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ELECT 2015-16 Annual Update on Key Program Outcomes

ELECT Background

Pennsylvania’s Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT) program is a statewide initiative providing comprehensive educational and other support services to expectant and/or parenting students. As of 2015, the teen birth rate was 22 births per 1,000 teen girls (age 15-19), and there were 229,888 births to teen girls. Since its peak in 1991, the teen birth rate has declined by 64 percent. In the past year alone, it dropped 8 percent. Pennsylvania’s rate has declined 59 percent since 1991 (National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2015). Although national and statewide pregnancy rates have declined since the 1990s, the ELECT program responds to the pressing academic, social, and economic vulnerable student population. Research consistently reveals that adolescent mothers are at greater risk for mental and psychological problems (e.g., depression), as well as adverse health and social outcomes, as compared to females who delay childbearing until adulthood (Hodgkinson, S., Beers, L, Southammakosane, C.& Lewin,A., 2014). Research also indicates that the impact of adolescent pregnancy can be mediated by youth development programs that address risk factors across multiple domains (i.e., individual, family, social relationships, and community) and provide educational and social support services to pregnant adolescents. This report provides information about Pennsylvania’s ELECT program activities and its participants, as well as evidence related to its impact.

Technical assistance, trainings and data collection

Since 1990, the Center for Schools and Communities (CSC) has provided ongoing training and technical assistance (TA), to Pennsylvania’s ELECT programs funded through the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Income Maintenance.

Technical assistance

Technical assistance is provided through telephone support, on-site visits, trainings, publications, resources, and websites. In 2015-16, staff made or received 732 phone calls and emails received regarding topics such as summer programming, student enrollment and eligibility, program requirements, professional development, and monitoring visit requirements.

Due to a Pennsylvania state budget impasse and PDE and DHS travel bans, there were no visits to observe the ELECT summer programs during July and August 2015 and the 2015-16 site visit schedule had to be abbreviated. A risk assessment was created to determine which sites required to be monitored. The School District of Philadelphia and School District of Pittsburgh were monitored based on the large number of students served by each, as well as them receiving the most grant funds of all of the ELECT grantees. The following additional criteria, each with a possible 20 points, was used to assess the remaining programs: grantee's 14-15 monitoring report scored needs improvement in two or more categories; low enrollment is
an ongoing issue for the grantee; the grantee has assigned a new program director within the past 2 years; grantee has significant need for assistance with case files and/or data tracking; and grantee has shown or has expressed a number of issues and concerns. Each of the 29 sites was scored using these criteria and the nine with the highest scores were added to the 2015-16 monitoring list, along with School District of Philadelphia and School District of Pittsburgh, for a total of 11 sites.

These 11 ELECT programs received on-site monitoring in 2015-16 to measure success and adherence to PDE’s ELECT program requirements. The sites that were monitored included:

- Allegheny Intermediate Unit
- Capital Area Intermediate Unit
- Delaware County Intermediate Unit
- Harrisburg School District
- McKeesport School District
- Midwestern Intermediate Unit
- Neshaminy School District
- Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit
- School District of Philadelphia
- School District of Pittsburgh
- Williamsport School District

Site monitoring consisted of observation of a teen parent group, an interview with the grantee’s ELECT staff, meeting with the superintendent or executive director, and a review of the student case files. The ELECT monitoring tool is divided into four sections:

- Staffing (five benchmarks)
- Enrollment and Eligibility (three benchmarks)
- Programming (12 benchmarks)
- Case Files (18 benchmarks)

Ten percent of student case files are reviewed and then rated using a percentage score for each of the 18 benchmarks in this section. Each benchmark is reviewed independently of the other benchmarks within that section and the overall monitoring tool. Each individual benchmark receives a rating of Exemplary, Meeting Requirements, Needs Improvement or Noncompliant. Figure 1 below shows the results from the 2015-16 monitoring reports and demonstrates a need for further TA and training in the areas of maintaining enrollment, raising graduation rates, improving grades, increasing the number of home visits and the amount of individual case management, and providing accurate reports. Grantees receiving Needs Improvement or Noncompliant ratings were offered recommendations for improvement by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

