and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators all contribute to a strong collaboration that has enabled the program to be successful in preparing individuals for work in public child welfare.

As shown in Figure 17 below, CWEB graduates have entered the child welfare workforce in 79% of the counties in Pennsylvania. We believe that this is evidence of the strong impact that our undergraduate education program has on child welfare services across the state.

**Figure 17. CWEB County Participation**

The evaluations over the past ten year period have been most helpful in suggesting program improvements, and we continue to analyze our lessons learned from administering the
program thus far. Early in the program’s history, issues such as timely tuition payments, direct deposit of stipend payments, and issues specific to the Philadelphia Civil Service system were resolved. Some of these issues, such as school tuition and student stipend payments, represented larger systems issues over which the University has limited control. Barriers to the timeliness of hiring CWEB graduates have been successfully resolved for the most part. We have refined our admission criteria and instituted a more intensive case management process to ensure successful outcomes. Beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year, a case management component was introduced to better facilitate CWEB student enrollment in the state-mandated competency and skills-based training, Charting the Course. CWEB students are now assigned to a Regional Training Specialist at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program who assists them with enrollment and the initiation of their certification training record.

Close follow-up by the CWEB Coordinator has resulted in the majority of graduates securing county agency employment within sixty (60) days of graduation. Due to continuing state budgetary issues since the summer of 2010, the period for finding employment was extended beyond the typical sixty days. Even with this challenge, most recent CWEB graduates are now gainfully employed at the time of this report. We continue to make concerted efforts to connect CWEB graduates with agencies experiencing a significant workforce shortage. Students may pursue employment in any county in the state, and the vast majority secure employment quickly. Many wish to remain in the county where they completed their internship, and most do. However, there are some students who are reluctant to relocate and who live in areas where there are no immediate openings. When students fail to follow through on their contractual obligation, the CWEB program initiates an aggressive collection procedure that can include obtaining a court judgment against the student. This is rarely necessary as nearly all students honor their obligations.

As has been discussed previously, a career in public child welfare is not for everyone. The process of student discovery is a normal, healthy course of action which results in decisions that benefit students and counties. The CWEB program facilitates that process by counseling
with the students and graduates and then providing a professional, business-like collection system for reimbursement when necessary. Repayment can be discontinued for those who are initially in default, but become employed in public child welfare.

Suggestions for CWEB program improvements and our action plan are summarized below. Some suggestions are new, while others are ongoing or have been addressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Program Improvement</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve successful outcomes for students by refining admission criteria and participant selection</td>
<td>• Two additional requirements have been added to the admission criteria: student transcripts and a personal statement regarding the desire to pursue public child welfare as an area of practice. A template has been developed for the personal statement to increase the responsiveness of applicants to key child welfare issues. This template will be in effect for the 2012-2013 admission period.</td>
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| Further guidance to university faculty on the details of civil service requirements and other technical aspects related to county internship and employment | • Target discussion of this issue during school visitations and informational meetings  
• “Frequently Asked Questions” fact sheet posted on CWERP website  
• Presentation by CWEB faculty at annual PAUSWE (PA Undergraduate Social Work Educators) meeting |
| Increase participation in Civil Service Social Work Internship program | • Intensify outreach to schools and students regarding the benefit of completing 975 hours of internship (e.g., civil service standing, exemption from SCSC exam, ability to complete competency-based training as part of internship, greater marketability for hiring)  
• Enlist county agency support in providing arrangements for extended internship by CWEB students |
| Increase successful program completion among “at risk” students (e.g., academic challenges, those experiencing unanticipated life events) | • Increase outreach and case management to students by CWEB faculty and staff  
• Increase collaboration with school faculty |
| Increase county participation in the CWEB program | • Increase direct consultation with counties  
• Increase school engagement of counties in the field practicum process  
• Presentation by CWEB faculty at PCYA & CCAP meetings |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Suggested Program Improvement</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve CWEB student enrollment in mandated child welfare skill and competency-based training, Charting the Course Toward Permanency in Pennsylvania</td>
<td>• Introduction of case management system matching Regional Training Specialists from the PA Child Welfare Training Program with each CWEB student. Regional Training Specialists coordinate enrollment in Charting the Course during the CWEB students’ senior year and begin the training record to document completion of modules.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve successful job placement following graduation</td>
<td>• Ongoing assistance by CWEB Coordinator in identifying county casework vacancies, facilitating referrals for interviews, and counseling graduates regarding child welfare employment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ongoing collaboration with SCSC regarding communication of exam exemption for those completing 975 internship hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve dissemination of child welfare career development opportunity through CWEB and CWEL to prospective and current participants</td>
<td>• Development of an informational video featuring CWEB program participants (current students and graduates)</td>
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**CWEL**

After sixteen (16) years of operation, the CWEL program has continued to reach additional students and counties while maintaining its commitment to close, collaborative working relationships with the Department of Public Welfare, students, county agencies, and schools of social work in Pennsylvania. The number and diversity of counties has increased; the number of students continues to meet the projected goals; and the number of applications typically matches or exceeds the number of budgeted student openings. The program is acknowledged as providing students with a valuable educational experience; as useful in their child welfare practice; as a major asset to public child welfare in Pennsylvania; as well administered and user friendly; as having a long-term impact on public child welfare practice; and as a positive element in the continuing challenge of worker retention.

CWEL students contribute to human service programs in both the public and private sector during the course of their graduate studies through active engagement in field work in a variety of agency settings. Figure 18 on the following page illustrates the breadth of programs that
benefit from the skill and expertise of our child welfare students. County agencies, in turn, benefit from the expanded knowledge that CWEL students bring to the county as a result of their field and classroom experience. CWEL students have been instrumental in improving cross-systems collaboration, educating provider agencies about child welfare mandates and services, and, in some instances, shifting a pre-existing, negative perception of child welfare practice. Students develop a greater appreciation and understanding of the services, mandates, philosophy, delivery and outcome goals of providers. All of this occurs as our students share their expertise and enrich their skills through internships with community and private provider agencies.

**Figure 18. CWEL Field Placement Types**

![Pie chart showing CWEL Field Placement Types]

- **Permanency** 28%
- **Child Abuse & Neglect/CAC** 25%
- **Mental Health/Substance Abuse** 19%
- **Healthcare** 6%
- **Housing/Homelessness** 5%
- **Juvenile/Criminal Justice** 5%
- **School/Head Start** 5%
- **Fam. Violence/Victim Services/DV Shelter** 1%
- **Other** 6%

![Another pie chart showing Permanent Field Placements]

- **Independence** 25%
- **Kinship Care** 16%
- **Foster Care** 7%
- **Fam. Finding** 18%
- **Family Group Decision Making** 16%
- **Reunification** 9%
- **Adoption** 9%

63
A main goal of the CWEL program is the development of leadership within child welfare. Currently, our CWEL graduates make up 18% of county agency administrators in Pennsylvania. An additional 7 CWEL graduates hold Assistant Administrator positions. We applaud our graduates’ promotion into these key leadership roles and the new vision and energy that they bring to public child welfare. The following map illustrates this impact.

Figure 19. CWEL County Leadership

Narrative responses gathered during the program evaluation contain a number of suggestions. These responses are obtained through open-ended comments on the evaluation instruments and then verified through key informant focus group sessions. Some suggestions are impractical or impossible to implement. Others are based upon misinformation. Most of the suggestions gleaned from the evaluation of both programs over the years, however, point to important questions and bear thoughtful review. Several of these will be highlighted because they come from multiple sources, were reported in so many different ways, or have become persistent themes. All of the partners ought to be thinking about strategies to address them over subsequent review periods.
One prominent theme concerns the climate, salaries, job classifications, assignments and opportunities for career development which graduates of the CWEL program encounter upon their return to the county agencies. The following key points have been repeated by multiple respondents:

- difficulty in negotiating assignments that capitalize on the returning worker’s new skills, knowledge and advanced training;
- lack of differentiation in job classifications among workers with and without graduate degrees;
- lack of salary incentives in most counties;
- hostile, skeptical and jealous reception workers sometimes face upon return to their agency after graduation;
- scarcity of opportunities for promotion in many counties;
- lack of opportunities for leadership and/or a voice in decision making;
- the sense that advanced educational achievement is not matched with respect and growth opportunities.

In some counties, returning graduates have been embraced and invited to participate in creative and challenging assignments that are advantageous to both the worker and the agency. Participation in Quality Service Reviews (QSRs), membership in special workgroups associated with Pennsylvania’s Program Improvement Plan (PIP), and involvement in practice initiatives such as the early developmental screening of young children, safety assessment, and the use of mobile technology in the field are a few of the projects that benefit from the expertise of CWEL graduates. CWEL graduates are invited to become mentors and supervisors of CWEB students in their agencies; many assume prominent roles in leading youth and family engagement practices and are active in continuous quality improvement initiatives within their counties. Many CWEL graduates have become trainers for the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program and members of statewide committees and workgroups. Others have involved themselves in the education of future child welfare professionals by becoming adjunct instructors at schools of social work.
The contrast in the moods of those graduates who have enrichment opportunities and those who do not is stark. One group of graduates speaks of long-term commitment to public child welfare and the other group is beginning to think of other ways they can serve children at risk and their families where the opportunities are better fitted to their skills. Graduates do not speak of reneging on their commitments; when they do contemplate other options such as moving to employment with private providers or other human service entities after completion of their commitments, they do so with sadness for the most part. The CWEL faculty views the comments of graduates about agency climate as representative of the key deciding element in child welfare employee retention. Our research, and that of others, strongly supports this finding. Counties and agencies that ignore these concerns should not be surprised by the loss of valuable staff. While there is extensive research evidence of the importance of non-salary factors in retention (see Appendix L), the results of this and previous surveys affirm that salary remains a very important issue in Pennsylvania. Along with supportive agency working conditions, adequate compensation is critical to the stability of our child welfare workforce.

