**Paula S. McCommons, Ed.D.**   
**Director, STAR-Center Outreach and**   
**Supervisor/Behavioral Health Liaison for Allegheny County Student**    
**Assistance Program**   
**UPMC- Western Behavioral Health**

Dr. McCommons serves as a supervisor and behavioral health liaison for the Allegheny County Student Assistance Program (SAP) provided by Allegheny County and UPMC- Western Behavioral Health. Currently Dr. McCommons provides SAP services to k-12 students in two school districts covering elementary k-8 and high school buildings.  In her supervisory role she oversees six school districts. She and her fellow liaisons are responsible for screening individual at-risk youth, offering on-going support for referred students, assisting families in accessing appropriate resources in and out of school, participating in core team meetings and providing consultations to faculty and parents.  As needed, they also provide postvention services.

As Director of STAR-Center Outreach activities, Dr. McCommons provides crisis intervention, postvention assistance and consultation to school districts and communities across the commonwealth of Pennsylvania following a tragic loss.  During her tenure, Dr. McCommons served on the executive committee of the Pennsylvania Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative (PAYSPI) and assisted with the development of state-wide symposiums, conferences and legislative initiatives, including Act 71 requiring school districts to develop comprehensive suicide prevention plans.  Since 2010, Dr. McCommons has assisted her STAR-Center colleagues in providing technical support for the SAMHSA sponsored Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention Grants for Pennsylvania originally focusing on screening in primary care, transitioning to suicide prevention in schools and now focusing on strengthening the continuity of care for youth identified at risk for suicide.  Materials and resources generated through the efforts of these grants are archived on the across the life span PA state suicide prevention organization "Prevent Suicide PA." Visit [www.preventsuicidepa.org](http://www.preventsuicidepa.org/)