



MCWEP

MASTERS CHILD WELFARE EDUCATION PROGRAM 2015-16 ANNUAL REPORT

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT



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LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONGOING PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The Masters Child Welfare Education Program (MCWEP) is a partnership among the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF), the New Jersey Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-NJ), and a consortium of three graduate social work programs – The Monmouth University School of Social Work MSW Program, the Rutgers University School of Social Work MSW Program, and the Stockton University MSW Program. In the Spring of 2016, we welcomed Kean University’s Master of Social Work Program to the Consortium. However, Kean’s first cohort of MCWEP students will enter in the Fall 2017 semester, so no data included in this report pertains to Kean University. The MCWEP partnership was formally initiated in June 2012, when the project was funded by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families.

The intent of MCWEP is to enhance the knowledge and skills of supervisors who are currently employed at the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), through completion of a Master’s Degree in Social Work (MSW). Through participation in MCWEP, DCP&P supervisors broaden their perspectives on social work and child welfare (including evidence-based public child welfare practice), develop advanced clinical skills, and deepen their supervisory skills so that they become more confident supervisors and mentors in the work with at-risk children and families and more effective leaders in promoting exemplary practice within New Jersey’s public child welfare system.

This program evaluation covers the months of August 2015 – July 2016. In evaluating the project, the perspectives of the students were sought to capture the academic and experiential components of the program. This report includes data from respondents in four cohorts of MCWEP, which includes 54 DCP&P supervisors, 19 casework supervisors, and one local office manager. The majority of students are women (84%), and as a group, they have hundreds of years of combined supervisory experience with DCP&P. Approximately 36% are African American, 28% are Latino, and 28% are Caucasian. The MCWEP students are divided among the three consortium schools and represent about 75% of DCP&P local and area offices.



Descriptive Data - A total of seventy-four (74) students were funded during the first four years of the program. The following tables provide some descriptive data about the students admitted to cohorts 1, 2, 3, and 4.

SUMMARY DATA ON MCWEP STUDENTS

	# of Students				
AGE GROUP	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	TOTAL # (% of Total)
30-35	7	3	1	1	12 (16%)
36-40	6	5	10	5	26 (35%)
41-45	4	4	5	4	17 (23%)
46-50	2	3	3	5	13 (18%)
>51	1	3	1	1	6 (8%)
TOTAL	20	18	20	16	74
	# of Students				
GENDER	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	TOTAL # (% of Total)
FEMALE	18	16	17	11	62 (84%)
MALE	2	2	3	5	12 (16%)
TOTAL	20	18	20	16	74
	# of Students				
ETHNICITY	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	TOTAL # (% of Total)
African American	8	7	3	9	27 (36%)
Caucasian	6	8	5	2	21 (28%)
Latino	6	3	8	4	21 (28%)
Other/Unknown	----	----	4	1	5 (7%)
TOTAL	20	18	20	16	74



	# of Students				
DCP&P TITLE	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	TOTAL # (% of Total)
SFSS1/CWS	5	8	4	2	19 (26%)
SFSS2	14	10	16	14	54 (73%)
LOM	1	----	----	----	1 (1%)
TOTAL	20	18	20	16	74
	# of Students				
YRS In Current Position	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	TOTAL # (% of Total)
1-5 years	8	5	6	9	28 (38%)
6-10 Years	8	8	13	2	31 (42%)
11-15 years	4	4	1	5	14 (19%)
16-20 years	----	1	----	----	1 (1%)
>20 years	----	----	----	----	0 (0%)
TOTAL	20	18	20	16	74
	# of Students				
SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	TOTAL # (% of Total)
Monmouth University	6	6	7	7	19 (26%)
Rutgers University	8	7	8	5	23 (31%)
Stockton University	6	5	5	4	16 (22%)
TOTAL	20	18	20	16	74
	Students Who Separated from MCWEP				
SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	TOTAL # (% of Total)
Monmouth University	----	1	1	----	2 (3%)
Rutgers University	----	----	----	1	1 (1%)
Stockton University	----	----	1		1 (1%)
TOTAL	0	1	2	1	4 (5%)



Number of Students Admitted from DCP&P Local and Area Offices:

Atlantic East:	1
Atlantic West:	2
Atlantic/Burlington/Cape May Area:	0
Bergen Central:	2
Bergen South:	3
Bergen/Hudson Area:	1
Burlington East:	2
Burlington West:	0
Camden Central:	2
Camden East:	4
Camden North:	3
Camden South:	4
Camden Area:	0
Cape May:	2

Cumberland East:	0
Cumberland West:	0
Cumberland/Gloucester/Salem Area:	0
Essex Central:	3
Essex North:	0
Essex South:	3
Essex Area:	0
Gloucester East:	1
Gloucester West:	2
Hudson Central:	2
Hudson North:	0
Hudson South:	1
Hudson West:	1
Hunterdon:	0

Hunterdon/Mercer/Somerset/Warren Area:	1
Mercer North:	4
Mercer South:	2
Middlesex Central:	0
Middlesex Coastal:	6
Middlesex West:	2
Middlesex/Union Area:	0
Monmouth North:	4
Monmouth South:	4
Morris East:	1
Morris West:	3
Morris/Sussex/Passaic Area:	1
Newark Center City:	2
Newark Northeast:	3

Newark South:	1
Ocean North:	3
Ocean South:	1
Ocean/Monmouth Area:	0
Passaic Central:	5
Passaic North:	6
Salem:	2
Somerset:	1
State Central Registry:	1
Sussex:	1
Union Central:	1
Union East:	0
Union West:	2
Warren:	1



MCWEP Anticipated Graduation Dates – Cohort 1

Anticipated Graduation Date	# (%) of Students in Cohort 1 Graduating	% of Cohort 1 Graduated, by Date
May 2014*	2 (10%)	10%
September 2014*	1 (5%)	15%
December 2014*	2 (10%)	25%
July 2015*	6 (30%)	55%
December 2015*	4 (20%)	75%
May 2016*	5 (25%)	100%
TOTAL	20 (100%)	