All ELECT programs monitored in 2015-16 received a Meeting Requirements rating in the Staffing and Programming sections of the monitoring tool. The results of the monitoring in Enrollment and Eligibility and Case Files are shown in Figure 1 below.
The ELECT program website, http://ppt-elect.center-school.org, was updated and maintained throughout the 2015-16 program year. Since the website was created in 2008, it has received over 10,000 visitors and 69,929-page views. It is a public website that provides resources, professional development opportunities, and an overview of the ELECT programs across the state. In the 2015-16 program year, 1,849 users visited the website, 56 percent of which were first time visitors to the site. In comparison, the 2014-2015 program year, there were 1,698 users, 53 percent of which were first time visitors to the site. The average visit to the site (referred to as a ‘session’) was around two minutes. During the 2013-2014 program year there were 1,140 users, 44 percent of which were first time visitors to the site. The average session was around 3 minutes.
Training

In 2015-16, ELECT grantees were required to participate in webinars using GoToWebinar, a platform that can be used by anyone with an internet connection. CSC’s digital learning coordinator assists with the scheduling, registration, presenter orientation, live presentation and the evaluation of each session. The following sessions were provided:

- **August 5, 2015:** *Basic Excel Training: A Tool that Can Make ELECT Data Easier* – 36 individuals participated.
- **December 3, 2015:** *Compassion Fatigue: When the Distress of Others Becomes Contagious* – 37 individuals participated.

Data Training

Data trainings were held throughout the year as needed, particularly for new staff and for programs requesting or in need of training in specific focus areas.

The ELECT Statewide Conference was held May 3-5, 2016, at the Sheraton in Harrisburg, PA, and 150 participants attended the event. Three three-hour institutes offered intensive best practice guidance, including: Hands-On Data Entry, Games Educators Play: The Art of Teaching with “Wise” Games, and Cultivating Empathy for Healthy Relationships and Collaborative Programs. Twelve workshop sessions offered information on a variety of topics including, but not limited to: peer abuse, empathy, communication with teens, financial education, building community partnerships, current drug trends, and resume and interview skills. Eric Rowles, President/CEO of Leading to Change, presented a keynote address titled “Raising the Fatherhood Flag,” and Melanie Watkins, Board Certified
Psychiatrist/Speaker/Author, provided a keynote address called, “Resilience: Cultivating Strength for Future Success.”

Data Collection

In the fall of 2003, CSC launched the first ELECT data collection website with secure individual site data reporting features. Web-based summary reports were made available to users for immediate access to client data for evaluation. The CSC issued monthly and year-end ELECT program reports for both state and ELECT site use. The reports provide both a summary analysis and site-specific information regarding the ELECT sites. The first year-end reports (prior to 2004) were provided in a spreadsheet format, but in 2004 CSC worked collaboratively with PDE and DHS officials to improve the report format. These changes resulted in additional detailed narrative analysis of ELECT data, a summary of data collection analysis methods, and more extensive analyses of ELECT data. Program reports were also enhanced on the ELECT website, permitting real-time access to attendance data. All reports were produced according to best practices and reviewed by multiple professional staff for accuracy and completeness.

Over time, additional programmatic reporting and administrative features were added to the data collection website to respond to specific data requests from ELECT sites. System modifications and improvements continued to be made until 2010 when targeted data collection funding was removed from the FY2011-12 state budget. Data from 2012-13 was collected from ELECT sites via spreadsheets and in July 2013 the secure online data collection system was available to the 29 ELECT sites and used to collect the data for the 2013-14 program year.

In 2015-16, CSC’s data coordinator handled over 1,071 phone call consultations regarding data questions from ELECT program sites, as well as 3,393 emails were sent to grantees to address data concerns and questions, with the highest concentration through the months of August (377), September (388) and October (378) 2016 when sites were completing the data for a new program year.

Program Outcomes

Data from the 2015-16 ELECT program year were collected in the secure online ELECT database from July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016. The ELECT data coordinator conducted an extensive data cleaning and analysis process from July 16, 2015, to August 25, 2016, using database error reports and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data were validated using rules established in previous ELECT data collection (2003-10).