Well-educated and skilled professionals who serve children at risk and their families will benefit public child welfare wherever they practice and will return the investment made on their training by the taxpayers many times over. But a major opportunity will have been lost if agencies do not take full advantage of the skills, optimism and enthusiasm of the returning workers. Retention has always been one of the goals of federal funding for child welfare training and is central to the mission of the CWEB and CWEL programs. It is well known from research conducted over a decade ago that workers who are skilled in the services they are asked to provide and who receive strong agency support have higher retention rates. All indications suggest that CWEB and CWEL students have received excellent training and education. It remains for the partners in this enterprise to be creative, innovative and energetic in following through with organizational change after graduates return. The 12 or so months CWEB students

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and the 20 or so months full-time CWEL students spend in educational preparation is very modest when compared to the many years their potential child welfare careers will span following graduation.

CWEL has a remarkable record of retention. Of the 960 graduates who have completed the program, only thirteen (13) have failed to complete their work commitment. Another three hundred and seventy-two (372) have resigned after completing their commitments for all reasons. Again, these reasons include not only voluntary departures from child welfare employment, but also retirement, death, permanent disability, relocation of a spouse and a variety of other unique circumstances. This represents an overall loss rate of only 7.5% per year for the life of the program. The following figure illustrates retention among our graduates at one, five and ten-year intervals post-commitment. The average commitment period is approximately 1½ years. This commitment calculation includes individuals who were awarded advanced standing in their academic program by virtue of having a BASW degree, those who completed a full, two-year academic program, and those who obtained CWEL funding for only a portion of their academic studies. Figure 20 shows that of those whose commitment ended over 10 years ago, almost 40% remain in their agencies nearly 12 years after graduation (1 ½ years average commitment plus ten years post-commitment). This does not include those who continued in the child welfare field in other agency settings.

**Figure 20. Long-term Commitment of CWEL Graduates**

![Figure 20](image_url)
The research literature on long-term retention of workers with no legal work commitment clearly shows the importance of agency climate, quality of supervision, intrinsic worker fulfillment and job satisfaction from appropriate assignments, and personnel policies along with salaries as some of the keys to long-term retention. Unfortunately, there is little that CWEB or CWEL alone can do about any of these important factors. It is critical for the Department, the University, county agencies, and PCYA to work together in implementing strategies to address organizational and workforce issues. Several CWERP faculty members serve on the state Recruitment and Retention Committee where some creative ideas have been discussed. Getting these implemented at both the state and county levels is highly political and often difficult. We believe that our longitudinal research on the retention of CWEL students can inform this discussion.

The subject of the advantages and disadvantages of full and part-time study continues to surface, particularly for CWEL students. There is no doubt this is one of the areas in which county differences occur, but there is also no doubt from student evaluations and the many years of collective experience the schools have had, that the educational experiences of full-time students are clearly superior. Full-time students have many more opportunities to interact with their academic advisors and other faculty outside of class; more time to network with other students; more time available for library research; more choice of elective courses; more time to write papers and prepare other assignments; and more options for completing their internships. They can do this with less commuting, less stress from two major work-related responsibilities, less conflict between work schedules (e.g. court appearances) and class schedules, and less time away from their family responsibilities. The tuition for full-time completion of a degree is also less than for part-time study. Full-time students require only half as much time or less to complete the program. This means a quicker return to full productivity in the agency. Part-time studies often take as long as four years to complete, and there is a higher rate of academic disruption (and sometimes program discontinuation) among part-time students compared to full-

time students. Three to four years is an extraordinary period of time for students to be balancing the demands of child welfare work, academic studies and the other responsibilities in their lives.

The agencies’ primary concern with full-time study for CWEL students most frequently is whether or not the agency can fill the position while the student is away for full-time study. The counties that have hired replacements have experienced no major difficulties and have been able to do so without any financial cost because of the reimbursement they receive for the salary and benefits of the trainee in school. Schools and students almost unanimously favor the full-time model. Of the withdrawals from the program prior to graduation, seventy-one percent (71%) were part-time students. Our discussions with these students confirm that the problems inherent with part-time study, such as stress and scheduling, were the determining factors. These are serious, costly and unnecessary losses.

Another county agency concern with full-time study is the belief that part-time students are likely to have higher retention rates after graduation. There is absolutely no evidence for this contention. By far the greatest number of complaints and the most impassioned concerns from students are that they are not permitted to engage in full-time study. These students are angry, bitter, under pressure from their families, sleepless at night because of their worries over the children in their caseloads, and some express a determination to resign as soon as their commitments are completed. We have witnessed this during the history of the CWEL program and know from our collaborative work with other IV-E programs across the country that high levels of stress among part-time students is a universal phenomenon. We believe that only authorizing part-time study is a shortsighted and counter-productive agency policy.

Part-time study while working full-time is difficult under even the most ideal circumstances. The competing responsibilities of work, home and school are encountered by all part-time, working students. This reality is compounded for child welfare students by the demands of the job (i.e., court dates, unanticipated emergencies, staff shortage). During the 2010-2011 program year these stressors continued to be amplified by the Pennsylvania budget crisis. For part-time enrollment to be more satisfying for participants, both counties and schools
need to be flexible with scheduling and provide enhanced supports to assist employees/students in the balancing of multiple responsibilities. This is a necessary workforce investment.

Moreover, administratively, only full-time students may be used by the University in generating the substantial matching funds it contributes to balance the project’s budget. The CWEL program began as a largely full-time program. In the 2010-2011 academic year, 61% of the newly admitted students were part-time. This actually reduces the total number of students who can participate, reduces the federal contribution to the program and increases the state matching funds required.

Another concern with which all four partners must constantly struggle is differences in policies or requirements. County personnel policies differ in ways such that CWEB and CWEL students in the same classroom with their respective program classmates may be subject to contrasting requirements. Curricular requirements or academic calendars among the schools may differ enough that students from the same county (but not attending the same school) also have contrasting requirements.

The CWEB and CWEL faculty are keenly aware of these differences and seek to assist the other partners in being aware of alternative approaches that might be helpful. But in the final analysis, uniformity is not the goal. These are not seen as fairness issues. As long as the Title IV-E regulations are followed, the effort has been to allow for local conditions and needs to guide local decision-making. This is true for county agencies and among schools of social work. Workers in some counties are employed under union conditions. Others are not. Small counties face somewhat different personnel issues than larger ones. College or university calendars may control social work department or school schedules. The number of child welfare students in a given school has an effect on the number of child welfare courses that can be offered. Consequently, students and others who observe some differences are quite correct and refer to a diversity that is neither possible nor desirable to control centrally. It is always the goal of the CWEB and CWEL programs to provide:

1. Easy access to the programs for trainees, counties and schools;
2. Equitable distribution of resources that assures as many schools and counties have the opportunity to participate as possible;

3. Streamlined administrative procedures and timely reimbursements;

4. Strict observation of Title IV-E regulations;

5. Full disclosure of all aspects of the program’s operation among the partners and to the public;

6. As little interference as possible with selection of trainees and implementation models by counties and with schools in their selection and admissions processes;

7. Recognition of the achievements and contributions of our students;

8. Recommendations for workforce improvement.

Suggestions for quality improvement and our action plan for the CWEL program are summarized below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Program Improvement</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alteration in commitment time for part-time students</td>
<td>• Part-time student commitment period is already pro-rated in order to avoid a longer commitment time. Commitment time begins upon graduation. (Because this question is raised periodically, we note it here.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(suggested by participants)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of commitment time for all participants</td>
<td>• This is precluded by federal Title IV-E regulations [45 CFR, Ch. II § 235.63 (b) (1)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued focus upon agency working environment and</td>
<td>• Targeted intervention with agency supervisors and administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunities for graduates to use their expanded skills</td>
<td>• Ongoing feedback to county administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and abilities within the agency</td>
<td>• Ongoing CWERP faculty participation in statewide Recruitment and Retention Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implementation of OE practice model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission for students to major in administration or</td>
<td>• Students in a current administrative or managerial position are permitted to pursue an administrative or macro track. Those in direct service positions must focus upon direct practice. This policy is in keeping with the federal expectation that trainees are being prepared for best practice in that aspect of IV-E services to which they are assigned by the agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>macro practice</td>
<td>• Students may take courses in administration as electives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Suggested Program Improvement** | **Action Plan**
--- | ---
Inclusion of advanced level child welfare coursework in school curriculum, particularly in evidence-informed and evidence-based practices | • Curricular consultation to schools  
• Provision of technical assistance  
• Offering of FGDM course in programs  
• Continued refinement of child welfare curricula, including cross-university course enrollment

Increase in full-time student enrollment | • Continue to encourage counties to hire replacement staff using the reimbursement received for the salary and benefits of the school trainee

Increase support to part-time students | • Encourage county agencies to provide flexible scheduling, modified work assignments and opportunities for field work outside of the agency

Increase salary of child welfare workers | • Continue to advocate at the county, state, and federal level that salaries must be adequate to compensate for the demands of public child welfare jobs

**Recommendations**

We are committed to continuous quality improvement and understand that no successful program is static. Areas for future consideration for both programs are summarized below.

**Recommendation** | **Background Information and Rationale**
--- | ---
Maintain CWEB enrollment number at approximately 95-100 | This target appears sufficient at this time. In the event that recruitment efforts increase child welfare interest, demand will surpass capacity.

Maintain CWEL enrollment at approximately 205 | This enrollment target appears sufficient at this time. It has been possible for schools to expand course offerings to child welfare students. Online course work offers students more flexible learning forums.