MCWEP Anticipated Graduation Dates – Cohort 2

Anticipated Graduation Date	# (%) of Students in Cohort 2 Graduating	% of Cohort 2 Graduated, by Date
May 2015*	1 (6%)	6%
May 2016	3 (18%)	24%
July 2016	7 (41%)	65%
December 2016	6 (35%)	100%
TOTAL	17** (100%)	

MCWEP Anticipated Graduation Dates – Cohort 3

Anticipated Graduation Date	# (%) of Students in Cohort 3 Graduating	% of Cohort 3 Graduated, by Date
May 2016*	1 (5%)	5%
July 2017	8 (42%)	47%
December 2017	10 (53%)	100%
TOTAL	19** (100%)	

MCWEP Anticipated Graduation Dates – Cohort 4

Anticipated Graduation Date	# (%) of Students in Cohort 4 Graduating	% of Cohort 4 Graduated, by Date
July 2018	5 (31%)	31%
December 2018	11 (69%)	100%
TOTAL	15** (100%)	

*Indicates students who have already graduated

**One or more student(s) withdrew from the program prior to graduation



PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Competency-Based Assessment

Program assessment in MSW education focuses on student outcomes (the extent to which students demonstrate competencies and associated practice behaviors), rather than inputs (curriculum content). Similarly, assessment in the Masters Child Welfare Education Program (MCWEP) is focused on student attainment of a set of competencies and associated practice behaviors. Under the Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), all MSW graduates are expected to have mastered certain competencies. In addition, each participating MSW program has its own direct practice/clinical concentration and has developed a set of advanced MSW competencies to guide learning in the classroom and field. All students in MSW programs are assessed for mastery of the CSWE competencies and the specific advanced competencies established by their MSW programs. To assess the additional mastery of competencies required by MCWEP, we use the specialized competencies that students develop through their participation in MCWEP. These competencies specifically address the Division of Child Protection and Permanency requirements that child welfare supervisors have an exceptionally well-developed perspective on the knowledge base in social work and child welfare practice, are able to effectively teach clinical skills and theories, and are able to supervise effectively in an organization where workers regularly make difficult decisions that affect the lives of vulnerable children and families. These two sets of competencies, trauma-informed child welfare practice behaviors and leadership and supervision in child welfare practice behaviors, are developed in two elective courses all MCWEP participants are required to take prior to graduation. These two sets of competencies are also rehearsed and reinforced during the sessions of the Learning Community.

MCWEP students completing one or both courses during the 2015-2016 academic year rated their own mastery of these specialized competencies. The following summarizes the results of those self-assessments.





Assessment of Student Learning – Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice

Students were asked to rate the degree to which they agree with the listed statements regarding Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice Behaviors. Mean scores are reported below (1 = Very Much Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Very Much Agree):

Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Competencies	Mean Score			
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
1. I am able to integrate the concept of “child traumatic stress” in case practice and supervision by knowing what types of experiences constitute childhood trauma and utilize a trauma-informed lens to manage child welfare cases.	4.71	4.71	4.82	4.94
2. I am able to apply knowledge of how traumatic experiences affect brain development and memory and understand the relationship between a child’s lifetime trauma history and his or her responses through comprehensive case planning.	4.29	4.47	4.55	4.76
3. I can articulate how trauma has an impact on the behavior of children over the course of childhood and how child traumatic stress is exacerbated over time by ongoing stressors (including separation from/loss of caregivers, and/or foster placement) in a child’s environment and within the child welfare system.	4.43	4.65	4.36	4.82
4. I am able to identify and promote the utilization of trauma-sensitive interventions such as strategic referrals to timely, quality, and effective trauma-focused interventions and trauma-informed case planning with multi-disciplinary teams.	4.29	4.41	4.45	4.76
5. I can articulate how the impact of traumatic stress can be prevented and/or mitigated by trauma-informed responses of child welfare workers and child welfare systems.	4.43	4.35	4.36	4.71
6. I am able to consider how cultural factors influence the manner by which children may identify, interpret, and respond to traumatic events during the case practice process.	4.43	4.35	4.45	4.71
7. I am able to identify the impact of secondary traumatic stress (STS) on child welfare workers and employ appropriate interventions.	4.43	4.41	4.27	4.71
8. I support Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) goals of safety, permanency, and well-being by increasing skills to effectively serve children and families (biological and resource) in the child welfare system that have experienced traumatic stress.	4.57	4.71	4.36	4.71



Assessment of Student Learning – Leadership and Supervision in Child Welfare

Students were asked to rate the degree to which they agree with the listed statements regarding Child Welfare Leadership and Supervision Competencies. Mean scores are reported below (1 = Very Much Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Very Much Agree):

Child Welfare Leadership and Supervision Competencies	Mean Score			
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
1. I am able to assess my own strengths and challenges as a leader.	5.00	4.83	4.85	4.87
2. I am able to describe key qualities of leaders and the impact on child welfare systems and staff.	4.33	4.75	4.45	4.93
3. I can demonstrate an understanding of the role of ethics and the systems perspective in leadership behavior as a supervisor.	5.00	4.83	4.85	4.87
4. I am able to describe key child welfare workforce issues, trends, and challenges from a national perspective.	4.00	4.66	4.85	4.47
5. I can demonstrate the ability to identify evidence-based practice in child welfare supervision.	4.00	4.83	4.85	4.67
6. I am able to demonstrate an understanding of the stages and key issues in the implementation of change initiatives.	4.67	4.92	4.45	4.53
7. I am able to understand the relationship of creating a learning culture to staff retention and performance.	5.00	4.83	4.45	4.80
8. I am able to describe interactional clinical supervision and discuss how it would be implemented in a public child welfare setting.	5.00	5.00	4.92	4.67
9. I can describe and apply strategies to foster an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued.	4.33	4.58	4.45	4.67
10. I am able to describe the impact of trauma on worker retention and list strategies to mitigate the stress of secondary trauma.	3.67	4.58	4.18	4.87



Learning Community Assessment

The Learning Community is an integral component of MCWEP designed to enhance students' MSW classroom and field learning experiences and meaningfully connect these experiences to child welfare practice and supervision. The purpose of the MCWEP Learning Community is to foster a state-wide network of MCWEP participants to disseminate educational information related to child welfare and encourage dialogue among participants regarding MSW education and translation of educational outcomes to workforce experiences. The Learning Community also provides an avenue for process evaluation of the needs of student participants in MCWEP.