The glossary and the data validation served as the means to ensure clean data from the 29 ELECT sites. The ELECT data coordinator continues to offer group and individual trainings to assist site staff with further understanding of each data element. Data were examined and corrected in the database and then merged into one data record per student ID code. Data were then examined for consistency, cleaned and analyzed in SPSS. All analyses used simple descriptive statistics and were focused on reporting the outcome measures established by PDE.
In 2015-16, the ELECT program enrolled a diverse group of 3,539 secondary school students in which 82 percent of the participants were female (Figure 2) and a typical participant is about 18 years of age (Figure 4). Of ELECT participants, 63.7 percent were minority students (Figure 3). Race breakdowns for 2015-2016 in Figure 3 include: 44% of the students reporting they are Black, 36% as White, 17% as Latino, 2% as other and 1% as Asian or American Indian. Site enrollment numbers varied from 23 to 1,236 participants.
Each of the 29 ELECT programs is required to meet several outcomes regarding school achievement and individual ELECT program success. The following table displays the expected primary outcomes for the ELECT program and the outcomes from the 29 sites in 2015-16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
<th>Non-Repeat Pregnancy</th>
<th>Participant Retention</th>
<th>Academic Performance</th>
<th>School Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectation</td>
<td>75 percent</td>
<td>85 percent</td>
<td>75 percent</td>
<td>75 percent</td>
<td>75 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>87 percent</td>
<td>94 percent</td>
<td>64 percent</td>
<td>76 percent</td>
<td>83 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graduation Rate**

Among all participant seniors, 87 percent graduated in 2015-16. The graduation rates are based on the number of seniors eligible to graduate that do complete that semester. GED students are in a separate calculation. This graduation rate is twelve points above the ELECT outcome requirement of 75 percent. This number exceeds the national graduation rate of 81.4 in 2015 (Retrieved from http://www.americashealthrankings.org/all/graduation). Although ELECT students face multiple challenges as they balance the impacts of pregnancy, delivery and the additional stresses of parenting while going to school, the ELECT graduation rate is the higher than their peers who may not have all of the additional responsibilities of parenthood while in high school.

**Non-Repeat Pregnancy**

In 2015-16, 94 percent of all participants did not experience a repeat pregnancy while enrolled in the ELECT program, which is nine percentage points above the ELECT outcome requirement of 85 percent. In comparison to national statistics on repeat teen pregnancies, the ELECT data compare favorably. For example, in 2013, almost one in six (17 percent) births to 15-19 year olds was to females who already had one or more children (Martin, Hamilton, Ventura and Osterman, 2013). The ELECT early intervention and support systems contribute to a diminished rate of secondary pregnancy for ELECT participants in Pennsylvania.

**Participant Retention**

Sixty-four percent of the enrolled ELECT students remained in the program for the 2015-16 school year, which is less than the ELECT requirement of 75 percent. Thirty-six percent (1375) of the students were not retained. There was substantial variance across sites for this outcome (between 32 to 88 percent in retention rates across sites), which indicates that some sites are struggling greatly to retain students in the program, while others lose very few students from their ELECT program during the year. If identified, students who leave the program may be excluded from calculations if the factors related to leaving are outside of the ELECT program’s control (i.e. student moving to another state, miscarriage, etc.).

**Academic Performance**

More than 76 percent of the students enrolled in the ELECT program maintained an end-of-year cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 (based on a 4.0 system) or increased their GPA between intake and follow-up. The ELECT requirement for the same criteria is 75 percent. The ELECT students’
academic performance falls below expectations and is a concern, as poor academic performance is one of the most consistent predictors of dropout.

**School Attendance**

Participants attended school about 83 percent of the school days between September 2015 and June 2016, surpassing the ELECT requirement of 75 percent. Robert Balfanz, researcher at the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University, reports that poor attendance is a national issue for students (Balfanz, 2007). Attending school less than 80 percent of the time is one of the three early warning indicators for dropping out of school. ELECT students have additional challenges to maintaining good attendance such as prenatal appointments, pediatric visits for their child(ren) if they are parenting, a child’s illness that prevents the child(ren) from going to daycare and bed rest in the later weeks of pregnancy. Studies show that communicating with families about attendance, celebrating good attendance with students and families, and connecting chronically absent students with mentors measurably reduced students’ chronic absenteeism from one year to the next (Sheldon, S.B. & Epstein, J.L, 2004).