Consideration of CWEL participation by Department employees, i.e., DPW Regional Office employees, ChildLine employees, perhaps others | OCYF approval for this recommendation was granted in 2008. The federally-approved Program Improvement Plan for PA places much emphasis on education and the opportunity for OCYF regional office and ChildLine employees allows additional trainees to benefit from the CWEL program. This, in turn, will benefit our children, families and communities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Recommendation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Background Information and Rationale</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of an additional component to the CWEL program in order to recruit new employees for the counties. These persons would never have worked in a county CYS before, but would be trained and would have the same length of work commitment as that currently required of CWEL students.</td>
<td>The provision in the federal Title IV-E regulations which permits the training of persons “preparing for [public child welfare] employment”(^8) provides this opportunity. A principal advantage is cost savings. The cost of all this to the Department would be the non-federal match. With preparation during the 2011-2012 program year, this initiative could be in place for the 2012-2013 academic year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of additional graduate degree programs in Pennsylvania as they become accredited.</td>
<td>Increasing the number of schools allows for greater student access, reduces student commuting time and decreases reduces program costs. The Bradford campus of the University of Pittsburgh opened in 2002-2003 and has a child welfare focus. Marywood and Temple universities have several branch campuses across the state. Kutztown University received full accreditation in the 2007-2008 academic year. The Millersville-Shippensburg program received full accreditation from the Council on Social Work Accreditation and admitted its first cohort in the summer of 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase depth of undergraduate child welfare curriculum among schools through the development of a certificate in Child Advocacy Studies in collaboration with the National Child Protection Training Center.</td>
<td>Undergraduates currently complete one child welfare course and a public child welfare internship. We are currently in the process of piloting the first of three courses in Child Advocacy Studies in an on-line, hybrid format. This will strengthen the child welfare course options for students and also has the benefit of providing elective options for students outside of social work who receive little, if any, content on child abuse and neglect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of CWEB/CWEL Advisory Network to provide input on emerging program issues.</td>
<td>CWEB/CWEL school partners have endorsed the development of an advisory network among school faculty, program graduates, county administrators and CWERP faculty to provide input and guidance for the programs. Several faculty have been asked to join the Training Steering Committee of the PA Child Welfare Training Program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^8\) 45 CFR, Ch. II, §235.63 (a).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Background Information and Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is recommended again that consideration be given to including the fourteen (14) private, accredited undergraduate social work programs in Pennsylvania in the CWEB consortium.</td>
<td>Many of the schools presently participating in CWEB have small enrollments. Unlike the CWEL program, there is no backlog of persons waiting their turn to participate in CWEB. If all of the fourteen additional schools chose to participate, met the requirements, and were approved, the potential would be to approximately double the enrollment. The demand from counties for new bachelor’s graduates is at least that great. Unfortunately, the cost of doing this would be borne largely by the Department as the University has little with which to match federal funds in the CWEB program. The two largest line items in the CWEB budget are tuition and stipends, neither of which is subject to indirect costs. This is an opportunity that should receive consideration and is a question constantly asked by the non-participating schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition support and ongoing connection among CWEL graduates.</td>
<td>Transition back to the county agency is often problematic for full-time students. Additionally, graduates can benefit from ongoing connection and support. It is recommended that special attention be paid to preparing students for their return and to developing a network of ongoing support. Transition groups for returning graduates may be helpful in this regard, and graduates are encouraged to become involved as trainers or join special workforce or task groups through the PA Child Welfare Training Program (CWTP). Practice Improvement Specialists from CWTP are assigned to counties throughout the state and actively engage with CWEB and CWEL graduates to provide support and enlist them in practice initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporation of trauma-informed supervision at the county level</td>
<td>Current students and graduates speak poignantly about needing supervisory and peer support to manage work-related stress, and of the impact of secondary trauma upon their ability to remain in the field of child welfare. We believe it is critical to address this issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Background Information and Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of a doctoral-level CWEL option.</td>
<td>This recommendation for a very small program with guidelines carefully developed by the Department and the University can provide an additional research arm for the Commonwealth and further our mission of establishing evidence-based child welfare practice across the state. Schools are receptive and there continues to be a demand from counties and individuals. Research at the doctoral level can make an even greater contribution to the Commonwealth and the field. CWERP is in an excellent position to make this contribution. A reasonable objective might be one (1) doctoral student in each of the five (5) schools with a doctoral program. Work commitment issues need to be addressed among all involved parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimbursement to counties for 100% of the salaries of full-time students and for fringe benefits at the same level that the Department currently reimburses counties.</td>
<td>When the CWEL program was initiated, it was decided to reimburse counties for only ninety-five percent (95%) of full-time students’ salaries. It was hypothesized that counties would pass the five percent (5%) reduction along to students and this amount in the aggregate would be used as part of the non-federal matching funds required under IV-E regulations. However, this approach was quickly abandoned. First, it became evident that federal authorities would classify contributions from students as “private funds” which are prohibited except under very obtuse rules this approach could not meet. Secondly, a number of counties continued to pay the workers their full salaries even though the counties were reimbursed at only the ninety-five percent (95%) level. Adding to this is the burden of the very low salaries that so many CWEL students earn. Especially those students with families find even the five percent (5%) salary reduction very difficult to endure. This may also assist counties in considering allowing more employees to become full-time students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

The faculty and staff of the CWEB and CWEL programs sincerely believe the Department and the counties can rightfully be proud of the achievements of our child welfare education programs. While we are gratified to be part of this remarkable venture and partnership, we sincerely acknowledge that the contributions of many others are what guide, sustain, and shape these programs.

The county children and youth service administrators have been unfailingly responsive as individuals and through their organization, the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, Inc. The Department of Public Welfare, especially former Secretary Estelle B. Richman and former Acting Secretaries Dichter and Nardone and their respective staff, have all played important roles. We especially thank former OCYF Deputy Secretary Richard Gold and Cathy Utz, Director of Policy and Program Development, for their strong support and partnership. We also thank our OCYF Program Monitor, Terry Clark, for his oversight and support of our work. The sixteen (16) academic partners have made major contributions to the success of our programs and that of our students. Admissions, registrations, invoices, graduations, academic schedules, course listings, internships and dozens of other details must be coordinated and carefully attended. The United States Children’s Bureau, and especially its Region III office in Philadelphia, has continued its strong support, not least of which is extensive funding of both the CWEB and CWEL programs. The State System of Higher Education has enabled the ten (10) state universities with accredited undergraduate social work programs to become part of the consortium.

We are proud that the CWEB and CWEL IV-E education programs have been recognized as key strengths in Pennsylvania during both rounds of the federal Child and Family Services Review. Our graduates have assumed leadership roles in practice initiatives throughout the state and actively contribute to shaping the future of child welfare services on the local, state and national level.
Finally, no amount of contracts, agreements, budgets, reports, curricula, faculty or any other of the myriad academic and administrative components of this project could produce a successful outcome without exceptional students. It is to the everlasting credit of the schools (undergraduate and graduate) and the counties that the vast majority of the CWEB and CWEL students selected to participate in these programs have been exceptional achievers academically and leaders among their academic and professional peers. The students’ investments, risks, energy, vision, and productivity are more responsible than anything else for the success of this program in the final analysis. We salute them with sincere admiration.
Appendices

A. Table I: Participating School Programs
B. CWEB and CWEL School Participation Map
C. Table II: University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Courses
D. Table III: Undergraduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEB Schools for 2010-2011
E. Table IV: Graduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEL Schools for 2010-2011
F. CWEB County Participation Map
G. CWE B Overview: 2001-2011
H. CWEL Overview: 1995-2011
I. CWEL Applicant Pool and Admissions: 1995-2012 Academic Years
J. Program Evaluation Data Tables
K. List of Supplemental CWEB and CWEL Materials Available On-line
L. Child Welfare Research Sampler
M. Child Welfare Education and Research Programs Faculty and Staff
Appendix A

Table I
Participating School Programs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>MSACS</th>
<th>CSWE</th>
<th>CWEB only</th>
<th>CWEB/ CWEL</th>
<th>CWEL only</th>
<th>Entry into program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bloomsburg University</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryn Mawr College</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California University</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinboro University</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CWEL 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutztown University</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CWEL 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lock Haven University</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield University</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marywood University</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millersville University</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CWEL 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shippensburg University</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CWEL 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slippery Rock University</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple University</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CWEL 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pittsburgh</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CWEL 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Chester University</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CWEL 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widener University</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CWEL 2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

CWEB and CWEL
School Participation Map
Child Welfare Education and Research Programs
Participating Schools

- Bloomsburg University
- California University
- Edinboro University
- Lock Haven University
- Kutztown University
- Mansfield University
- Marywood University – Main Campus
- Millersville University
- Shippensburg University
- Slippery Rock University
- Temple University – Main Campus
- West Chester University
- Widener University
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Pittsburgh - Bradford
- University of Pennsylvania
- Bryn Mawr University
- Temple University - Harrisburg
- Widener University - Harrisburg
- Kutztown University
- Millersville University
- West Chester University
- University of Pennsylvania

Legend:
- CWEL Only
- CWEB Only
- CWEB and CWEL
Appendix C

Table II
University of Pittsburgh Graduate Child Welfare Courses
2010-2011
### TABLE II

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH CHILD WELFARE COURSES**

#### FALL TERM 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child and Family Advocacy</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child and Family Policy (two sections)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Families at Risk (two sections)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Maltreatment: Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Welfare Services</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Practice with Children and Adolescents</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate Partner Violence</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term Treatment (two sections)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work with Drug &amp; Alcohol Dependent Persons</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SPRING TERM 2011

