

Bridget O'Connell, Ed.D.

Proven student-centered leadership with a focus on academic excellence, customized learning, and community collaboration while promoting the mission of the Palisades School District. .

Current Experience

Superintendent - Palisades School District, Kintnersville, PA

August 2011 – PRESENT Recognized as Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year 2022

Programs and Services:

- Expanded AP Course options to include AP Pre-Calc, AP 3-D Art, AP Cybersecurity, and AP Business Principles and Personal Finance. There are now 18 AP options for students.
- Successfully implemented K-5 language arts program (CKLA) based on rigorous review process and best practices in program implementation
- Unified Sports - Yearlong: Strength and Conditioning, Bocci, and Track & Field
- Successfully implemented Pre K Counts Program at Durham Nockamixon Elementary
- Expanded industry based certification opportunities for students in engineering career pathway (OSHA certification) and business career pathway (Excel certification)
- Served as an advocate and led district in support of sanctioning girls wrestling (2024), girls flag football (2025) and boys and girls golf (2025) as PIAA sports
- Enhanced high school career pathways through use of advisory boards
- Incorporated workplace development skills into in school cafe run by students in need of learning supports ([Pirates Pier Cafe](#))
- Promote STEM education through elementary after school activities, and high interest electives and programs ([Watershed Integration Program](#) (WIP) and Cybersonics Team 103 (FIRST Robotics) which is ranked in the top 2.9% in the world)

Community Outreach:

- Hosted Palisades Community Forum meetings (United Way, local faith based and non-profit organizations, and health networks) to identify community needs and discuss collaborative means of meeting those needs
- Featured in [press conference in Harrisburg](#) to advocate for charter school funding reform
- Hosted and served as panelist on Palisades Community [Mental Health Panel](#)
- Maintain active and productive relationships with local, state and U.S. elected officials in order to successfully advocate on behalf of the district (State Representatives Labs and Staats, Senator Coleman and US Congressmen Fitzpatrick and McCormick) through

legislative dinners at Palisades, hosting in-district tours and office visits in Harrisburg and Washington, D.C.

- Engage in ongoing outreach and engagement with community organizations and partners, including local emergency management services teams, parent volunteers and philanthropic organizations
- Partner with Palisades Community Foundation - Wizards Game, Giving Tree, 5K
- Represented the Palisades School District at [President Obama's launch of the Future Ready](#) initiative and Superintendents' Summit at the White House (2014)
- Facilitated fiscal, academic and voting region transfer of Riegelsville Borough (formerly Easton Area School District) residents into the Palisades School District (2012)
- Provide volunteer opportunities for Senior Citizens through our PEARL Program which offers a property tax rebate

Operations Oversight:

- Oversee the development and implementation of \$53.6M annual budget
- Support School Board in all aspects of governance and professional development including: new board orientation, board roles and responsibilities, health care reform, special education, negotiations, local board legislative advocacy, and handbook development
- Supervise and develop a cohesive, dynamic team of building and district administrators
- Serve as district Act 44 Safety and Security Coordinator and oversee all aspects of district security and reporting
- Completed review of data security and participated in table top scenarios with other Bucks County Schools
- Reopened the district for both in-person (5 days a week) and remote instruction at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year during the pandemic
- Served as district Pandemic Coordinator and district lead for the initial development and ongoing review of the Health and Safety Plan (2020)
- Implemented one to one Chromebook initiative and learning management system in 2017 for grades 6-12 which supported the district in reopening remotely during 2020 school closures
- Created Pennsylvania State Police Workspace at Palisades High School – First in state (2013)

Adjunct Professor - Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA

August 2008 – PRESENT

- Course Title: *Curriculum Management for the School Executive*
- Routinely serve as doctoral dissertation committee member for Lehigh doctoral candidates

District Awards, Achievements and Recognitions

2013 – PRESENT

- Recognized as a Bucks County [Best Value District](#) (2026)
- Featured in [Data Insights Magazine](#) (2024) in article, *Data Drives Behavioral/Emotional Health Interventions*
- [Great PA Schools Designation Recipient](#) (2024)
- AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award (2023, 2024)
- National History Day first place winners for PA National History Award and PA National History Day state qualifiers (2024)
- Palisades Watershed Integration Program (WIP) recognized by [PSBA in Great School](#) segment as an innovative program (2024)
- Palisades High School - Recognized by US News and World Report as a top high school since 2018
- Recognized by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bucks County with [Pinnacle Award](#) (2023)
- Recognized by Special Olympics as a Unified Champion School for inclusive practices (2023)
- Recognized by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia as a Youth Heart Watch District (2023)
- Tinicum Elementary School – National Blue Ribbon School (2021)
- Recognized for multiple years by the Anti-Defamation League as a No Place for Hate in the following buildings: Palisades High School, Palisades Middle School, and Durham Nockamixon Elementary School
- Pennsylvania Art Education Association - Outstanding Visual Arts Community (2020-present)
- NAMM Foundation - Best Communities for Music Education in the nation (2020 - 2024)
- Palisades High School World Language Department- PSMLA Exemplary Program Award for 2019-2021.
- School-wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support Recognition and Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support (PAPBS) Network for multiple years
- Recipient of \$25,000 Teacher in the Workplace state grant to enhance pathway programs at the high school (2020)
- *Newsweek* Top STEM High School 2020
- Recognized as a Don Eichhorn School to Watch – Palisades Middle School (2019)