Table 1 provides an overview of each of the 29 ELECT sites and their performance during the 2015-16 program year. A summary of these statistics is provided to the ELECT program coordinator prior to the scheduled monitoring visit so that the site’s performance based on the ELECT requirements can be reviewed and discussed during the monitoring visit.
**Table 1: Primary Outcomes for ELECT Sites: 2015-16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Graduation Rate for Current Year</th>
<th>Retention Rate for Current Year</th>
<th>Academic Performance Improvement or Increase in GPA</th>
<th>Participant School Attendance</th>
<th># Secondary Pregnancies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allegheny IU</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>93.75%</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
<td>91.30%</td>
<td>89.58%</td>
<td>6.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allentown SD</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>83.67%</td>
<td>52.00%</td>
<td>70.40%</td>
<td>73.03%</td>
<td>6.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altoona SD</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>82.76%</td>
<td>73.17%</td>
<td>90.00%</td>
<td>85.48%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARIN IU 28</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>87.50%</td>
<td>75.61%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>89.35%</td>
<td>3.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berks IU</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>80.95%</td>
<td>71.08%</td>
<td>76.30%</td>
<td>86.43%</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Area IU</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>94.59%</td>
<td>70.83%</td>
<td>88.80%</td>
<td>88.75%</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Susquehanna IU</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>82.98%</td>
<td>82.98%</td>
<td>79.10%</td>
<td>89.55%</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester County IU</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>92.11%</td>
<td>70.38%</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
<td>83.75%</td>
<td>6.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware County IU</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>90.00%</td>
<td>38.33%</td>
<td>92.70%</td>
<td>86.67%</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie SD</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>85.29%</td>
<td>79.80%</td>
<td>72.40%</td>
<td>79.41%</td>
<td>8.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Johnstown SD</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>86.36%</td>
<td>84.38%</td>
<td>94.38%</td>
<td>9.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrisburg SD</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>84.62%</td>
<td>51.85%</td>
<td>57.80%</td>
<td>83.13%</td>
<td>2.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster SD</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>91.89%</td>
<td>73.81%</td>
<td>82.70%</td>
<td>74.69%</td>
<td>4.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster/Lebanon IU</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>70.37%</td>
<td>64.71%</td>
<td>72.30%</td>
<td>83.49%</td>
<td>6.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln IU*</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luzerne IU</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>86.36%</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>82.50%</td>
<td>87.38%</td>
<td>3.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKeesport IU</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>52.60%</td>
<td>73.31%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwestern IU</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>93.22%</td>
<td>79.63%</td>
<td>85.10%</td>
<td>88.62%</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neshaminy SD</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>76.92%</td>
<td>90.50%</td>
<td>86.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Tri-County IU</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>90.91%</td>
<td>81.13%</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
<td>87.70%</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia SD</td>
<td>1,236</td>
<td>84.48%</td>
<td>55.20%</td>
<td>84.80%</td>
<td>79.06%</td>
<td>10.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh SD</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>76.47%</td>
<td>72.73%</td>
<td>72.60%</td>
<td>81.83%</td>
<td>2.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schuylkill SD</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>76.92%</td>
<td>59.57%</td>
<td>78.80%</td>
<td>91.90%</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scranton SD</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>94.74%</td>
<td>74.07%</td>
<td>90.20%</td>
<td>86.44%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneca Highlands IU</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>90.00%</td>
<td>77.50%</td>
<td>75.60%</td>
<td>87.22%</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuscarora IU</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>52.94%</td>
<td>71.70%</td>
<td>82.22%</td>
<td>5.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington SD</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>95.45%</td>
<td>72.22%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
<td>85.56%</td>
<td>3.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmoreland IU</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>96.00%</td>
<td>72.00%</td>
<td>73.50%</td>
<td>91.13%</td>
<td>5.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsport SD</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>65.52%</td>
<td>72.00%</td>
<td>88.75%</td>
<td>7.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,539</strong></td>
<td><strong>86.56%</strong></td>
<td><strong>64.30%</strong></td>
<td><strong>76.42%</strong></td>
<td><strong>82.57%</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.4%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data was unavailable*
ELECT Program Elements

There are 29 ELECT programs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Sixteen of the programs are operated by intermediate units and the remaining 13 programs are operated by school districts. Eight programs are urban and the remaining 21 sites serve a combination of rural, suburban and urban students. The Pittsburgh and Philadelphia sites served 191 and 1,236 students respectively, while the rest of the programs averaged 90 students. Services provided by ELECT grantees include support to participants through group discussions, individual guidance meetings and curriculum-driven courses. ELECT programs also offer intensive case management, attendance monitoring, summer programming and other services to facilitate students’ transition into the workforce. Academic credit for program participation is provided by some programs.