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<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Child and Family Policy (two sections)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Families at Risk (two sections)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Welfare Services</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Based Intervention</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Term Treatment</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Practice with Families</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work with Drug and Alcohol Dependent Persons</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SUMMER TERM 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Practice with Families</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work with Drug &amp; Alcohol Dependent Persons (two sections)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate Partner Violence</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Table III
Undergraduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEB Schools
2010-2011
TABLE III

Undergraduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEB Schools for 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Course Offering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bloomsburg University</td>
<td>Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California University</td>
<td>Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinboro University</td>
<td>Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutztown University</td>
<td>Child Welfare and Social Work Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lock Haven University</td>
<td>Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield University</td>
<td>Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marywood University</td>
<td>Child’s Rights and Societal Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millersville University</td>
<td>Social Work and Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shippensburg University</td>
<td>Introduction to Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slippery Rock University</td>
<td>Introduction to Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple University</td>
<td>Child Welfare Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pittsburgh</td>
<td>Child Welfare Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Chester University</td>
<td>Child Welfare Practice and Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widener University</td>
<td>Families at Risk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 In addition to the undergraduate course, Child Welfare Services, University of Pittsburgh undergraduate students are permitted to register for any of the graduate level courses shown in Table II (Appendix C) as electives. The two graduate courses Child and Family Policy and Children and Families at Risk can be used.
Appendix E

Table IV
Graduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEL Schools
2010 - 2011
### TABLE IV

**Graduate Child Welfare Course Offerings of Approved CWEL Schools for 2010-2011**  
*(University of Pittsburgh is shown on Table II)*

**Bryn Mawr College, Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research:**

- Adolescents in Family Therapy
- Child Welfare Policy, Practice and Research
- Clinical Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents
- Clinical Social Work and Substance Abuse
- Clinical Social Work and Trauma
- Clinical Social Work with Women in Families
- Family Therapy: Theory and Practice

**California University, Department of Social Work and Gerontology**

- Practice with Children and Youth
- Social Work with the African American Child
- Social Work with Substance Abuse/Addictions

**Edinboro University, Department of Social Work**

- Clinical Practice for Families and Children in Child Welfare
- Family Social Work Practice I
- Family Social Work Practice II

**Kutztown University, Department of Social Work**

- Interventions with Substance Abusing Populations
- Maltreatment in the Family
- Social Work with Family Groups
- Treatment Modalities for Social Work with Families

**Marywood University, School of Social Work**

- Critical Issues in Chemical Dependence
- Child Welfare Practices and Services
- Family Focused Social Work Practice
- Social Work Perspectives on Psychopathology
- Social Work Practice with Children
- Social Work Practice and Youth Development

*Advanced standing students attending Marywood University must take an additional course beyond that required for the MSW in order to meet the child welfare course requirements.*
Millersville/Shippensburg Universities, Department of Social Work/Department of Social Work and Gerontology

- Child Welfare
- Children and Youth at Risk

The University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Work

- Mental Health Diagnostics
- Middle Childhood and Adolescence
- Policies for Children and Their Families
- Poverty, Welfare and Work
- Practice with Families
- Practice with At-Risk Youth
- Prenatal and Early Childhood Development
- Practice with Children and Adolescents
- Substance Abuse Interventions
- Violence in Relationships through the Lifespan

Temple University, School of Social Administration

- Alcohol and Substance Abuse
- Assessment and the DSM-IV
- Child and Family Human Behavior in the Social Environment
- Child and Family Policy
- Emotional Disorders of Children and Adolescents

West Chester University, Graduate Department of Social Work

- Advanced Social Work Practice with Families
- Social Work in Child Welfare
- Social Work and Chemical Dependency

Widener University, Center for Social Work Education

- Advanced Social Work Practice with Families
- Biographical Timeline
- Child Welfare: Practice and Policy
- Social Work Practice with Addicted Persons and Their Families
- Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents
- Treating Trauma
Appendix F

CWEB County Participation Map
COUNTIES EMPLOYING AND/OR PROVIDING INTERNSHIPS FOR GRADUATES OF THE CHILD WELFARE EDUCATION FOR BACCALAUREATES PROGRAM 2001-2011
Appendix G

CWEB Overview
2001-2011
Charts 1-6
Chart I
Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates
2001-2011 New Admissions (Projected Through 2014)
Chart 3
Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates
2001-2011 Admissions by School and Ethnicity

Widener University
West Chester University
Temple University
Slippery Rock University
Shippensburg University
Pittsburgh, University of
Millersville University
Marywood University
Mansfield University
Lock Haven University
Kutztown University
Edinboro University
California University of PA
Bloomsburg University

Cumulative Number

African American
Caucasian
Latino
Multi-Racial
Other
Chart 4
Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates
2001-2011 Admission Demographics

Percentage

Female

Male

AA
Caucasian
Latino
MultiRacial
Other
Chart 5
Ethnicity Comparison
US Census Data 2010 for Pennsylvania and
Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates 2010-2011 New Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>2010 US Census Data For PA</th>
<th>2010-2011 CWEB New Admits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MultiRacial</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 6
Recent CWEB County Employment
Employment For Graduates -- Summer 2007 to Summer 2011

Indicates County of Hire
Appendix H

CWEL Overview
1995 - 2011
Charts 1 - 8
Chart I
Child Welfare Education for Leadership
Chart 5
Ethnicity Comparison
US Census Data 2010 for Pennsylvania and
Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates 2010-2011 New Admissions

- African American: 10.8% (2010 US Census Data For PA), 26.1% (2010-2011 CWEB New Admits)
- Caucasian: 79.5% (2010 US Census Data For PA), 65.2% (2010-2011 CWEB New Admits)
- Latino: 5.7% (2010 US Census Data For PA), 6.5% (2010-2011 CWEB New Admits)
- Multi-Racial: 1.9% (2010 US Census Data For PA), 0% (2010-2011 CWEB New Admits)
- Other: 2.9% (2010 US Census Data For PA), 2.2% (2010-2011 CWEB New Admits)
Chart 6
Child Welfare for Leadership
1995-2011 Admissions
by School & Full-time/Part-time Status

Percent

Widener University
West Chester University
Temple University
Shippensburg University
Pittsburgh, University of
Pennsylvania, University of
Millersville University
Marywood University
Kutztown University
Edinboro University
California University of PA
Bryn Mawr College

PT
FT
Chart 7
Child Welfare for Leadership
1995-2011 Admissions
Part-Time Trend
## Chart 8
### CWEL County Impact
#### Percent of Positions Historically Occupied by a CWEL Graduate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erie</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKean</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potter</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tioga</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susquehanna</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntington</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I

CWEL Applicant Pool and Admissions by Position and Years of Service
1995-2012 Academic Years
### TABLE I

**Child Welfare Education for Leadership**  
**1995-2012 Academic Year Applicant Pool**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counties Represented</th>
<th>Students Admitted*</th>
<th>Applicants Eligible But Unfunded</th>
<th>Applicants Ineligible**</th>
<th>Applicant Withdrew</th>
<th>TOTAL Applications***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95-09</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1043</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The category of “Students Admitted” for 2011-12 includes 3 people admitted for the 11-12 academic year who decided not to participate in CWEL immediately prior to the start of school.

** The category of “Ineligible” includes those not approved by their county or a school, those with less than one year of service, and applicants not employed by public child welfare agencies. It also includes those who did not complete their application, for personal or other reasons not known by CWEL.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>AVERAGE YEARS IN PRESENT AGENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95-2010</td>
<td>10-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseworker</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* “Other” includes Regional Representative, Program Representative, Program Analyst, Program Specialist, Program Coordinator, Agency Director, Associate Director, Director of Social Services, Casework Manager, and Administrator.
Appendix J