- Recipient of \$177,000 PA Educational Access Grant to implement 1:1 in grades 6-12 (2016-2017)
- [Featured district in United States Department of Education](#) – Office of Ed Tech: Future Ready Leadership
- Recognized by American Red Cross for outstanding community support and collaboration while serving for eight days as a shelter in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy (2013)

Previous Experience

Assistant Superintendent - Palisades School District, Kintnersville, PA

2007 – 2011

Supervisor of Curriculum and Federal Programs – Quakertown Community School District, Quakertown, PA

2005 – 2007

Acting Assistant to the Superintendent - Palisades School District, Kintnersville, PA

2004 – 2005

High School Assistant Principal - Palisades School District, Kintnersville, PA

2003- 2004

High School English, Social Studies and Gifted Education Teacher and Cross Country Coach - Palisades School District, Kintnersville, PA

1997 – 2003

Men's and Women's Assistant Track Coach – Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA

1995 - 1997

Degrees and Certifications

The Education Policy and Leadership Center - Advanced Policy Fellow - 2024

AASA/PASA - National Superintendent Certificate Program - 2021

Pennsylvania Department of Education - Superintendent Academy – 2017

University of Pennsylvania – Certificate in Leadership Dynamics – 2015

The Education Policy and Leadership Center – Policy Fellow – 2014

Cornell University: School of Industrial and Labor Relations – Master's Certificate in Human Resources - 2012

Lehigh University – Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership –2007

Lehigh University – Master of Education, Secondary Education – 1997

Lehigh University – Bachelor of Arts, English and Anthropology – 1995

Pennsylvania Department of Education – Certifications include: Superintendent Letter of Eligibility, Assistant Superintendent Letter of Eligibility, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, Secondary Principal, English 7-12 and Social Studies 7-12

Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) – Master Scuba Diver – 2017

Current Affiliations and Memberships

- American Association of School Administrators (AASA) - Executive Committee
- Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA) - Board of Governors
- St. Luke's University Health Network Upper Bucks Campus - Board of Trustees
- Lehigh University School Study Council – Chair
- DaVinci Science Center - Board of Trustees
- Lehigh University College of Education, Dean's Advisory Committee (DAC)
- Springfield Township (Bucks County) Lions' Club
- Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA)
- American Society of Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- Lehigh University Alumni Association: Class correspondent

Personal Awards, Achievements, and Recognitions

2013 – PRESENT

- Easton High School Portrait of a Graduate Alumni Recognition (2026)
- Featured in Bucks County Herald Article, "[Palisades superintendent has spent decades on the right track.](#)" (April 2026)
- Featured in Bucks County Herald Article, "[Longtime Palisades Superintendent gets 5 year contract.](#)" (June 2026)
- Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year (2022)
 - <https://buckscountyherald.com/stories/bucks-countys-palisades-bridget-oconnell-is-pennsylvania-superintendent-of-the-year.13393>
- Patriot League (Collegiate Division I) Title IX Trailblazer of Distinction
<https://thebrownandwhite.com/2022/10/20/title-ix-changes-in-sports-equity-over-the-years/>
- Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) featured in *50 Years of Title IX* Newsletter (May 2022)
- The Education Policy and Leadership Center (EPLC) Leadership Program Alumni Award (2022)

- Citation from the Pennsylvania Senate for PA Superintendent of the Year recognition (June 2022)
- Citation from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives (Sponsor Shelby Labs) for PA Superintendent of the Year recognition (2021)
- Commendation from Bucks County Board of Commissioners for PA Superintendent of the Year recognition (2021)
- Bucks County Intermediate Unit Outstanding Service Award (December 2019)
- Easton Area High School (Easton, PA) Wall of Fame Inductee (2016)
- American Academy of Arts and Sciences *Top 5 To Watch in 2015*
- Citation from PA Senate (Sponsor: Bob Mensch) for Palisades School District representation at White House (2014)
- Blended Schools Network *Leadership Award* (2013)
- Bucks County Board of Commissioners *Letter of Commendation for Real Hero of Bucks County* (2013)
- Citation from the PA House of Representatives (Sponsor: Marguerite C. Quinn) and the PA Senate (Sponsors: Charles J. McIlhinney, Jr., Bob Mensch, and Robert M. Tomlinson) for *Community Partner Hero Award* (2013)

Presentations

Last 5 years:

- PASA New Superintendent Academy - *Organizational Development, Structure and Team Building*
- #PANeedsTeachers Summit Presenter - *Palisades Education Career Pathway*
- Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA) Women's Caucus Speaker - *Striving for Wellbeing: The Challenge of Taking Care of Oneself and Others*
- PASA Leadership Forum Keynote Speaker - *Building and Maintaining Relationships: Now More than Ever*
- PASA National Superintendent Certification Program presentation – *Creating and Sustaining Career Pathway Advisories*
- Lehigh School Study Council panel participant – *Leadership in a Pandemic: How we, as Superintendents, Think, Process, Cope and Persist Personally as a Leader*
- PASA Conference: EdTalk and Presenter