Delivery of Case Management to Participants

A crucial component of the ELECT program is the provision for individual student case management. According to Klerman (2004), the most important factor in preventing subsequent pregnancies may be the strength of the relationship between the teenage mother and the individual working with her. The students are required to receive no less than two hours of one-to-one case management, provided at minimum every other week. During this time, case managers work with students to help them overcome barriers that may prohibit them from graduating. These barriers may include academic struggles, relationship issues, health problems, attendance issues as well as other issues that may impact the pregnant or parenting teen’s ability to graduate from high school.

The ELECT guidelines recommend that a case manager’s caseload be between 20-35 students depending on the employment status (full- or part-time) of the case manager. Due to the statewide decline in the number of pregnant and parenting teens, some programs are broadening their service area to keep the enrollment numbers at full capacity. Therefore, these sites, with permission from PDE, are covering additional areas not previously served.

Some ELECT programs use a team approach with students; services for participants are provided by more than one staff member. This allows for the students to have more than one point of contact during their time enrolled in the program. One of the benefits of this approach is that programs with a large service area can organize their travel schedules to efficiently serve more students at a time. This is especially helpful when planning group work or events.

Most case managers have an office in their primary school and temporary space on scheduled days in other schools. Approximately half of the programs allow for students to drop in as needed, and the other half require an appointment or a teacher’s pass to visit the ELECT staff. The ELECT staff reports that schools are increasingly more restrictive in allowing students to leave class to attend ELECT groups/activities.

Through monitoring visits, technical assistance phone calls or during professional development, many of the grantees have verbally requested the ability to use technology to connect with students. While texting is commonly used to communicate with students it is not an allowable
platform to conduct one-to-one time with the students. One potential conduit to opening up more opportunities for case management is to meet students where they are with technology, such as Skype and FaceTime. “With the technological landscape continuously expanding and with social media, smart phones and iPads quickly becoming a part of everyday life, a growing number of counselors are looking to incorporate new technologies into their work. These technologies aren’t yet free of potential drawbacks or ethical considerations, but many counselors contend that if used properly, they could open up a whole new horizon for the profession” (Shallcross, 2011).

**Instruction of Teen Pregnancy Prevention**

One of the key components of the ELECT program is to prevent subsequent pregnancies. Teenage mothers who have a second birth soon after the first birth have substantially poorer socioeconomic and familial outcomes than do those who delay subsequent childbearing (Kalmuss and Namerow 1994). The ELECT programs provide individual and group instruction on a variety of topics to help prevent subsequent pregnancies, such as birth control methods, pro-social relationship strategies and goal setting. Pregnancy prevention education is provided to both males and females. Students who exhibit factors placing them at higher risk for subsequent pregnancies receive additional prevention education and assistance from the case managers.

The case managers are also expected to provide education on a variety of topics that are outlined in the ELECT guidelines to contribute essential support for the overall success of the teens and their child(ren). These topics are to be covered each year in creative and engaging ways by either the case manager and/or outside providers.

**Instruction Regarding Up-to-Date Health Care and Nutrition**

ELECT sites are encouraged to provide education on health care and nutrition. Sites aim to help students understand the importance of health care for themselves and their child(ren). They refer students to receive routine health care and teach them how to care for their babies. Many ELECT sites work closely with Women Infants and Children (WIC) and the Penn State Extension to ensure provision of comprehensive nutritional education and information on how to live a healthy lifestyle on a restricted budget.

**Instruction in Budgeting and Family Financial Planning**

An essential part of transitioning to adulthood is the ability to manage income and household finances. Overall, just 49 percent of high school students believe they are “highly” or “very knowledgeable” about personal finance. However, when teens report frequent conversations about money with an adult, 70 percent rate themselves as “highly” or “very knowledgeable” about personal finance (Making the Case for Financial Literacy, 2012). This gives credibility to the ELECT program, as staff assist students with banking skills, monetary goal setting, and other education to help them become fiscally responsible and independent.
Vocational and Career Planning

ELECT program staff work with students in grades 11 and 12 to develop and implement a post-graduation plan, which includes continuing education or job placement.

Across Pennsylvania, there has been a decline in the number of ELECT sites using the GED program. During monitoring visits, the sites report that fewer areas have GED programs and fewer students use them, due to the number of alternative methods available to obtain a diploma. The ELECT Program had 210 students complete their GED in the 2015-2016 school year compared with 116 in 2014-15.

