

Paula S. McCommons, Ed.D.

Dr. Paula McCommons received her B.A. in psychology from Seton Hill College in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. She studied in London for six months, while interning in a psychiatric day hospital serving youth and adults. She received her M.Ed. in Educational Counseling from the University of Pittsburgh where she later received her Ed.D. in Educational Administration. Dr. McCommons is a nationally certified counselor with specialties in school and career counseling. She is also a PA licensed professional counselor, certified guidance counselor and post-secondary student personnel specialist.

During her tenure as director, she has served on the executive leadership board for PAYSPI (PA Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative), visit www.payspi.org, where she has worked closely with representatives from many disciplines and professional organizations within the state to update and execute the state suicide prevention plan. This work has included facilitating the development of regional county task forces and the passage of Act 71 requiring school districts to develop comprehensive suicide prevention efforts. Dr. McCommons also assists in the technical support STAR-Center provides to the PA SAMHSA grant team on Suicide Prevention in Schools and previously on the PA SAMHSA grant on suicide prevention in primary care.

Dr. McCommons also serves as a behavioral health liaison for the UPMC/WPIC County Student Assistance Program. As a member of the state-mandated Student Assistance Program, for one of Pittsburgh's largest public high schools and a high achieving suburban high and middle school, she is responsible for providing individual screenings of at-risk students, offering on-going support for referred students and for assisting families in accessing appropriate referrals both in and out of school. At school, she serves on the core teams, provides consultations for faculty and parents, and offers specialized behavioral health presentations upon request. As needed, she also provides postvention services.