The Learning Community has two components in which MCWEP participants are expected to be involved. In the online discussion board, students respond to discussion threads posted by Learning Community Coordinators. The second component involves quarterly in-person meetings where students have opportunities to gain further education, disseminate information in group presentation format, and engage in process evaluation.

After each Learning Community Meeting, an evaluation was administered to capture how effective the meeting was. Mean scores for each of the items were above 4.47 in all cases, indicating that students were highly satisfied with their experiences in the Learning Community.

The following data represent information gathered from each of the four (4) Learning Community Meetings that took place during the 2015-2016 academic year:





Learning Community Evaluation Results

Learning Community	Activities	Evaluation	Mean Score (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)
August 14, 2015 9:00am – 4:00pm DCF Professional Center New Brunswick, NJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation to MCWEP mission/ purpose/structure • Keynote Speaker – Allison Blake, Commissioner, New Jersey DCF • Recognition of MCWEP Graduates • Self-care and Success in Graduate School 	1. The speakers demonstrated expertise on the subject matter presented.	4.73
		2. The speakers communicated in a clear and organized manner.	4.73
		3. The speakers were able to hold my interest.	4.68
		4. The methods of the presentation were effective.	4.68
		5. The content was directly related to MCWEP.	4.68
		6. Handouts supplemented presented material.	4.63
		7. I will use content from this learning community meeting in my work as a DCP&P Supervisor	4.58
		8. The content of this learning community was helpful to me as an MSW student	4.56
November 13, 2015 9:00am – 4:00pm DCF Professional Center New Brunswick, NJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided discussion in Cohorts • “Gaps in Services for Diverse Populations” • Group/Student Presentations “MSW Curriculum Basics” • “The Social Construction of Difference, Cultural Competency, and Child Welfare” 	1. The speakers demonstrated expertise on the subject matter presented.	4.68
		2. The speakers communicated in a clear and organized manner.	4.66
		3. The speakers were able to hold my interest.	4.63
		4. The methods of the presentation were effective.	4.68
		5. The content was directly related to MCWEP.	4.53
		6. Handouts supplemented presented material.	4.47
		7. I will use content from this learning community meeting in my work as a DCP&P Supervisor.	4.64
		8. The content of this learning community will be helpful to me as an MSW student.	4.61

Table continued on next page.



Learning Community Evaluation Results (continued)

Learning Community	Activities	Evaluation	Mean Score (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)
February 26, 2016 9:00am – 4:00pm Stockton University Galloway, NJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided Discussion – “Lesson Learned and Goals for Next Semester” • “Hopes and Fears for the New DCF Sustainability and Exit Plan” by Dr. Richard Gelles • Myers-Briggs Personality Type Discussion 	1. The speakers demonstrated expertise on the subject matter presented.	4.64
		2. The speakers communicated in a clear and organized manner.	4.67
		3. The speakers were able to hold my interest.	4.67
		4. The methods of the presentation were effective.	4.56
		5. The content was directly related to MCWEP.	4.62
		6. Handouts supplemented presented material.	4.56
		7. I will use content from this learning community meeting in my work as a DCP&P Supervisor.	4.67
		8. The content of this learning community will be helpful to me as an MSW student.	4.62
June 3, 2016 9:00am – 4:00pm Monmouth University West Long Branch, NJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided Discussion – “Transfer of Learning from MSW to DCP&P” • “Fieldwork and MCWEP: Opportunities and Challenges” • Reports from Students Attending the NASW Conference • Team-Building Activity 	1. The speakers demonstrated expertise on the subject matter presented.	4.57
		2. The speakers communicated in a clear and organized manner.	4.60
		3. The speakers were able to hold my interest.	4.63
		4. The methods of the presentation were effective	4.63
		5. The content was directly related to MCWEP.	4.71
		6. Handouts supplemented presented material.	4.50
		7. I will use content from this learning community meeting in my work as a DCP&P Supervisor.	4.63
		8. The content of this learning community will be helpful to me as an MSW student.	4.60



The Learning Community evaluations also included open-ended questions. These questions were:

1. In your opinion, what were the strengths of this Learning Community?
2. What suggestions would you offer to improve this Learning Community?
3. What will you do differently in your practice/employment as a result of this Learning Community?
4. What was the most important thing you took away from today's Learning Community Activities?

The following tables report the themes identified in a content analysis of student responses to the open-ended questions and the frequency with which the themes were mentioned. Following the table are examples of the students' comments in their own words.

In Your Opinion, What Were the Strengths of This Learning Community?

Theme	Frequency Mentioned
Content	35
Community	34
Linking MSW curriculum & Learning Community content to Child Welfare Practice	14
Skill Development	9

Content

- The (team building) challenge was interesting and showed different dimensions of teamwork
- The (content) was very powerful and inspiring!
- Excellent and very informative speaker!
- The presentation was excellent- the best I've seen in years.
- The personality tests were very interesting.
- The speaker on children's rights, litigation, and the sustainability plan.

Community

- Being together and feeling supported.
- It is an interactive day that incorporates all cohorts.
- The collaborative and supportive atmosphere
- We were able to share our ideas with each other
- Thank you for 3.5 years of community experience- this environment will be missed!