Program Evaluation Data Tables
Table 1
Average Scores per Item by Program Type and by Status for Current Students
(1=strongly disagree; 2=somewhat disagree; 3=neither agree nor disagree; 4=somewhat agree; 5=strongly agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>CWEB n=41</th>
<th>CWEL n=27 Full</th>
<th>CWEL n=51 Part-time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CWERP Program Processes</strong></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program information clearly explains the CWEB/CWEL program</td>
<td>4.27 (.85)</td>
<td>4.67 (.55)</td>
<td>4.55 (.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The application form instructions are clear</td>
<td>4.40 (1.03)</td>
<td>4.67 (.55)</td>
<td>4.68 (.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understood the contract</td>
<td>4.26 (.97)</td>
<td>4.52 (.64)</td>
<td>4.49 (.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website is easy to use</td>
<td>4.10 (1.05)</td>
<td>4.36 (.86)</td>
<td>4.42 (.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the handbook when I have a question</td>
<td>3.49 (1.21)</td>
<td>4.11 (.85)</td>
<td>4.16 (1.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The faculty (University of Pittsburgh) respond to my phone calls/email</td>
<td>3.95 (1.22)</td>
<td>4.78 (.50)</td>
<td>4.80 (.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The staff (University of Pittsburgh) respond to my phone calls/email</td>
<td>3.87 (1.28)</td>
<td>4.84 (.47)</td>
<td>4.75 (.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The faculty (University of Pittsburgh) helped me when I had a problem</td>
<td>3.92 (1.18)</td>
<td>4.67 (.66)</td>
<td>4.76 (.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The staff (University of Pittsburgh) helped me when I had a problem</td>
<td>3.76 (1.28)</td>
<td>4.72 (.55)</td>
<td>4.66 (.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Degree Program</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My academic advisor is familiar with the CWEB/CWEL program</td>
<td>4.30 (.88)</td>
<td>4.56 (.64)</td>
<td>4.36 (.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child welfare courses that I have taken are relevant</td>
<td>4.38 (1.09)</td>
<td>4.68 (.56)</td>
<td>4.62 (.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The faculty who teach the child welfare courses relate the content to practice</td>
<td>4.24 (1.21)</td>
<td>4.40 (.77)</td>
<td>4.57 (.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been able to apply what I learn in class to field/internship or job</td>
<td>4.31 (1.15)</td>
<td>4.60 (.46)</td>
<td>4.68 (.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field/Internship Experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have felt supported in the process of arranging my field/internship</td>
<td>3.95 (1.30)</td>
<td>3.96 (1.14)</td>
<td>3.77 (1.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have received good supervision in field</td>
<td>4.38 (.98)</td>
<td>4.19 (1.23)</td>
<td>4.33 (1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to try new ideas or skills from class in my field</td>
<td>4.16 (.98)</td>
<td>4.31 (.88)</td>
<td>4.50 (.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This field/internship has been a valuable learning experience</td>
<td>4.51 (.90)</td>
<td>4.08 (1.23)</td>
<td>4.47 (.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>CWEB n=41</td>
<td>CWEL n=27</td>
<td>CWEL n=51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency/field Interface</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average (SD)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average (SD)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average (SD)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My field supervisor is familiar with the requirements of the CWEB program</td>
<td>4.24 (.97)</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My field supervisor is familiar with the requirements of the State Civil Service</td>
<td>4.24 (.94)</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to easily arrange the time needed to go to classes</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>3.98 (1.16)</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to easily arrange the time needed to do my field placement</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>3.04 (1.46)</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My agency was able to accommodate my return in the summer</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>4.83 (.38)</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value of the degree to the Field</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My degree will help me to contribute to the field</td>
<td>4.51 (.95)</td>
<td>4.86 (.45)</td>
<td>4.76 (.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to use what I am learning when I am employed or return to a child welfare agency</td>
<td>4.54 (.89)</td>
<td>4.56 (.80)</td>
<td>4.69 (.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The CWEL or CWEB program gave me an educational opportunity that I would not have had otherwise</td>
<td>4.51 (.89)</td>
<td>4.93 (.28)</td>
<td>4.73 (.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The CWEL or CWEB program has positively impacted my development as a social work professional</td>
<td>4.44 (.95)</td>
<td>4.89 (.32)</td>
<td>4.78 (.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The CWEB and CWEL program should be made available to more students and child welfare workers</td>
<td>4.49 (.84)</td>
<td>4.93 (.27)</td>
<td>4.69 (.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a scale from 1-10, with 1 having the least value and 10 the great value, what is the value of the CWEB or CWEL program to the public child welfare system?</td>
<td><strong>8.27 (1.46)</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.26 (1.16)</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.20 (1.17)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( ^a p < .01 \) CWEB compared to CWEL  
\( ^b p < .05 \) CWEB compared to CWEL
Table 2
Average Scores per Item by Program Type for Recent Graduates
(1=strongly disagree; 2=somewhat disagree; 3=neither agree nor disagree; 4=somewhat agree; 5=strongly agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>CWEB n=15</th>
<th></th>
<th>CWEL n=65</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My program prepared me for working in a child welfare agency</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.931</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My skills were equal or better to other caseworkers not in the program</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>.946</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a better understanding of the complex problems of our families*</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.998</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My education had helped me to find new solutions to the problems that are typical of our families*</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>.627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am encouraged to practice my new skills in my position</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.814</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am encouraged to share my knowledge with other workers</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am given the opportunity and authority to make decisions</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is current opportunity for promotion in my agency</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can see future opportunities for advancing in my agency</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to remain at my agency after my commitment period is over</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My long term career plan is to work with children and families*</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend my agency to others for employment in social work</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend public child welfare services to others looking for employment in social work</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have seriously considered leaving public child welfare (lower scores = greater commitment)</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I were not contractually obligated to remain in public child welfare for my commitment, I would leave (lower scores = greater commitment)</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a scale from one to ten with 1 having the least value and 10 the most value what is the value of the CWEB and CWEL program to the public child welfare system</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05
Appendix K

Supplemental CWEB and CWEL Materials Available On-Line

http://www.socialwork.pitt.edu/research/child-welfare/annualrpt.php

- CWEB and CWEL Applications
- CWEB Frequently Asked Questions
- CWEL Frequently Asked Questions
- CWEB Student Handbook
- CWEL Student Handbook
- Program Evaluation Instruments
Appendix L

Child Welfare Research Sampler: Training Outcomes, Recruitment and Retention


This study investigated the factors that contribute to job retention and turnover in both public and voluntary child welfare agencies. 202 workers from voluntary agencies and 144 workers from a public agency participated in the research study, which consisted of a survey. Results from the study suggest that public agency workers are more content with their promotional opportunities, benefits, and the nature of work when compared to voluntary agency workers. Conversely, volunteer agency workers expressed greater satisfaction with their co-workers and a higher commitment to child welfare work than public agency workers.


A longitudinal research design with 416 participants was used to determine the effect that training and transfer of learning (TOL) in child welfare has on child welfare worker job retention. Study results support the notion that job training contributes to job retention in child welfare workers. Training and TOL may “communicate an investment in the worker’s career development which in turn increases the likelihood of a longevity investment by the worker to the agency.” Results also emphasize the importance of the supervisor and coworker’s roles in job retention. The researchers suggest, however, that continued research is necessary to clarify the relationship between training, transfer of learning, and child welfare worker job retention.


In this article, the researchers sought to extend the understanding of child welfare worker turnover beyond workers intent to leave, to specific job and work withdrawal behaviors. 621 child welfare workers from across one mid-Atlantic state participated in the study, which consisted of an online self-report survey. Independent variables included perceptions of organization/environment, personal and job factors, and attitudinal affective responses. Dependent variables included job withdrawal, work withdrawal, job search behaviors, and exit from the organization. Research
results state that organizational climate, particularly work stress, most directly contributes to job and work withdrawal, job search behaviors, and organization exit.


Available at: [http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J147v30n04_04](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J147v30n04_04)

This study examined long-term child welfare workers’ reasons and motivations for their job retention. Over three focus-group interviews, a sample of 21 child welfare workers and supervisors from urban, suburban, and rural areas were interviewed. Three major themes emerged to explain the sample’s continued employment in child welfare: movement, both beyond the boundaries of the agency and within it; importance of local management, including the need for professional and personal support from supervisors and local administrators; and educating novice workers, the need to adequately prepare and mentor new child welfare workers.


Forty-three states and 48 counties from seven locally administered states participated in this study. The study employed survey methodology. Findings from the state data indicate that: (1) vacancy rates are low among staff groups; (2) annual staff turnover rates are high for all groups except supervisors; (3) annual preventable turnover rates are high for all staff groups except supervisors; (4) the median percentage of all preventable turnovers in FY 2000 was very high; (5) the impact of vacancies on agencies is compounded by required pre-service training and phased-in caseload policies; (6) the dimensions and factors involved in staff recruitment problems are varied, complex, and widespread; (7) while states have implemented many strategies and approaches in response to recruitment problems, there are no “magic bullets or quick fixes”; (8) preventable staff turnover problems are complex, multi-dimensional, and widespread; (9) states have implemented many strategies and approaches to deal with preventable turnover problems, but their effectiveness has been modest; (10) there is a gap between the states’ rated recruitment and retention problems and their implementation of strategies to address such problems; (11) “softer” strategies (in-service training, educational opportunities) for addressing staff preventable turnover are important; (12) some states are successful and reported that their recruitment and/or preventable turnover situation improved in FY 2000; (13) states have many ideas about actions that should be taken by agencies to recruit and retain qualified child welfare service workers; (14) significant amounts of data are missing from some survey responses. In comparison, county responses indicate that: (1) vacancy rates are relatively low for all staff groups and are lower than state vacancy rates for all staff groups; (2) annual county staff turnover, like states, is quite high for all staff groups except supervisors; (3) annual county preventable turnover rates are very low for all worker groups; (4) the median percentage of all turnovers that are preventable in the responding counties are between 27% and 47% for all worker groups except supervisors; (5) counties and states responding to the survey view the factors involved in staff recruitment problems in a similar way; (6) like states, responding counties have implemented many strategies and approaches to lessen recruitment problems, but
similarly have not found “magic bullets or quick fixes”; (7) counties rated preventable turnovers as less problematic than states did; (8) like states, counties have implemented many strategies and approaches for addressing preventable turnover problems, but their rated effectiveness is higher than states; (9) counties also see “softer” strategies as important for addressing preventable turnover; (10) county child welfare agencies were somewhat more likely to seek additional resources from county boards as a result of the workforce crisis than states did with governors/state legislatures; and (11) the extent of change experienced by counties was somewhat more positive than states.


Available at: http://www.aphsa.org/Home/Doc/Workforce%20Report%202005.pdf

This report summarizes the data received from a survey done by the American Public Human Services Association, Fostering Results and the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research with funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts. Thirty-one (31) state-administered and eleven (11) locally administered child welfare programs responded to the survey instruments for a total of forty-two states (82%). The survey examined staffing issues, vacancy and turnover rates, workload, recruitment and retention strategies, and related information. Regarding “education and training,” the report concludes that “University-agency training partnerships and/or stipends for students was the highest rated recruitment strategy implemented by respondents while increased/improved in-service training, increased educational opportunities e.g. MSW, and increased/improved orientation/pre-service training were rated the top three most effective strategies implemented by the respondents to retain case-carrying child welfare workers. …quality supervision was ranked highly as a factor contributing to staff retention, and good supervision ranked as the top organizational and personal factor contributing to staff retention. Training for frontline supervisors is critical due to the impact supervisors have not only on the retention of frontline workers but also on the worker’s performance in the service to children and families.”


