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what
you
can
do

A YEAR IN REVIEW

POUGHKEEPSIE CHILDREN'S CABINET

DECEMBER 2020

 HARVARD Kennedy School
THE CAMPAIGN FOR HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL

Littauer

79
John F. Kennedy Street



About Children's Cabinets

Imagine if leaders of all of the agencies and organizations that serve children and youth in your community came together at one table to improve their collective ability to meet the needs of children. Picture your superintendent talking with your head of libraries, strategizing with your health commissioner, and collaborating with your summer and after school providers to create a civic ecosystem that enables all children to thrive. We call this a Children's Cabinet. Across the nation, Children's Cabinets are "advancing a new paradigm for systems of support and opportunity for children and youth using coalition building and policy change. Children's Cabinets are collaborative action bodies composed of agencies inside and outside of government, with responsibilities and interests in seeing children thrive in school and in life." A Children's Cabinet provides a space for government agencies and community stakeholders (such as your Children's Hospital, United Way, or Boys and Girls Club) to create a shared vision for kids in your community and then work together to make that vision a reality. By seamlessly coordinating the supports and services that your community provides, Children's Cabinets address young people's holistic needs as they grow and develop.

-Excerpt sourced from [Harvard EdRedesign Lab Local Children's Cabinet Toolkit](#)

Origin Story

The Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet (PCC) emerged as an outcome of the first-ever Poughkeepsie Summit at Harvard University in August of 2019, convening more than 20 local officials and nonprofit leaders to discuss community development opportunities related to the City of Poughkeepsie's future, with a focus on improving opportunities and shifting material conditions for young people in Poughkeepsie. This summit was the first of its kind and was organized by a group of young professionals with deep ties to the City of Poughkeepsie including Rob Watson Jr., James Watson, Klynn Grier, and Kelsey Donohue.

The City of Poughkeepsie has long faced intergenerational issues of inequity across the city and in the education system. The PCC was established as a collaborative citywide initiative that seeks to ensure that children, youth, and families can thrive across all aspects of their lives in school and beyond. This innovative approach brings together cross sector partners and reimagines how decisions that impact children, youth, and families are made.

The PCC is co-chaired by Rob Rolison, Mayor of the City of Poughkeepsie, and Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, Superintendent of the Poughkeepsie City School District. Through a first-time partnership between the Mayor and Superintendent of Schools, the PCC works to excavate resources for young people, bolster programming that works, streamline services, identify service gaps, and better meet the holistic needs of young people in Poughkeepsie. The cabinet is composed of an Executive Committee with leaders from the faith-based community; philanthropy and business; city and county government; nonprofits and community-based organizations; hospitals and health networks; elected officials and the Poughkeepsie City School District. The Cabinet also includes the presidents of 5 local colleges: Marist College, The Culinary Institute of America, SUNY New Paltz, Vassar College and Dutchess Community College. The Cabinet will also house 4 working groups that convene subject matter experts to develop programmatic and policy solutions for the Executive Committee and general public's consideration.

The PCC is a member of the [Local Children's Cabinet Network](#), a national initiative of the Harvard Graduate School of Education's (HGSE) Education Redesign Lab, The Forum for Youth Investment and the Children's Funding Project. Additionally, the Cabinet was recently invited to join the HGSE [By All Means Initiative](#), becoming only the tenth community nationwide to be invited into the program, joining a select group of communities that includes Oakland, CA; Louisville, KY; Providence, RI; Chattanooga-Hamilton County, TN; and Stockton, CA.

Our Mission & Vision

Mission:

Our mission is to *connect* all members of the Poughkeepsie community who support children in order to *create* and *coordinate* a cradle-to-career system of services, supports, and opportunities that ensures *every child* can thrive in Poughkeepsie regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, poverty or circumstance.

Vision:

We envision a community where all children and youth thrive and have equitable opportunities to reach their full potential.

Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet Executive Committee

City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Rob Rolison (Co-Chair)

Poughkeepsie City School District Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser (Co-Chair)

Stacey Bottoms, Associate Minister,
Youth Director and Assistant Clerk,
Beulah Baptist Church

Dr. Elizabeth Bradley, President of
Vassar College

Paul Calogerakis, Chairman of the
Board, Poughkeepsie Alliance

Frank Castella, Executive Director
and CEO of the Dutchess County
Regional Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Donald P. Christian, President of
SUNY New Paltz

Sally Cross, CEO of the Community
Foundations of the Hudson Valley

Gloria Cukar, Director of External
Affairs, Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital
of Westchester Medical Center

Brian Doyle, Chief Executive Officer
of Family Services

Dr. Ellen Gambino, Acting President of
Dutchess Community College

Jonathan Jacobson, New York State
Assemblyman

Tom Lawrence, Director of the
Poughkeepsie Public Library District

Geraldine Laybourne, Co-Founder of
Day One Early Learning Community

Heather Martino, Poughkeepsie High
School Special Education Teacher and
Poughkeepsie Public School Teachers'
Association President

Timmian Massie, Senior Vice President
for Marketing, Public Affairs and
Government Relations at Nuvance
Health

Marcus Molinaro, Dutchess County
Executive

Jeannie Montano, President and CEO
of the United Way of the Dutchess-
Orange Region

Dr. Dennis Murray, President of Marist
College

Tamoya Norwood, President of the
PTA, Early Learning Center

Andrea Reynolds, President and
CEO of the Dyson Foundation

Dr. Tim Ryan, President of the
Culinary Institute of America

Sarah Salem, Councilmember-at-
Large of the City of Poughkeepsie
Common Council

Sue Serino, New York State Senator

Karmen Smallwood, Dutchess
County Assistant Commissioner Youth
Services

Gabriela Vega-Matthews,
Community Organizer and Advocate

Dr. Felicia Watson, President of the
Poughkeepsie City School District
Board of Education

Robert Wright, President of Nubian
Directions II Inc.

Cabinet Staff & Consultant Team

Kristina Giangreco, Director of
Special Projects, Poughkeepsie City
School District

Kylynn Grier, Cabinet Consultant

John Penney, Director of Community
Engagement, City of Poughkeepsie

James Watson, Cabinet Consultant

Rob Watson Jr., Cabinet Advisor



TIMELINE AT A GLANCE

January - April 2020

January 2020: Confirmation of Harvard EdRedesign Lab Technical Assistance

January 17, 2020: Poughkeepsie Summit at Harvard Reconvene: Winter Meeting at Dutchess Community College

January- February 2020: Secured initial collaborations, partnerships and funding strategies for cabinet staffing

February 26, 2020: Mayor and Superintendent of Schools Announce Cabinet Executive Committee Members

February 26, 2020: First Executive Committee Monthly Meeting

March 2020: Periodic Cabinet Response to COVID-19 Meetings

April 3, 2020: 2nd Executive Committee Monthly Meeting

April 2020: COVID-19 Task Force Meetings

May - August 2020

May 8, 2020: 3rd Executive Committee Monthly Meeting

Late May 2020: Poughkeepsie invited to join Harvard EdRedesign Lab By All Means Initiative

June 5, 2020: 4th Executive Committee Monthly Meeting

June 23, 2020 & June 25, 2020: Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet: Goal Setting Meeting

July 10, 2020: 5th Executive Committee Monthly Meeting

July 29, 2020 & August 3, 2020: Mission & Vision Breakout

Meeting August 7, 2020: 6th Executive Committee Monthly Meeting

September - December 2020

September 2, 2020: Working Group Launch Planning Breakout

September 25, 2020: 7th Executive Committee Monthly Meeting

October 6, 2020: Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet Youth Engagement Strategy Meeting

October - November 2020: Launched Working Group Co-Chair Nomination Process

November 5, 2020: Secured Partnership with Marist College Center for Social Justice Research & Center for Civic Engagement

November 17-19, 2020: Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet participates in virtual Fall 2020 By All Means Convening at the Harvard Graduate School of Education

October - December 2020: Secured integrated student supports partnership with Poughkeepsie City School District, Dutchess County Path to Promise and Boston College Lynch School of Education City Connects Program

Topline Wins

Individualized Success Plans:

The Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet is launching an integrated student support system pilot in Poughkeepsie Middle School in early 2021 in partnership with Poughkeepsie City School District (PCSD) and Dutchess County Path to Promise. The partnership will implement the nationally-renowned City Connects program from the Boston College Lynch School of Education. City Connects is the most rigorously evaluated student program of its kind in the nation and will facilitate the development of individual success plans to support the in-school and out-of-school needs of students. Through a robust real-time data platform and professional development system, it will support evidence-based decision-making related to children, youth and families in PCSD.