Linking MSW curriculum and Learning Community content to child welfare practice

- Providing subject matter that was useful and related to our current positions. Also providing useful and powerful speeches.
- The speaker gave good information regarding the bigger picture of how to improve the child welfare system.
- It heightens and brings reward to social work practice and values.
- Learning the various personality types and how they may relate to our workers and personal relationships.
- Topics are directly related to DCP&P work
- A feeling that this is a shared experience—reaffirming what s taught and the importance of applying it to our jobs.

Skill Development

- It continued to address important issues like stress and time management
- Group activities, learning to work in teams
- Team building and collaboration exercises
- Listening to different strategies in order to be successful
- I really enjoyed student presentations and getting feedback, talking what we’ve learned
- The MCWEP community provides a comprehensive, strength-based approach on what we do, and the field of social work in general.

What Suggestions Would You Offer to Improve This Learning Community?

Theme	Frequency Mentioned
Further information on specific topics	9
Suggestions/preferences for content delivery/learning modalities	8
Suggestions for more self-care, information on Secondary Traumatic Stress, stress management	6

Further information on specific topics

- I would like to learn more about DCP&P policy
- I would like to learn more about new exit plan
- More practical field tips for dealing with challenges and barriers in the office
- To present to upper administration RE: what is needed to make MCWEP successful and how our leaning can be implemented over time to make or create a stronger impact on DCP&P



Suggestions/preferences for content delivery/learning modalities

- More hands-on activities
- More contributions from students
- Continue to use videos
- More outside speakers
- More video interactions and presentations by practitioners in other social work fields.

Suggestions for more self-care, information on Secondary Traumatic Stress, stress management

- Stress management and self-care
- We could have some training on PTSD, STS, and compassion fatigue
- Give suggestions on integrating self-care

What Will You Do Differently in Your Practice/Employment as a Result of This Learning Community?

Theme	Frequency of Responses
Integrate/apply content to practice	14
Share content with Staff/supervisees	13
Further exploration or research into area of content	5

Integrate/apply content to practice

- Making sure that I am aware of my actions when interacting with families
- I am reinvigorated to continue to do what is right as it pertains to the NASW and cultural competency values
- Remember to be proximate to our social problems and remain hopeful
- Make sure we do not lose sight of the fact that the child must be our focus
- Continue to apply what has been learned throughout my time in the program
- Implement systems to monitor the standard of care
- Think and discuss the needs of our agency
- Look at cases though various lenses (trauma, client perspective, etc).
- Continue to be a hopeful advocate for change.



Share content with staff/supervisees

- Incorporate a discussion with my workers about proximity
- More encouragement for my supervisees, and encouraging self-care
- I want to use the challenge activity at my staff meeting to promote teamwork
- Engage my supervisees to be more culturally competent
- I would like to share info from the presentation with my staff
- Use an icebreaker activity and personality test to help with unit engagement

Further exploration or research into area of content

- I am going to review the info provided regarding the exit plan, etc.
- Think about ways to contribute to the success and sustainability of our new plan
- Continue to be an advocate for change and progressive development
- These events keep me appreciating what I do and why I do it.

What Was the Most Important Thing You Took Away from Today’s Learning Community Activities?

Theme	Frequency of Responses
Tangible skills	15
Direction for future practice	13
Hope/Inspiration/Support	9

Tangible skills

- The importance of gathering info and being able to present professionally
- Tips on how to engage staff and stay committed to the process
- The break down and review of federal laws pertaining to child welfare
- The use of the Myers-Briggs assessment, an understanding of my own personality type.
- How to commence the usage of clinical supervision and collaborative approaches toward team-building
- The importance of self-care and time management

**Direction for future practice**

- Building connections
- Push for social justice
- Our state is not the only one that has had struggles with the child welfare systems
- Continue to advocate for change and improvement within DCP&P
- The child is the center of our case- work.

Hope/Inspiration/Support

- Keep hope that change is possible. Continue to do the good work I do because it matters
- Change is a process and we cannot lose hope.
- The fact that I am not alone in doing this program
- Feeling support from the program and others in my cohort
- Don't give up

Summary of Student Feedback

In sum, students indicated that they are acquiring gainful critical thinking skills, knowledge, and practice techniques. Students have developed a strong sense of solidarity and collegiality amongst their cohorts and MCWEP program staff. The transfer of skills and knowledge through their MSW courses is reinforced with specific enhanced learning opportunities derived from the learning communities. Students are eager to apply their learning, whether it be from specific content areas, or applicable approaches, to their work setting and with their supervisees. Student voiced a clear appreciation for their colleagues' support, and the desire to offer support to both colleagues and supervisees. Students expressed a longing for additional information, techniques, and ideas for self-care within the child welfare environment

Additionally, the students provided feedback related to the areas of content, learning modalities and topics for which they have preferences. This feedback will be integrated in the 2016-2017 learning communities and beyond. As the Learning Community curricula is explored, adjusted, and solidified, student feedback has been perhaps the strongest guiding input for improvement. The Learning Community environment has been a laboratory for MCWEP staff and faculty to explore effective pedagogical strategies and have meaningful impact with a captive and invested audience of engaged MSW students and DCP&P supervisors.



OVERALL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

To elicit information about current students’ perceptions of the MCWEP program as a whole – MSW programs’ curriculum, MCWEP elective courses, field placement experiences, and the Learning Community meetings — students were asked to respond to several open-ended questions in a questionnaire given to them at the end of the Academic Year.

1. What are the strengths of MCWEP?
2. How well do you think MCWEP is preparing you to be a more impactful supervisor at DCP&P (consider your MSW coursework, The Learning Community Meetings, and the MCWEP electives, if taken [Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice, and Child Welfare Leadership & Supervision] all as a part of MCWEP)?
3. Is there anything about MCWEP that you think should be changed? If so, what and why?
4. Do you feel you are being prepared to play a role in the transformation of New Jersey’s public child welfare system? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
5. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about MCWEP?