Available at: http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.aspx?pubguid={A4B76C41-76F0-4ACA-A475-1665F3519663}

This extensive report prepared by the Annie E. Casey Foundation outlines preliminary findings of job conditions of frontline social services workers and the problem they face. Findings show that the reasons child welfare workers leave their jobs are heavy workload, low status, low pay, and poor supervision. Motivations to stay in their jobs are sense of mission, good fit with job, investment in relationships, and professional standing. The report identifies eight fundamental problems that cripple all human services sectors: not finding sufficient numbers of quality staff, retaining quality staff, lower salaries to frontline workers than those in other jobs at comparable levels, limited opportunity for professional growth and advancement, poor supervision, little guidance and support, rule-bound jobs, education and training that do not match the roles and demands actually encountered on the job.

Available at: http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=vc4RVFHxvQAC&oi=fnd&pg=PA13&dq=Ashby,+C.+M.++(2004).+Child+welfare:+Improved+federal+oversight+could+assist+states+in+overcoming+key+challenges.+Testimony+before+the+subcommittee+on+human+resources,+committee+on+ways+and+means,+house+of+representative&ots=djFAhkmPKv&sig=rrze2NCsLpciWcgSLDKc_mK9MYE#v=onepage&q=&f=false

This testimony, which is based on findings from three reports, finds that child welfare agencies face a number of challenges related to staffing and data management that impair their ability to protect children from abuse and neglect. Low salaries hinder agencies’ ability to attract potential child welfare workers and retain those already in the profession. Additionally, high caseloads, administrative burdens, limited supervision, and insufficient training reduce the appeal of child welfare work. This report also finds that high-quality supervision and adequate on-the-job training are factors that influence caseworkers to stay in the child welfare profession.


Available at: http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/323166

The authors conducted a metaanalysis of 25 articles concerning the relationship between demographic variables, personal perceptions, organizational conditions and either turnover or intention to leave. Results suggest that burnout, job dissatisfaction, availability of employment alternatives, low organizational and professional commitment, stress, and lack of social support are the strongest predictors of turnover or intention to leave. When such decisions are based on organizational culture, supervisors can implement employee-targeted programs that are aimed at increasing job satisfaction.


Available at: http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/news/2000/03/child.htm

According to a 1998 survey, only 25% of social work graduates in the country take positions in public social services and only a portion of those choose child welfare. This is a national problem. Low salaries, excessive caseloads, low status, poor working conditions, and absence of career ladders are some of the factors which discourage graduates from applying for public agency positions.

Available at: http://www.familiesinsociety.org/ShowDOIAbstract.asp?docid=70

This review examines research on job satisfaction in child welfare systems and on other factors that influence a worker’s decision to leave a job or stay including organizational climate factors. Studies reviewed in this article report that the most satisfying work environment is one in which staff engage in self-actualizing work with clients, are encouraged to achieve, experience feelings of accomplishment, work collaboratively with their colleagues, and enjoy trust and permission to express anger appropriately. Motivational factors such as salary and working conditions can be individualized depending on the needs of employees. Studies that focus on factors affecting decision to stay or leave report that workers who remain in their child welfare positions despite burnout and other negative factors are those who come to the work with a sense of personal and professional mission, who have been well-matched to their positions or who have the flexibility to move to more suitable positions as their interests and needs change, and who enjoy supportive relationships with supervisors who relate to them in a consultative manner. Supervisors, who are able to promote trust; foster good communication; encourage input into decision making, creativity, and innovation; engage staff in goal-setting; clearly define roles; improve cooperation; and maintain open systems that are capable of taking in and responding to new information have a significant and positive impact on organizational climate.


Available at: http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7wDnIEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Examination+of+racial+imbalance+for+children+in+foster+care:+Implementations+for+training&ots=B6E8srulF7&sig=Vvju7F9pOxghLTGpnI0jiteoenE#v=onepage&q=&f=false

This study examined the training needs of an agency to address the high number of African American children in out-of-home care in an East Texas county. The study found that African American children were referred to public child welfare at twice the rate of Anglo children, with the ratio increasing during case progression. The study also found a higher proportion of African American children in the community and a higher poverty rate among these children. This study suggests that training should include generalist and advanced generalist social work education in order to assess, prevent, treat and evaluate interventions designed for the safety, permanency and well being of children. This study emphasizes the benefits of university/agency partnerships.

Available at: http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7wDnlEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Examination+of+racial+imbalance+for+children+in+foster+care:+Implementations+for+training&ots=B6E8sruIF7&sig=Vvju7F9pOxghLTGpnI0jteoenE#v=onepage&q=&f=false

This study explored a Texas university/agency partnership program to prepare social work students for public child welfare. The results of the outcome study showed that more than 79% of the BSW stipend students were hired upon completion of the internship. Fifty-six percent of those who were hired stayed beyond their commitment and the length of the employment ranged from one to nine years.


This study explored differences in perceptions of the child welfare agency work environment among Title IV-E educated individuals who remained employed within public child welfare and those who sought employment elsewhere after fulfilling a legal work commitment. Job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment were predictive of staying versus leaving. The evidence suggests that efforts to retain highly skilled and educated workers should focus upon creating positive organizational climates within agencies, including innovative ways to use the increased skills and abilities of MSW graduates.


Available at: http://rsw.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/18/6/565

Based on the current research of the causes for preventable turnover and theories related to organizational change, an intervention was designed to reduce turnover in public child welfare agencies. The intervention included three components: management consultations, capacity building for supervisors, and an intra-agency design team (DT). The DT intervention was a team of agency representatives who used research and critical thinking to identify and remedy causes of turnover in a particular agency. The DT members included the agency that has members representing units such as foster care and child protective services. The members were at several levels of the agency’s hierarchy frontline caseworker, senior caseworker, supervisor, director of services, and deputy commissioner. True buy in and endorsement from the County commissioners was essential to giving DT the authority to collect and review data and testing creative solutions. Preliminary results from four systems in the DT intervention study indicate that from wave 1 (2002) to wave 2 (2005), the nonintervention systems showed no significant improvement of 3% on intention to leave. At wave 1, 81% of the employees identified an intention to leave, while 78% indicated intention to leave at wave 2. On the other hand, the systems that received the DT intervention improved significantly by 22%, from 76% down to 54%.

Available at: 
http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=uaHgAVEPolwC&oi=fnd&pg=PA83&dq=Preparing%20for%20child%20welfare%20practice%3A%20Themes%2C%20a%20cognitive-affective%20model%2C%20and%20implications%20from%20a%20qualitative%20study&ots=gHVAasreg7&sig=Y3cSURfQW47fHciWlhw37gEOw-Y#v=onepage&q=Preparing%20for%20child%20welfare%20practice%3A%20Themes%2C%20a%20cognitive-affective%20model%2C%20and%20implications%20from%20a%20qualitative%20study&f=false

This qualitative study conducted 37 focus groups over four years with approximately 550 Title IV-E MSW students. The most frequent themes centered on direct practice: students emphasized direct practice as the most frequently mentioned strength of the curriculum as well as the most frequently mentioned weakness. Anxiety and apprehension about the emotional challenge of social work emerged as a theme.


Available at: 
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V98-4H68SWM-2&_user=88470&coverDate=07%2F31%2F2006&rdoc=1&fmt=&orig=search&sort=d&docanchor=&view=c&_acct=C000006998&_version=1&urlVersion=0&userid=88470&md5=94a099e962a68ed202f8a6cb3e9ce81

This study used administrative data from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families for a five year period from January 1, 1998 to December 31, 2002. A multivariate framework was used in order to investigate the likelihood of event occurrence using Cox proportional hazards modeling. Age played a significant role with the likelihood of reunification in that reunification was the lowest for infants and highest for children who entered care between ages 2 and 15; exit from foster care to adoption was the highest for infants and decreased with increasing age of the child; and children entering foster care between ages 2 and 5 were most likely to exit due to reunification. However, a history of two or more prior removals was associated with significantly lower rates of reunification. In addition, children placed in a relative foster care home were more likely to not be reunified or not adopted. Finally, children with known emotional or physical disabilities and those with a history of sexual abuse were less likely to reunify or to be adopted. The findings with respect to disability status and emotional behavioral problems and sexual trauma suggest that children with these risk factors are more challenging to move to permanency through reunification and adoption, and they require longer lengths of stay in care. This pattern suggests a need to emphasize finding stable and therapeutic treatment homes that will keep children in a stable setting so that their problems are not compounded by frequent placement transitions while in care.

Available at: http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7wDnlEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA89&dq=Factors+influencing+the+retention+of+specially+educated+public+child+welfare+workers&ots=B6E8srupF4&sig=4aWCFvzOnwO4gtMaIW_u2ma8Q8#v=onepage&q=Factors%20influencing%20the%20retention%20of%20specially%20educated%20public%20child%20welfare%20workers&f=false

This study examined the factors that affect the retention of specially trained social workers in public child welfare positions. Two hundred thirty-five Title IV-E funded MSW graduates completed the survey instrument. The findings showed that the level of emotional exhaustion, salary, percentage of work week spent doing court related tasks, and the extent to which respondents receive support from work peers and supervisors were significant factors that influenced graduates who remained in public child welfare employment and those who left or planned to leave public child welfare jobs. Worker burnout was the number one reason for leaving child welfare jobs.


Available at: http://www.socialwork.msu.edu/outreach/docs/ResilientCWWinterviews.pdf

This study involved interviews with 21 child welfare supervisors and frontline workers who were identified as “resilient” by their child welfare agency director. The goal was to identify factors related to worker and supervisor resiliency. Telephone survey interviews were conducted that included 26 open-ended questions. Results suggested a number of strategies to inform child welfare training curriculum and recruitment and retention efforts. This includes providing internship or volunteer opportunities for individuals interested in child welfare work prior to their actual application, maintaining a friendly, flexible, and positive work environment, enhancing supervisory support for new workers in their first year, and having clear job descriptions. Veteran workers also reported that lower caseloads, higher salary, training, workshops and attentiveness to prevent burnout have also contributed to their tenure in the agency.