Child Care Utilization

Child care is an ongoing challenge for teen parents. In most cases, students do not choose a licensed facility over child care options provided by a relative. This often leaves the infant/child(ren) in a solitary setting with little interaction or early childhood education. Currently, 12 percent of the ELECT students use a family care home, 23 percent use a childcare center, 42 percent send their child(ren) to family/neighbor care, and 23 percent of the students do not use childcare at all. Three percent of the students utilize multiple childcare resources. Quality child care is important as children in the early years (ages 0-5) are the most sensitive for brain development. Children who receive quality child care enter school with better math, language, and social skills. Parents also report reduced stress when their child has safe, loving, and stimulating child care (Children’s Cabinet, 2016).

Monitoring visits have shown that very few students in Pennsylvania choose to use daycare facilities. The majority of students choose to leave their child(ren) with a relative of the child’s mother or the father. When asked about this, common reasons students cite for not choosing daycare include, but are not limited to:

- Not wanting a stranger to watch their infant/child(ren);
- Not trusting someone;
- Not wanting their infant/child(ren) to be in a daycare until they can talk (report back to mom and dad);
- Lack of availability of Child Care Information Services (CCIS) funds, and/or
- Convenience (child care provider lives in the home).

ELECT staff educate students on the benefits of licensed daycare facilities and how they can help the student and their infant/child(ren).

Transportation Services

ELECT sites help students overcome barriers to education by providing a plethora of resources. Some of these resources include bus passes, arranged transportation and working with school districts to arrange appropriate transportation for the students and their child(ren). Currently, 35 percent use a school bus, 21 percent of students walk to school, 20 percent take a
public bus, 14 percent are driven by family or friends, and 10 percent of students take classes at home and do not need transportation or drive themselves to school.

**Transition Services**

Seniors are eligible for the transition phase of the program that provides ongoing case management to graduated students for an additional 120 days after the program year ends. The purpose of transition is to maintain the relationship the ELECT staff and student have built over the time the student was enrolled and to help students transition into the next phase of their lives with the help of ELECT staff. The majority of ELECT sites utilize the transition period to keep students engaged between high school graduation and over the summer. Only three sites offer transition-specific activities for that group of students, while the other 26 sites have transition students participate in activities with the rest of the ELECT students. The ELECT program served about 1,386 transition students from July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016.

**Retrieval Services and Efforts to Retain Students**

The ELECT program focuses on keeping the students in school while they are enrolled in the program. They help student's problem-solve and overcome barriers that may lead to school dropout or disengagement. Once a student is no longer enrolled in the program, they are no longer eligible for ELECT services. Most sites report very few drop-outs and will continue to work with those who drop out of high school to encourage them to re-enroll.

The ELECT sites are given a set of guidelines to be followed to form the basic structure of the ELECT program. The programs have the freedom to locally design the major aspects of their programs to meet their specific needs and maximize resources available to them. The 29 ELECT sites serving Pennsylvania’s pregnant and parenting teens are staffed with individuals that want the best outcomes for their students. Though each site operates differently, the underlying goal of graduation and success beyond high school is the foundation of each of the programs.
Recommendations

Based on this year-end report and the technical assistance provided to the 29 ELECT sites during the 2015-16 program year, CSC makes the following recommendations for program improvement:

- Due to continued struggle across the state in the area of enrollment, continue to deliver quality technical assistance, as well as consider developing recruitment materials, offering resources that provide specific strategies, and providing additional professional development in this area.
- Improve communication and continue outreach, training and technical assistance to ensure all 29 sites are comfortable and well-trained with both the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) and the Center's ELECT data collection systems.
- Offer feedback and guidance in the area of attendance, specifically excused absences, so that sites are made aware of the importance of encouraging good attendance and maintaining accurate data.
- Though there hasn’t been a significant change across the state, some urban areas are showing an increase in secondary pregnancies. CSC will continue efforts to keep instances of secondary pregnancies down by providing the most current pregnancy prevention materials and resources to sites and offering training on the topic as needed.
References

**America’s Health Rankings (2014)**


**Children’s Cabinet, 2016**


Klerman, L. (2004). Another Chance: Preventing Additional Births to Teen Mothers


**National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unwanted Pregnancy. (2014)**