Students offered a great deal of insight about the program, their experiences, and their aspirations for moving forward in the organizations transformation. Their ideas and trepidations are a major component in our considerations for MCWEP program enhancement.

The following tables describe themes identified in students’ responses to the open-ended questions and the frequency with which those themes were mentioned. Following the tables are specific examples of students’ responses, in their own words.

What are the strengths of MCWEP?

Themes Identified	Frequency Mentioned
Knowledge/ Academic Enhancement/Learning Communities	14
Support Received – students, staff, administrators	12
MCWEP Structure/Academic Opportunity	10

Knowledge/Academic Enhancement/Learning

- The classes are very beneficial because the classes can be immediately applied to supervisory work that is currently being conducted between supervisors and their supervisees.
- The MCWEP program is self-motivating, and utilizes strength-based practice which is essential in dealing with all humans.
- The strength of MCWEP is in the Learning Community. Although many times I do not want to come I always get something out of the process. MCWEP has given me the opportunity to increase my knowledge about social work and relate some critical concepts to my profession.
- MCWEP is also providing us with “a bigger picture” with regards to person-in-environment and how it all relates.
- MCWEP has allowed Supervisors to apply critical thinking skills in order to improve upon case practice while servicing children and families...by providing courses and informational sessions through the learning community to have a working knowledge of the research in regards to child maltreatment and how to apply that knowledge in working with children and families.
- MCWEP provides supervisors with the ability to learn skills that can have a direct positive impact on the families we serve.
- You learn so much and it is a great opportunity to learn and grow to help the families that we work with.



- Learning communities allow staff opportunities to connect, share experiences and ideas, network and focus learning to our day-to-day job responsibilities
- I think a strength is the emphasis on helping supervisors see how families are impacted by being part of the system. It opened my eyes to many social justice concerns. It helped me to critically think about my role in the child welfare system and be more mindful about how my decisions impact families and the way my workers think about the families we serve.
- The opportunity to further myself in a way that directly impacts my work is the biggest strength of the MCWEP program. The MCWEP staff are supportive and huge advocates for the program. Another strength is the gathering together of the DCPD staff that are involved to share experiences from the three schools.

Support Received – students, staff, administrators

- It provides a support team for the students, provides information that is beneficial to our job as well as internship. Provides us with access to the individuals involved with the program, able to have any questions answered and if issues arise, it can be dealt with in a timely and positive manner.
- The MCWEP is a very coordinated program and is very cohesive. This is why the program has high retention rates of high rates of DCPD graduates.
- I think a big strength is the support from MCWEP.
- The program offers a great deal of support from the MCWEP team.
- MCWEP provides community and support.
- One of the main strengths that comes to mind is how supportive the program is. I enjoy the learning communities as it contributes to our learning experience and we have others that can relate to our obstacles. I enjoy that there is unity and I feel comfortable in reaching out whenever I have a question.
- I enjoy the “close knitted” community of MCWEP. They are so supportive that you are so motivated to do well. I appreciate them monitoring our progress by meeting quarterly. It also allows me to check in with them and just talk about my experiences.

MCWEP Structure/Academic Opportunity

- It's a great opportunity to grow professionally. It's also great to be in classes with individuals who have job and life experience!
- The MCWEP is collaborative, inventive, and comprehensive pertaining to how it combines fulltime Supervisors to complete a Social Work Degree. The coordinators are very understanding and cooperative with the supervisory staff.
- MCWEP is providing DCP&P supervisors with personal and professional growth by exposing us to different academic lessons and terminology that we would not have known otherwise
- The focus on the child welfare system is a major strength as it combines the skill set of a master in social work program with that of experienced child welfare workers. It promotes better outcomes for the children and families that the Division serves by educating the supervisory workforce.
- The strengths of MCWEP is that the program offers an accelerated program for child protective service workers to obtain their master's degree and to do so while they work. Other strengths include the offsite class; and partners with community providers that include the school, mental health institutions and clinicians, and legal professionals to offer internship opportunities to satisfy other MSW requirements. Finally, a key strength of MCWEP is the consortium of educational institutions that afford non-matriculating students the opportunity to take classes at partnering colleges and/or universities while completing their program.
- The strengths of the program are that each school has a different schedules and the prospective student can choose the school that is most convenient.



How is MCWEP preparing you to be a more impactful supervisor?

Themes Identified	Frequency Mentioned
Learning Communities/Enhanced Integration	14
The Trauma and Leadership Elective Courses	13
MSW Program Experiences/Strengthening of Perspective	10

Learning Community Meetings/Enhanced Integration

- The learning community meetings I have learned from other supervisors, learned difference concepts and ways to approach supervision.
- I feel MCWEP is helping me to be a more impactful supervisor by providing me with experience, knowledge, tools that will be very useful in help me in growing my staff.
- The Learning Communities incorporate inventive and creative ways to think and process information. Also, the courses increase our level of understanding on how to process cases. For example, I am now aware of the importance of reviewing cases from a trauma-focused lens. I am also aware of the importance of how theories impact child and family development. I am currently drafting a policy to introduce Trauma into DCP. In terms of supervision, the importance of clinical supervision versus administrative and task driven supervision.
- This program has enhanced my skills and has made me a better supervisor.
- I tend to look at the cases differently. The language and overall thinking changes
- MCWEP has enhanced my MSW education by providing a learning community that offers support, gives advice and provides additional resources to not only enhance my education but to put my education to use.
- It brings to the table information that may not be considered. Having the information from the MSW program provides a different, more insightful way to view a family and the needs they may have.
- The Learning Communities incorporate inventive and creative ways to think and process information.

