

The Masai, one of the most notable and fabled ethnic groups of Africa, have a saying that properly drives the collective work that we have engaged here in Poughkeepsie, NY –

### **“How Are the Children?”**

The saying **“How Are the Children?”** acknowledges the importance of children and places a value on their well-being on the current and future health of the community.

Let me ask you, **“How Are the Children?”**

In your momentary reflection you may have arrived at a response, “Many of our children are well but not all of them.”

Current and historical data on youth success in our community and schools support the response that while many of our children find success in and beyond school, many unfortunately have not.

This has been a long standing issue we as a community have grappled far too long with. Our desire, as a community, akin to the Masai, is for all of our children to be well.

Our children spend 20% of their waking hours, from the period of Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, in school, and 80% of that time in the community.

This data point is illuminating in understanding the importance of a school, home, and community approach to addressing our children’s varying and evolving educational, social, emotional, and wellness needs.

The Poughkeepsie Children’s Cabinet represents a “system of care” for the children of the city of Poughkeepsie. It provides them, their parents and caregivers, with a coordinated approach toward the provision of programs, supports, and services all aimed to strengthen;

- school readiness among our earliest learners,
- positive youth development opportunities outside of the school environment,

- college, career, and civic readiness, and
- services that support the physical, social, and emotional health of those who will represent the community and contribute to its vitality.

The Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet, the City of Poughkeepsie Division of Youth Opportunity and Development, along with the 5 Year Strategic Plan of the Poughkeepsie City School District and Dutchess County's Pathway to Promise are perfectly poised to serve as the foundation for the important work we are obligated to engage in to support the wellbeing of our children. Our goal is to provide all children, prenatal to college and career, with multiple access points to achieve success in and out of school. Our community's future depends on how well we work together to strengthen our collective impact on our children's' success.

We as, Board Members, administration, faculty, staff, parents, students, and members of the community must continue to remain steadfast in our commitment in championing our children. So when the question of "**How Are the Children**" is asked, we will harmoniously respond.

**"All of the Children are Well!"**