



PENNSYLVANIA PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION

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April 23, 2024

For Immediate Release

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Brian W. Swartzlander Named Pennsylvania's 2024 National Distinguished Principal

(ENOLA, PA) — Brian W. Swartzlander, Jr., Principal of Kiski Area Upper Elementary School (5-6) in the Kiski Area School District, has been named **Pennsylvania's 2024 National Distinguished Principal (NDP) by the Pennsylvania Principals Association**. As a state winner in the National Association of Elementary School Principals' (NAESP) National Distinguished Principal (NDP) Program, Mr. Swartzlander will be honored by NAESP and the PA Principals Association at special award ceremonies later this year.

James Orichosky, NDP Selection Committee Chair and President-Elect of the PA Principals Association, said, "The NDP Committee is pleased to select Brian Swartzlander from the Kiski Area School District as Pennsylvania's 2024 PA National Distinguished Principal. During his tenure as principal of Kiski Area Upper Elementary School, Mr. Swartzlander has proven to be an outstanding leader. From the moment we entered the building to visit, we could tell a culture of '*students first*' was evident. Mr. Swartzlander's playbook for approaching student improvement using data painted a clear picture on how to improve student performance, and the PBIS [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports] program is thriving, with students and staff taking pride in all that happens at their school. He will make an outstanding representative for our association at the state and national levels."

An educator for 21 years, Mr. Swartzlander has served in his current role as principal of Kiski Area Upper Elementary (KAUE) School since 2019. He also serves as the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) coordinator for the Kiski Area School District. Previously, he was the assistant principal at Kiski Area Intermediate School (7-8) from 2016-2019, supervisor of technology integration and support for Kiski Area School District from 2013-2016 and he taught social studies at Kiski Area High School from 2004-2013.

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“We congratulate Brian Swartzlander, an exceptional principal and leader, on his selection as Pennsylvania’s 2024 National Distinguished Principal. Brian has demonstrated through his leadership style that he values collaboration, shared leadership and teamwork. In addition, his outstanding leadership skills, role as a lead learner and commitment to the Kiski Area Upper Elementary students, staff and community are qualities that make him a distinguished principal and an example for principals and school leaders across the commonwealth,” said Dr. Eric Eshbach, Executive Director, PA Principals Association.

During Mr. Swartzlander’s tenure, he was instrumental in creating a collaborative environment. “When I became principal in 2019, professional learning communities [PLCs] had just been instituted across the district, and there was a lack of confidence and commitment to the continuous cycle of improvement,” he explained. By leveraging the strengths of the teachers and staff, they were able to successfully create a positive learning culture focused on high levels of student growth and achievement. In addition to their content and grade-level PLC teams, they have a Guiding Coalition that meets monthly to assist in leadership decision-making as well as a Behavioral PLC to influence MTSS structure, their Student Assistance Program [SAP] and their PBIS program.

Mr. Swartzlander and his staff have created a School-Wide PBIS program that was implemented for the first time during the 2023-2024 school year. This program focuses on the acronym “Cavs LEAD,” emphasizing leadership, empathy, accountability and determination among students. “I can honestly say that our staff takes 100% ownership in this process, and their efforts have significantly impacted the academic and behavioral success of our students. We are committed to creating a safe and positive environment for all students and parents that make up our KAUE family,” he explained.

According to Dr. Jason Lohr, Superintendent of Kiski Area School District, “Mr. Swartzlander embodies all attributes of servant leadership in every facet of the principalship. His interactions are always genuine, and that established trust fuels the culture, enabling him to lead students, faculty and staff to achieve even more than they believe possible. It is a culture that works, loves, learns and plays hard every single day. When I congratulated him on his recognition, his first words were about recognizing the incredible work that others are doing to make it happen. That's proof of who he is and where his heart is as a leader.”

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In addition to being a member of the Pennsylvania Principals Association and the National Association of Elementary School Principals, Mr. Swartzlander is a member of Solution Tree's Model PLCs at Work as well as a Crisis Prevention Institute certified instructor. He is also active in his community through collaboration with first responders in Washington Township (Westmoreland County) and as a district leader for STEM and Future Ready Learning in conjunction with ABC Create Alle-Kiski Valley Collaborative.

“Receiving this award speaks volumes about the work that my teachers, staff and district administrators do on a daily basis. All of my success is a result of collective ownership and team mentality. I am honored to accept this award on behalf of my school and my fellow administrators,” said Mr. Swartzlander

Mr. Swartzlander earned a Bachelor of Science in business administrator from Washington & Jefferson College; a Master of Science in curriculum design and instruction from Gannon University; and his principal certification from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He is currently working on his doctorate in educational administration and leadership at Penn West University.

Mr. Swartzlander and his wife, Amy, are the parents of two children, Katie (8) and Neil (6). “My amazing wife and beautiful children are my motivation and the reason I am so committed to making a difference in the lives of children. Education is the most important profession in the world, and I never take for granted the impact my educational team has on our future generations,” he shared.



Brian W. Swartzlander

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About the PA Principals Association: The PA Principals Association membership of approximately 3,500 is composed of elementary, middle level and secondary school principals, assistant principals and other educational leaders and is affiliated with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). www.papincipals.org

The Mission of the Pennsylvania Principals Association: To ensure a quality education for every child by comprehensively supporting the educational leaders of our schools.

The Vision of the Pennsylvania Principals Association: To be the best service organization of its kind in the United States.

For more information about the **Kiski Area School District**, visit: <https://www.kiskiarea.com/>