The Trauma and Leadership Elective Courses

- The leadership and supervision course has definitely taught me a lot about myself as a supervisor, showed me ways to improve and ways to encourage my workers to become better and more effective.
- MCWEP has prepared me tremendously to become an impactful supervisor in the office. The trauma-informed class has changed my dialect. I speak about terms that are foreign to the workforce and it makes them want to learn more about. MCWEP has given me hope again about the work that is being done in the field.
- I feel like the program is doing a good job assisting me to be able to make a difference. The trauma class was very good.
- I think MCWEP is preparing me to be more impactful as I have developed in being able to assess children and families through multiple lenses and recognizing the effects of trauma in the present as well as the future consequences for children when the trauma is not addressed. I have also learned to implement case practice with a defined purpose of providing services that are able to meet the true needs of the children and families being serviced. My overall perspective of what is required in managing workers now includes promoting and supporting the local office in its totality in order to foster a movement in transferring knowledge. Practicing the learned leadership and supervisory skills will allow staff to begin to engage and advocate differently and will impact families and produce better outcomes for the children being served.



- The coursework offered in MCWEP has better equipped me to work with the challenges of supervision and how to work with and lead casework staff to achieve positive outcomes for families. In the Child Welfare Leadership and Supervision course I learned to apply a greater focus on supervision, to understand my role as a leader and my leadership style, the significance of contracting with employees in order to effectively get the job done, and the need to employ solution-focused practices for families. I think the coursework in MCWEP has also enabled me to have a greater knowledge and understanding of trauma, trauma symptoms, other mental health disorders and the adverse outcomes of families. Because of my clinical training in the Trauma-Informed Child Welfare course, I have the ability to impart and utilize the clinical training with my staff to strengthen our efforts to assess the effectiveness of services and ensure evidence-based interventions, such as trauma-informed care, are utilized to produce positive outcomes for families we work with.
- MCWEP is definitely making me a more impactful supervisor, learning different social work concepts and approaches to supervision have been extremely useful. The “trauma-informed child welfare” course is the single most beneficial and impactful course in the entire curriculum.

MSW Program Experiences/Strengthening of Perspective

- It is very helpful and impactful. The education is priceless and so is the opportunity. Great program and it is planting the seeds for a better DCP.
- I believe the program has provided me with information that prepares the case managers we are training and developing to become more conscientious about trauma of parents and children we service.
- I think the MCWEP program is doing a very good job at preparing me to be a more impactful supervisor over my workers as well as the cases in my unit. One thing I am learning how to better look at the needs of people.
- MCWEP is helping me become a more impactful supervisor because it has change my approach toward child protection. I have a more holistic perspective on child protection which allows me to identify the family’s underlying needs and service them appropriately.
- MCWEP has taught me through the MSW education how to be a more adept supervisor. I am now able to see the cases at DCP&P in a more theoretical lens. i.e., ... why individuals do the things they do.
- I think that I have such a different perspective now regarding my role and responsibilities as a supervisor. I move differently in my supervision and I value my clients, caseworkers and administrators more now.

Is there anything about MCWEP you would like to change?

Themes Identified	Frequency Mentioned
Logistics and General	13
More DCP Support and Integration	5
Field Placement Hours	3



Logistic/General

- The summer program was very intense and stressful. I think it would have been better to have them during a regular semester because I feel I would have taken a lot more from them. They both were very interesting. I think that all MCWEP professors and/or Stockton professors should meet students where they are in their academic career.
- I'm not sure if this is a MCWEP issue or the university's issue, nonetheless, it is still an issue. Some of us (DCP& P supervisors) have not been in school in a long time. Learning APA has been a challenge and sometimes it's an obstacle for some of us. There is a need for either MCWEP, the University or both to address this issue because it creates a conflict between the students and the professors who have high expectations. This is a Master's Program and we should all know how to write masters level papers. However, we have not had the proper training and the time is very limited to "learn as you go". For that reason, I think someone should be addressing this important issue that would alleviate the student's frustration and the professor's expectations so that everyone can concentrate on the teachings and not about the correct APA reference, citation, annotation, etc.
- Honestly, I believe that MCWEP is effective. I also believe that all information about expectations should be provided each and every learning community. It is important to reiterate important information.
- I believe more opportunities to study abroad should be included in the program as electives.
- I would like more outside speakers. I enjoyed the book that was provided to me. I liked that it was not a mandatory read but something I could read in between semesters. I think the leadership course needs to be conducted differently. We need more feedback on the work. In other classes where I did a lot of online work, there were comments about the posts to let me know that what I had posted is relevant and on track.
- The curriculum schedule should be more flexible. Options to take more classes per semester should be allowed. Field class for one hour two Wednesdays out of the month is really out of way when you have no other classes.

More DCP&P Support and Integration

- Working at DCP&P can be stressful and each office is different, some offices are more involved with cases, some offices have a large amount of cases and I think MCWEP should be conscious of that and more sensitive to the needs of each supervisor.
- MCWEP should play a stronger advocacy role for Supervisors in the local office. MCWEP needs to feel supported and that they are not in the struggle alone.
- I am of the strong opinion that how and what the MCWEP students are being trained on should not be compartmentalized. Specifically, managers need to be informed on what is being taught and the expectation of the program.

Field Placement Hours

- I think we should be responsible for less internship hours since we have that "experience" from our job already.
- The internship is simply too many hours, and takes away from our primary function SIGNIFICANTLY. Required hours should be reduced at the very least, possibly removed depending on experience. The purpose of an internship is to provide students with professional experience; our DCP&P work experience alone should count towards these credits. A feasible method of implementing this would be to deduct the number of required field hours depending upon students' years at DCP&P. For example, the current requirement for traditional MSW at Stockton is 900 hours of field. For every 5 years of DCP&P experience, that number could be reduced by 100 hours. Therefore, someone with 15 years DCP&P experience would only be required to complete 600 field hours. This will still give students outside experience without taking away so much from our role as supervisors. The number of internship hours is the only negative aspect of MCWEP thus far.



Do you feel you are being prepared to play a role in the transformation of New Jersey's public child welfare system?