Youth Engagement Strategy:

The Children's Cabinet has launched an initial phase of the organization's youth engagement strategy in partnership with the Marist Center for Social Justice Research and Center for Civic Engagement. This work will serve as a vehicle for young people who grew up in the City of Poughkeepsie to shape the decisions that impact their lives and build out a blueprint for youth-led decision-making within the Cabinet to ensure that young people's recommendations are prioritized.



By All Means:

Poughkeepsie became only the 10th community in the country to be invited to join the "By All Means" initiative created by the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Education Redesign Lab. By All Means brings **intensive technical assistance, resources, evaluation, and research from Harvard** to support the work of the Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet. Additional resources can be found [here](#).

Data Mapping:

The efforts of the Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet are rooted in data collection and analysis. In order to inform decisions that broadly reflect the needs and hopes of City of Poughkeepsie residents, the Cabinet has prioritized collecting and disseminating data points that drive a better understanding of our pressing local challenges. This data will be used to support the Cabinet's work, especially in crafting policy and programmatic recommendations.

- [October 2020 Data for Decision-Making](#)
- [City of Poughkeepsie School District Compared to its Peers](#)



Topline Wins Continued

COVID-19 Rapid Response Efforts:

Fundraising: The Children's Cabinet fundraised \$62,000 to support the purchase of Chromebooks and Internet access for PCSD students.

WiFi/Hotspots: Facilitated partnership between PCSD and the Poughkeepsie Public Library District, who were able to loan out 50 WiFi hotspots to help students in need of Internet access.

COVID-19 Response Guide: Created a 20-plus page "[COVID-19 Response Guide for Families](#)" as a go-to reference on resources related to economic hardship, social services, public health, housing, civic engagement and other topics most relevant amid the COVID-19 crisis.

Citywide Virtual Town Halls: Organized two Virtual Town Halls via Facebook Live that were co-hosted by the Mayor and Superintendent to provide critical updates on the City and School District's COVID-19 response. In these sessions, the Mayor and Superintendent were able to answer questions about the City and School District in real time.

Working Group Co-Chairs:

The PCC recruited Co-Chairs for the Out-of-School Enrichment & Learning and Early Childhood Working Groups. Co-chairs are subject matter experts, representatives of existing coalitions and/or community representatives with deep ties and experience in the areas of focus. Co-chairs will facilitate:

- Framing and unpacking prevailing structural challenges and opportunities in thematic areas of focus (i.e. early childhood)
- Data collection and analysis for decision-making
- Capturing the perspectives and insights of key stakeholder groups through robust community engagement (particularly communities deeply impacted by the issue + sectors with the potential to support comprehensive solutions)
- Exchanging with leading national models + best practices
- Ideating, prioritizing and deciding on a comprehensive set of solutions (programmatic, fiscal, policy etc.) for the consideration of the Cabinet Executive Committee and Poughkeepsie community at large.



Building Partnerships



Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Completed collaboration with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Department of Urban Studies and Planning graduate students and the [We Who Engage Initiative](#) in the design and production of a civic design guide that will serve as a blueprint for the launch of Children’s Cabinet Working Groups in the future. See a draft of the [guide here](#).

Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative

The Cabinet team secured the admission of Mayor Rolison and City staff into the Bloomberg Philanthropies’ COVID-19 Local Response Initiative and Leading Social and Economic Recovery virtual sessions (housed out of the [Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative](#)), which include regular videoconferences that share critical public health information and leadership strategies. The [videoconference sessions](#) feature top experts from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative. Speakers have included Dr. Anthony Fauci, Bill Gates and President Barack Obama.



What is the Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet?

The Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet is a collective impact organization that convenes leaders across sectors to develop a citywide cradle-to-career agenda for children, youth and families. By seamlessly coordinating the supports and services that communities provide, children's cabinets address young people's holistic needs as they grow and develop.

The Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet is a member of the [Harvard EdRedesign Lab By All Means Initiative](#) and the [Local Children's Cabinet Network](#), a national initiative of the Harvard Graduate School of Education's EdRedesign Lab, the Forum for Youth Investment and the Children's Funding Project.