This Kentucky pilot program combined the experience of seven undergraduate social work programs and public child welfare agency trainers to prepare students for immediate entry into the public sector at an advanced practice level. Students (n=27) who were enrolled in the program scored significantly higher on the family services, competency-based training than comparable BSW students. The participants noted that the program was extremely successful and recommended that all BSW students have exposure to it.

Available at: 
http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=uaHgAVEPolwC&oi=fnd&pg=PA67&dq=Finding+and+keeping+child+welfare+workers:+effective+use+of+training+and+professional+development&ots=gHVAassaj9&sig=svKJpDgBy8yxZZJkJYP8KewHANK4#v=onepage&q=Finding%20and%20keeping%20child%20welfare%20workers%3A%20effective%20use%20of%20training%20and%20professional%20development&f=false

This article describes an evaluation of the Kentucky Public Child Welfare Certification Program (PCWCP) designed to recruit excellent workers from BSW programs who are prepared to take on complex cases with normal supervision within weeks of employment and to sustain those workers over time. The results of the pilot study show that agency supervisors consider the graduates to be: better prepared to handle complex cases much sooner than other new employees including BSW graduates, less stressed and much more confident, more skilled in interacting with clients, more knowledgeable of agency policy and procedures and, much more positive in their attitudes about the agency and their job.


Available at: 
http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=T5D7wDNlEhoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA69&dq=Child+welfare+knowledge+transmission,+practitioner+retention,+and+University+-+community+impact:+A+study+of+Title+IV-E+child+welfare+training&ots=B6E8srvKx2&sig=Q07yfcpPXZn8HeAvT7G1jXP23qY#v=onepage&q=Child%20welfare%20knowledge%20transmission%2C%20practitioner%20retention%2C%20and%20University%20community%20impact%3A%20study%20of%20Title%20IV-E%20child%20welfare%20training&f=false

This study compares child welfare knowledge of Louisiana’s MSW and BSW Title IV-E stipend students with non-stipend students using a quasi-experimental design. The study found that on a test of child welfare knowledge, students in MSW and BSW programs scored higher following child welfare training.


Available at:  
This article describes Nebraska’s process for measuring the costs of CPS worker turnover. “The formulas and process for calculating specific cost elements due to separation, replacement and training are provided. The practical considerations inherent in this type of analysis are highlighted, as well as the use of this type of data to inform agency human resource strategies.”


A national qualitative study explored recruitment and retention strategies within state child welfare agencies and the perceived effectiveness of such strategies. The study explored 50 state child welfare websites and interviews with 18 individuals (in 13 states). Findings suggest that agencies struggle with heightened turnover rates despite continuing identification and implementation of comparable types of recruitment and retention efforts. National utilized and underutilized strategies to alleviate recruitment and retention challenges are discussed, as well as mechanisms for overcoming these obstacles and promoting innovation. Creativity, new strategies, and other innovative forces have been important factors in improving recruitment and retention in other fields (i.e. nursing).


This article describes the development and factor analysis of the Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI), designed to measure system-level factors related to the likelihood of transfer of learning. Using a sample of 1,616 employees in a wide variety of organizations, the study found sixteen factors that affect transfer of learning with high to moderate reliability. The LTSI is recommended for use in research and organizations as a method to measure the organizational environment related to training transfer.

This retrospective study examined the retention rates of a Title IV–E program’s graduates in a public child welfare agency. The sample size was 266. The study found that Title IV–E trained social workers were more likely to have remained employed for a longer period of time than non-IV–E trained employees. Other important predictors were Spanish speaking, having an MSW, and being rehired by the agency.


Available at: http://rsw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/10/5/607

A three-year, quasi-experimental study of 266 workers hired in California between 1994 and 1997. New workers who had earned master’s degrees in social work through the California Social Work Education Center (CALSVEC) were compared with all others hired by the Department of Social Services for positions in public child welfare during the same time. “IV-E-trained workers scored higher on a test of child welfare knowledge, and they expressed more confidence in their ability to perform basic child welfare tasks than did other workers. Eighty-nine percent of IV-E workers were still employed at the study close... Contrary to expectations, IV-E workers were not more satisfied with their jobs than other workers... IV-E workers found making home visits in high crime areas to be less stressful than their counterparts... Title IV-E workers were more likely to remain employed at DSS than the non-IV-E workers. IV-E status was virtually the only variable that predicted length of employment at DSS... The more competent someone felt, the more likely they remained at DSS... Data suggest that bachelor’s level workers are more likely to exit employment than workers with higher levels of education. Master’s level workers had longer periods of employment.”


This report is the result of a twelve-month study on child welfare workforce recruitment and retention in Maryland carried out by the University of Maryland School of Social Work. Multiple sources of data were utilized for the study such as data collected from the state Department of Human Resources, local agency databases, self-report survey, focus groups and scanning for best and promising practices. The current state of the child welfare workforce suggested that turnover showed a steady upward trend from 2004 to 2006, and that some agencies lost almost a quarter of their workforce yearly. Seasonal trends were uncovered in that vacancies decreased in the spring and summer, corresponding to the University Schedules and the availability of new graduates. Caseload size and salaries were also examined. While Caseload size and supervisory ratios were within the national range, caseworker salaries lagged behind professions of comparable education and responsibility e.g. nursing, education, police work. Multivariate analyses were performed on the survey data to determine what factors best explain employees’ job and work withdrawal and search behaviors. Intent to leave (job withdrawal) had similar but also different predictors from work withdrawal (being late, not completing work). The study concludes that while there were
external factors that are not under the control of the agency, job and organizational factors that are within the control of DHR could address and suggestion and actionable items are provided by the study authors.


This study explores the crisis involving increased staff turnover rates in child welfare agencies. The aim of the exploration was to determine which relevant variables (organizational, personal, and supervisory) previously identified are most related to a worker’s intent to leave urban and rural child welfare settings. A survey was administered to 447 employees in 13 agencies to address organizational, personal, and supervisory factors. Data analysis included ANOVA, logistical regression, and structural equation modeling. Organizational and supervisory variables were not found to be significant when data were applied to structural equation modeling. Results did suggest that career satisfaction and satisfaction with paperwork are key factors related to a worker’s intention to stay.


This study used metanalytic techniques to examine the factors that were related to intention to quit and turnover among child welfare, social work, and other human service employees. Twenty-five articles were reviewed for this purpose. The study found that burnout, job dissatisfaction, availability of employment alternatives, low organizational and professional commitment, stress, and lack of social support were the strongest predictors of turnover or intention to leave. The findings suggest that “in order for employees to remain on the job, they need to feel a sense of satisfaction from the work that they do and a sense of commitment to the organization or the population served by it.”


This is a summary article of Glisson, Duke, and Green’s (2006) randomized study of the Availability, Responsiveness, and Continuity (ARC) program on child welfare organizational culture, climate, and turnover of child welfare workers. The article highlights the saliency of this research in that it demonstrates one of the first strong links between organizational intervention in child welfare and child and family outcomes. The author highlights the important components of the ARC intervention, including the need to emphasize child welfare internal working capacity and the
work environment over inter-organizational relationships with other community providers, which in previous research has shown to negatively influence service quality. The author encourages research to replicate Glisson’s work, and to compare outcomes for organizations, children, and families when implementing different models of organizational change.


This article addresses several unique training challenges that the state of Kansas confronts under a managed care model. Some of the issues that affect training needs of child welfare professionals are the timing of training delivery relative to new employment, turnover in contracted agencies, and managing relationships with multiple partners.


Available at: http://www.ffta.org/research_outcomes/annotation_pecora_kessler_obrien.pdf

This study was designed to evaluate the intermediate and long term effects of foster care on young adults who were served in two public and one private child welfare agencies. Case record reviews and interviews were used to answer these research questions: what are the educational achievements of the alumni; what is the financial situation of the alumni; and what foster care experiences were associated with educational achievement and a positive financial situation? While they found that foster care alumni completed high school at a rate comparable to the general population, a disproportionately high number completed through a GED. Alumni completion rates for postsecondary education were low, and many alumni were in fragile economic situations. Two foster care experience areas reduced undesirable outcomes in the education domain: placement stability and broad independent living preparation (having concrete living resources). Financial outcomes were improved when youth left care with independent living resources such as household goods. The implications for improving outcomes for transitioning youth are to intervene in order to reduce placement disruptions and to assist youth broadly when leaving care by providing household items and financial resources.

Available at: http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=uaHgAVEPolwC&oi=fnd&pg=PA21&dq=Use+of+Title+IV-E+funding+in+BSW+programs.&ots=gHVAast9de&sig=nCET6jzJsgPiizXOkeJE20HkqvM#v=onepage&q=Use%20of%20Title%20IV-E%20funding%20in%20BSW%20programs.&f=false

A survey design was used to find if all BSW programs in 1998-1999 were using Title IV-E funds to provide support for students who would agree to work in public child welfare programs after graduation. Out of 464 schools that were sent a questionnaire, 282 programs returned the questionnaire. The study found that of the schools that responded, 48 received Title-IV funding for BSW students. Program directors were asked if they included child welfare content in the curriculum. About one-fourth of the programs said they had child welfare course as required; fifteen percent had child welfare course as electives; only 4 percent required child welfare courses for all students; 20% had combination of the above; and the rest of the programs (34%) had no child welfare content in their courses.