Themes Identified	Frequency Mentioned
Yes	25
No	0

All students responding to this questions answered “yes,” they did feel they were being prepared to play a role in transforming New Jersey’s Public Child Welfare System. A handful of students expressed that while they felt prepared, they also felt apprehension about the preparedness of the environment around them for transformation. The reasons why and descriptions as to how they were being prepared differed. Samples of their responses are given below:

- I believe I am being prepared in the role of the transformation and the higher education has assisted with this process. The classes have provided an in-depth look into child welfare and the reform necessary to make a change for improvement.
- I do feel that the MCWEP program is preparing me for a more impactful role with in my county and state. Learning micro and macro level systems and interventions makes me a more well-rounded professional. The program has enhanced my engagement, critical thinking and leaderships skills already and I am only 1 year and a half into the program.
- This is a “YES” for me. My writing and expression skills have improved. My knowledge has increased in just one year in the program. My understanding of the community and the people that live in the community have increased and I have a better understanding and appreciation for the work that is being done in the Division.
- Absolutely, this program improves case practice by challenging ineffective interventions through evidence-based research and small cohorts that allow for open discussions and brainstorming.
- Definitely. I realize that MSWs and BSWs are preferred in our agency and I definitely understand why. As I am going through the process, it is beneficial that everyone working in this arena is trained and/or have gone through the program so there is consistency throughout the agency. I only see positive things coming out of this program.
- Yes, definitely. I think that I’m being groomed to assist in making the system better. The education that I’m receiving has been priceless. I’m learning so much. It’s like putting the pieces together. For example, engagement of clients. I understand the concept, impact and the significant of doing this with people. It’s not just a word.
- I do believe I am being prepared to continue the transformation of New Jersey’s public child welfare system as new leadership, in the sense that I am a part of the growing class of leaders who are educated and trained in evolving and enhanced practice of the child welfare system.
- I am very prepared because the system needs to change. There are many staff members who are victimized at work. These staff members are victim of secondary traumatic stress and burnout. If the right interventions are not used, we could lose a lot of conscientious workers. Training new staff is detrimental to the agency, as well as the children and families the agency serves. Although there have been many changes, these changes have not yet been totally embraced by all DCPD representatives. Hardworking, dedicated, and conscientious workers should be promoted on merit, and should be encouraged. MCWEP Graduates should also be attached to DCPD departments in order to encourage and supplement the agency.
- Yes, I do think I am being prepared to play a role in the transformation of the NJ public Child system by learning how to view thing from a different perspective. I also do not think I will have the opportunity to play a role in any changes because the main focus continues to be numbers. I wish it were different.
- I do feel that I am prepared but I don’t think DCP&P is prepared. We learn about different things are families need to be successful but they are not available for us to implement. An example of this is more trauma-informed services.



Summary of Students' Feedback:

In summarizing students' responses to the open-ended questions, there is a largely positive thread in terms of the program's strengths. And while students' critical thinking skills have provided them the tools to provide critical feedback in ways they would like to have the program tweaked for improvements, they remain overwhelmingly in support of the model. Students appreciate the opportunity MCWEP offers and the new and refreshing perspectives they gain from the curriculum. Students also endorse the significant amount of camaraderie and support they receive from their cohorts in the learning communities. Frequently students acknowledge the immediacy of their transference of knowledge to current cases, staff issues, or simply engaging an ally in the organization. There is effort among students to promote the program within their offices, and in the greater child welfare organization. Students actively recruit colleagues to participate in MCWEP each year, and certainly identify the desire to have more widespread dissemination of what they have learned. Through their newly informed approach in working with children and families, students have acknowledged a renewed sense of allegiance to the organization, including playing key roles in advocacy, in order to fulfill the transformation they hope to see.

For students, involvement in the MCWEP program carries a multi-tiered impact. First, they gain a set of skills, tools, frameworks, and theories by which they can guide their work in child welfare. Specifically, the Leadership and Trauma electives are instrumental in their development and an articulation of their duties. Second, the learning communities provide them with critical thinking and a holistic perspective on child welfare, more easily identifying where their supervisory positions play an important role in the transformation of the agency, and in advancing direction of an evidence-informed and professionalized organization. Next, they are building an infrastructure of like-thinking, like-informed, and like-motivated colleagues and peers that are allies in the process of transforming a sometimes slow-moving entrenched system. Their level of confidence, engagement, and initiative in the transformation process, cannot be underestimated.

Finally, despite the vast majority of measureable success, students offered some insight into the challenges that they face in the program. Students expressed some academic struggles, particularly with writing at the graduate level. They offered suggestions for additional supports. Students also identified some of the logistical barriers in the expectations of carrying out their assigned duties in combination with field placement hours, classes, and studies. They are hopeful that continued or even increased support at the local office level will improve as they, and future cohorts, become alumni of the program.

Since students continue to voice challenges juggling the multitude of expectations with which they are presented, some minor adjustments were made in scheduling this year. In effort to adapt to their needs, some hybrid class sessions were introduced to alleviate burden of travel time etc. However, students in the current cohorts longed for more face-to-face time together in structuring both the Trauma and Leadership courses they took over the summer months. The Trauma and Leadership electives are the only academic courses that students in MCWEP cohorts from all three MSW programs take together. They seem to treasure this experience and hope to make more of the time together as well as with professors.

Progress on Last Year's Recommendations

In the MCWEP Annual Report 2015, three recommendations were made in order to improve students' experiences. The first recommendation evolved from the student perceptions that some DCP&P manager or local offices demonstrated ambiguity in their expectations or understanding, and thus support of, MCWEP. Students perceived that at times, the lack of clarity complicated and even strained roles and responsibilities of MCWEP students in their offices. Students had expressed a desire for upper-level management and administrators to be more fully engaged in the MCWEP philosophy and aspects of programming. The goal was to engage upper-level and local managers in informational sessions, or other collaborative meetings in which they could ask questions and gain insight about MCWEP operations and expectations.

Including middle and local management in informational sessions or collaborative meeting has been a main focus of the director over the past year. She has visited a number of meetings of DCP&P administrators and Local Office leadership to present information about MCWEP. We have also distributed informational packets about our program to a number of key stakeholders within DCP&P.

In addition to direct collaborative informational meetings arranged by the director, students have forged opportunities to meet with DCP&P policy unit staff to discuss, explore, and review policies. MCWEP students have asked for opportunities to utilize their advocacy and policy skills to improve practices within the organization and begin to infuse a trauma perspective.

The second recommendation related to the delivery method and duration of the Leadership and Trauma Electives, where students have cohort by cohort, increasingly voiced a desire for more didactic experience. This past year, the Trauma course was extended to 12 weeks, with increased face-to-face time, combined with live synchronous sessions using a virtual platform. The Leadership elective will continue to be delivered in a hybrid format—asynchronous content administered online, combined with four in-person classroom meetings.

The final recommendation from the 2015 report was based on feedback from students on the learning communities. Students had requested content related to tangible practice skills and additional guest speakers. This recommendation was addressed through the learning community content, which included new units on team building skills and two new guest speakers.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS IN THE 2016-2017 ACADEMIC YEAR

MCWEP has cultivated and expanded its many strengths, which will continue to shape the direction and institutional capacity of the program in the future. In 2015-2016, MCWEP has had the opportunity to reflect upon the structure of the program, the needs and strengths of the students, and the demands of the agency as it shifts to its stages of the exit plan.

The program has been successful in providing an avenue for transfer of knowledge from social work programs to the DCP&P workforce for these supervisors. The structure of the program allows students flexibility to be able to matriculate in graduate courses while still being able to engage in work responsibilities. MCWEP also reinforces the need for impactful leadership and supervision through specialized electives and consistent connection between core social work courses and the future vision of DCP&P. As DCP&P moves forward in its efforts to become a trauma-informed organization, the national, evidence-based model employing the Core Concepts in Childhood Trauma (CCCT) provides students with knowledge of trauma-focused work and catalyzes the infusion of this knowledge from the mid-level out. The Learning Community component encourages students to gain confidence as social work professionals, exposes them to new research and literature in Child Welfare, and provides support and camaraderie among their peers. Finally, the program consistently encourages students to actively engage in the reform effort of the New Jersey public child welfare system, and this year highlights a new initiative reviewing policies and providing trauma-informed recommendations for improving them.

The following recommendations are made based on student feedback and MCWEP staff deliberation for fiscal year 2016-2017:

1. Students indicated in their comments in multiple evaluations, the desire for the modality of the summer elective courses exclusive to MCWEP, (Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice and Leadership and Supervision) to be delivered in a more traditional format, with minimal virtual, synchronous, or online content. Therefore, for Summer 2017, the Trauma course will be delivered over 12 weeks, 4 of which will be live, virtual synchronous sessions, while 8 sessions will be face-to-face in person. A 12-week, primarily face-to-face course most closely resembles a traditional semester course. The Leadership elective (as mentioned above) will continue to be delivered in a hybrid format—asynchronous content administered online, combined with four in-person classroom meetings.
2. Students expressed some concern over the balance between field placement hours and their work responsibilities. Initially, Stockton students had a block field placement option, during which they completed their required field placement hours over a 15-week- full time commitment to their field agency, removing them completely from the work flow in their local offices. While students provided very positive feedback from this option, it became fiscally unsustainable, and was eliminated. At this time, it is unclear how effectively student course and field placement release time is being observed by superiors, and appears to fluctuate across the board. Some suggest that while they are granted academic leave time, they are not granted relief from responsibilities, and are still juggling their full time work load regardless of academic leave, simply in fewer hours. Students suggested that the required field placement hours be reduced because of their work experience; however field placement hours are part of an accreditation standard that are not negotiable by MSW programs. Student concerns in this area merits MCWEP staff investigation and exploration of potential sources of relief. The recommendation with regard to field placement hours is that MCWEP conduct an anonymous survey of students, in which they describe the structure of their field placement hours, academic release time, and office duty expectations. Once this data is compiled, should the academic release time be inconsistently observed within offices, causing the overtaxing of MCWEP students, MCWEP informational literature, or brief memos can be generated. Once generated, these materials can be circulated via email, or interoffice memo, to update or refresh local office expectations and understanding of release time.
3. Lastly, students offered suggestions and ideas, accompanied with requests, for specific learning community content. Each academic year, the MCWEP faculty have developed a variety of learning community learning modules, and this year will have developed content to cover four cohorts of students simultaneously, over four years. In addition, we have developed a cadre of speakers who represent a diverse set of expertise, approaches, and child welfare content. The final recommendation for this year is to formalize and map the learning community modules in sequence, over the four years. It is crucial that the modules conform to compatibility with speakers and flexibility for some adaptation, should a core current issue arise (e.g. Hurricane Sandy and emergency response). As the sequence of modules is solidified, prior feedback for each specific module will be integrated prior to its adaptation, to ensure the highest caliber content possible. A resource list of speakers, with their topics and expertise and contact information shall be assembled in order to schedule learning community speakers and content one year out. Of course, flexibility to efficiently engage in a current, urgent issue is vital, and shall be built into the model.

Since its inception 3 years ago, MCWEP has accomplished a great deal, including the graduation of thirty-two (32) DCP&P supervisory staff with their MSW degrees. Among MCWEP's greatest strengths however is the persistent partnership between New Jersey's public child welfare system and the academic community, with the consistent support from professional organizations like NASW. As the recommendations for enhancement are implemented, MCWEP will carry on its improvement and enhance its goals. Bringing DCP&P supervisors back to school to pursue social work education continues to fan the flame of passion for child welfare among this great workforce. MCWEP hopes to maintain this important partnership with DCF as we all work toward improving and enhancing the lives of New Jersey's children and families.



MCWEP

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