Available at: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12705464

This study of 73 MSW graduates from 1993-1996 and 32 survey respondents assesses the extent to which IV-E MSW graduates remain engaged in child welfare following completion of their employment obligations to the IV-E program. The study found that “the vast majority of graduates funded by IV-E dollars became employed in and stayed in child welfare services, and that these social work-educated social workers are actively involved in shaping the practice, policies and administration of child welfare services.”


Available at: http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=uaHgAVEPolwC&oi=fnd&pg=PA35&dq=Do+collaborations+with+social+work+make+a+difference+for+the+field+of+child+welfare%3F+practice,+retention+and+curriculum.&ots=gHVAastcdd&sig=FmRXC0M0YBVSoBsBuriN4CJWl46w#v=onepage&q=Do%20collaborations%20with%20social%20work%20make%20a%20difference%20for%20the%20field%20of%20child%20welfare%3F%20practice%2C%20retention%20and%20curriculum.&f=false

This article provides three areas of evaluation of a partnership between a school of social work and a state department of child protective services. The first study determines the impact and success of
the Title IV-E program from both the students’ and the larger community’s perspective. The findings of surveys administered to both MSW Title IV-E students and to supervisors and administrators of Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (TDPRS) showed that approximately 50% of students agreed that their Masters education had improved their skills and relationship with their employers, community, and the profession. Administrator survey results showed 47% agreed that MSW’s have a better ability to use various interventions with clients than do bachelor-level employees. The second study determined the retention of Title IV-E participants in the agency. The study found that the reasons to remain employed at CPS were commitment to work, flexible schedule and increase in professionalism. Salary was reported as the most frequent reason for leaving CPS. The third study determines the current level of child welfare content in MSW curricula. The study found that 60% of respondents stated that an adequate emphasis was currently being placed on child welfare content, and 49% of respondents felt that there should be more emphasis on child welfare content in the future. The findings of the three studies suggest that Title IV-E funding is essential to the specialized training and education needed by child welfare workers.


Organizational culture and climate elements have not been extensively considered in the social welfare literature, especially in the domain of child welfare. This article addresses this gap by systematically exploring these factors and their effects on child welfare employee turnover. This exploration uses data collected by the New York State Social Work Education Consortium in 2002 and 2003. Organizational culture is organized by factors of achievement/innovation/competence, cooperation/supportiveness/responsiveness, and emphasis on rewards (ER). Organizational climate is classified by role clarity, personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion (EE), and workloads. A logistic regression model was used to analyze a worker’s intent to leave his or her current job. Findings suggest that both organizational culture and climate factors, particularly ER and EE, are significantly related to a worker’s intention to leave. Thus, employees emphasizing the values of organizational culture and climate have less intention to leave their current positions. This is an indication that child welfare agencies may improve organizational culture and climate by appropriately addressing elements (i.e. reinforcing ER and minimizing EE).

Southern Regional Quality Improvement Center. (2002). Summary of Results of Needs Assessment. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky. Available at: [http://rsw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/18/1/72](http://rsw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/18/1/72)

Ten states (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia) in the rural south were selected for this study. The study implemented focus groups and conducted a content analysis of data collected from state documents. Several topics were raised in the focus groups, including: supervision/casework supervision, organizational culture, strengthening assessment of families, and retention issues. Similarly, the content analysis revealed the following categories of need: assessment, service provision,
information systems, retention, and supervision. The report suggests a supervisory approach that may correct existing problems in these states.


This study reviews a clinical consultation model that was developed and tested with child welfare supervisors in public and private agencies in a large urban municipality over a three year period. The project involved existing university-child welfare partnerships, faculty from six social work schools, and the child welfare system. Evaluation methods included pre and post self-assessment instruments, a consumer satisfaction questionnaire, and follow-up measures at the three and 15 month post-program participation points. Data demonstrated significant increases in the self-assessment scores from the pilot study (year one) to year two. Intervention fidelity remained consistent across years two and three, with statistically significant changes in self-assessment scores in each year. Findings suggest that the clinical consultation model offers a tool for professional development and professional decision making that is transferable to comparable large cities and child welfare systems with similar staff/client numbers.


This article focuses on the effects of an organizational intervention on intention to leave child welfare. It is one of only two studies of its kind. A non-equivalent comparison group design was used with 12 child welfare agencies participating in either the Design and Improvement Teams (DT) intervention condition or in a comparison condition. Pre and post-intervention assessments of organizational factors and intention to leave took place. No significant interactions were noted for the organizational variables of workload, salary/benefits, and rewards. Findings do indicate significant interactions for three organizational variables (professional resources, commitment, and burnout) and intention to leave. All of these interactions showed a greater positive improvement for the DT group than the comparison group. A good model fit was demonstrated with pathways leading from the intervention through intervening organizational variables to intention to leave. Interventions at the organizational level could help child welfare agencies improve organizational shortcomings, positively affect perceptions of burnout, role clarity, and job satisfaction, decrease intentions to leave, and improve service quality.


The authors provide an overview of the causes and effects of workforce turnover in child welfare, which has been a persistent problem for more than four decades. Causes of workforce turnover are
categorized into three areas commonly cited throughout the relevant literature: individual factors (i.e. burnout), supervisory factors (i.e. supportive supervision), and organizational factors (i.e. job satisfaction). In comparison to the causes of workforce turnover, empirical research on the effects of such turnover in child welfare is limited. This paper explores the need for innovative empirical knowledge regarding the link between workforce turnover and outcomes in the field of child welfare. The literature concludes with consideration of the gaps and inconsistencies in previous research and related implications for social work profession, education, and practice.


This article describes an attempt by a public agency in Texas to address the high turnover rate of CPS caseworkers. The theory behind the pilot project was to have workers develop their own work schedules from their homes, allowing them the flexibility needed for meeting clients. The study found that: job satisfaction improved; there was a significant increase in compliance with quality standards; turnover decreased, and supervisory relationships were strengthened. However, there was no improvement in productivity and timeliness.

The Western Regional Recruitment &Retention Project Final Report

Available at: http://www.thebutlerinstitute.org/images/WRRRPFiles/WRRRP%20Final%20Report%20Final.pdf

The Western Regional Recruitment and Retention Project (WRRRP) addressed recruitment, selection, and retention issues in five rural and urban sites in the greater Rocky Mountain region – Colorado, Arizona, and Wyoming. Multiple training curricula and other resources were developed to attend to cross-site issues. Comprehensive organizational assessments were conducted using quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the agency, the worker, and the job. This information was used to create a strategic plan addressing the conditions that impact recruitment, selection, training, and retention. Each site interpreted the information from the organizational assessment, developed sites specific strategic plans of needs, priorities, and training intervention strategies. Throughout the five year project, WRRRP staff provided support, technical assistance and training. Evaluation activities were conducted throughout the project’s life to assess process and outcome results and to provide on-going assessment to make mid-course corrections. A major finding of the outcome evaluation was improved retention for caseworkers, supervisors and aides. A Qualitative finding of note was the importance of good supervision in retaining workers. The authors also note that • No single intervention will resolve the problems of ineffective recruitment and retention: A multi-pronged approach addressing recruitment, selection, training, and retention is necessary.


Available at: http://www.cwla.org/ADVOCACY/adoption031106.htm
This extensive report prepared by the GAO identifies the challenges child welfare agencies face in recruiting and retaining child welfare workers. Nearly 600 exit interview documents completed by staff who severed their employment from 17 state, 40 county, and 19 private child welfare agencies and interviews with child welfare experts and officials were primarily analyzed to get the results. The findings show that low salaries, in particular, hinder agencies’ ability to attract potential child welfare workers and to retain those already in the field. Other factors affecting retention are disparities in the salaries between public and private child welfare workers, high caseloads, administrative burdens, limited supervision, and insufficient training.


This study of 129 child welfare workers at the six-month follow-up found that the opportunity to perform new tasks and post-training peer support were important factors explaining training transfer. The results of this study suggest that greater involvement by trainees in the training process may positively influence child welfare workers learning of new skills and their ability to transfer them back to the practice setting.


Available at: http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/hs3622h638.pdf

This is a systematic review of 25 different research studies that focus on the retention of child welfare workers. The review aimed to address the question of the primary “conditions and strategies that influence the retention of staff in public child welfare.” The authors found that the most consistent characteristics related to retention were individual’s level of education, supervisory support, and worker caseload. The authors highlight the value of Title IV-E educational initiatives to recruit invested workers in pursuing advanced degrees in social work, and the negative impact that role overload and burnout have on retention. Recommendations are to increase the rigor and amount of research that is conducted in this area and to create a clearinghouse to regularly disseminate information about effective strategies in retaining workers and improving services that child welfare workers provide.

(*) Indicates that the abstract was provided by:

## Appendix M

Child Welfare Education and Research Programs
CWEB/CWEL Faculty and Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position Title</th>
<th>CWEB/CWEL Percent of Effort</th>
<th>Employment Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helen Cahalane, Ph.D., LCSW, ACSW</td>
<td>Principal Investigator</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>1/20/97 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Bradley-King, Ph.D.</td>
<td>CWEB Academic Coordinator</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>8/21/06 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline C. Donohue, MSW, ACSW</td>
<td>CWEL Field and Placement Coordinator</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7/1/95 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvonne Hamm, BA</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>6/28/10 - present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christie Incorvati, BA</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>7/28/08 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynda Rose, BS</td>
<td>Data/Systems Manager and Student Records Coordinator</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>8/4/10 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlo Perry, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Research Assistant Professor</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>8/1/10 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Beth Rauktis, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Research Assistant Professor</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10/1/07 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Schrecengost, MPPM, CMA</td>
<td>Business and Personnel Manager</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>3/3/03 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Winter, Ph.D., LSW</td>
<td>CWEL Academic Coordinator</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6/1/06 – present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Winters, M.A.</td>
<td>Evaluation Coordinator</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>3/16/09 – present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>