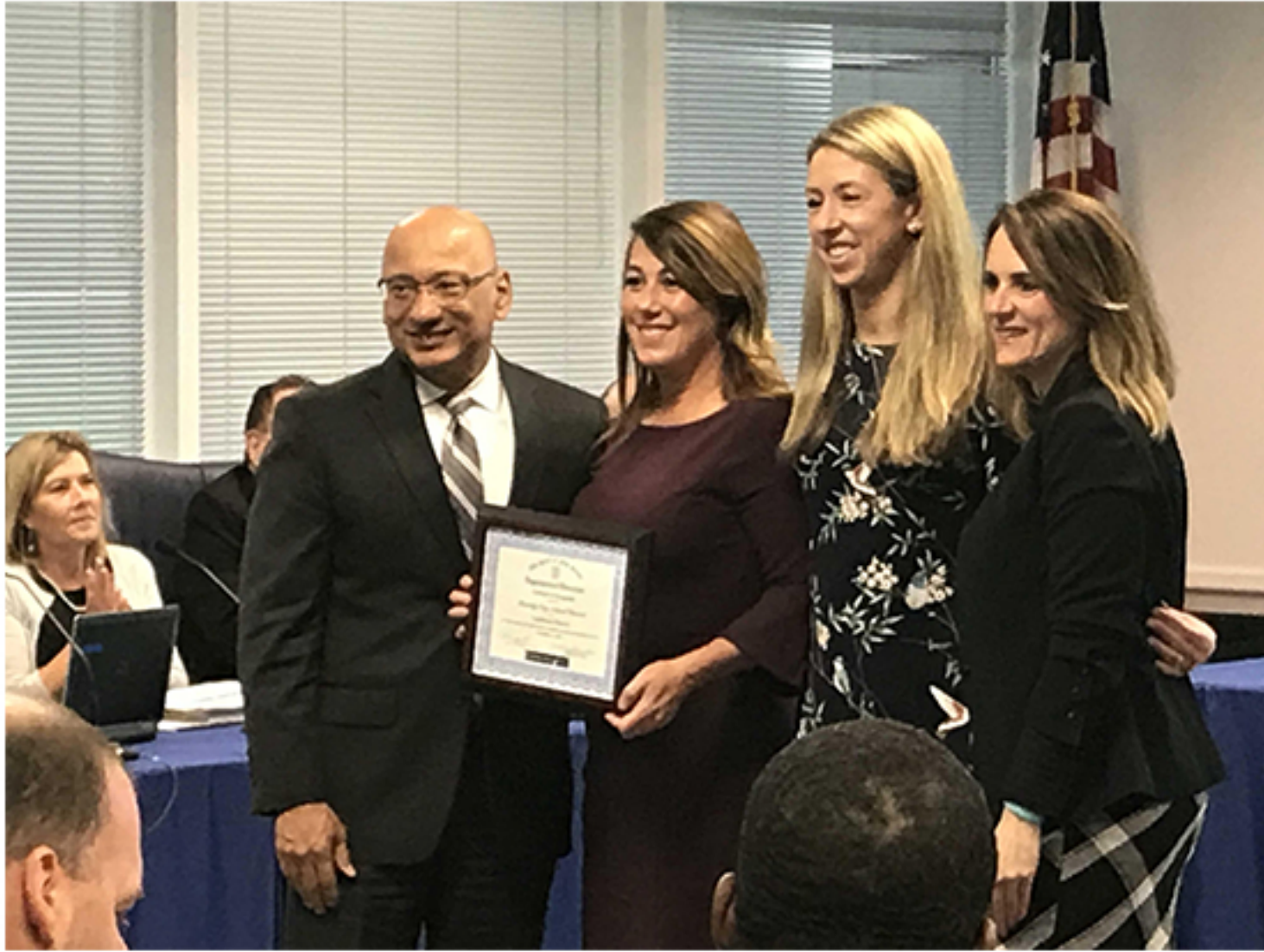


## Beverly School recognized as Lighthouse District



Beverly Superintendent Elizabeth Giacobbe (second from left) holds a plaque naming her school district one of seven Lighthouse Districts in the state on Wednesday, Nov. 1. With her are (from left) New Jersey State Board of Education President Arcelio Aponte, district director of curriculum and instruction Kerri Lawler, and state Commissioner of Education Kimberley Harrington. [KELLY KULTYS / PHOTOJOURNALIST]

By Kelly Kultys

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Seven school districts, including Beverly in Burlington County, were named Lighthouse Districts as a part of a new initiative by the New Jersey Department of Education.

TRENTON — Beverly was one of seven schools in the state to become a part of the inaugural class of “Lighthouse Districts” as designated by the New Jersey State Board of Education.

The other schools honored on Wednesday with plaques included the Mainland Regional School District in Atlantic County, Black Horse Pike Regional School District in Camden County, Cape May City, Highlands School District in Monmouth County, Mine Hill Township School District in Morris County, and Washington Township School District in Warren County.

Over 35 representatives from the schools were in attendance during the presentations to kick off the new initiatives.

The goal of the Lighthouse District initiative is to recognize districts for their academic achievements and improvements, according to Department of Education Commissioner Kimberley Harrington. Harrington said her department and others will look to these schools to show “what it means to be a district to illuminate the path.”

“First of all, it is humbling to be considered part of this inaugural group with other such amazing educators,” Beverly Superintendent Elizabeth Giacobbe said.

Beverly was the first lighthouse district to present its improvement, notably on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, also known as the PARCC exam, over the past few years, to the state board in September.

When the PARCC was implemented, the district changed its curriculum to better fit the standards, and this year saw the results of it. Scores went up overall, as did scores in subgroups such as for economically disadvantaged and special education students.

Mainland Regional presented this month, and its superintendent, Mark Marrone, said even though his district is a regional high school, it shared similarities with Beverly. He recalled hearing Beverly’s presentation at the New Jersey School Boards Conference earlier this year about the stability of the district’s administration.

“(They said) we’ve had seven years of administration there. That’s made a difference for us,” Marrone said.

State school board member Kathy Goldenberg, of Moorestown, who represents Burlington County, said district administrators statewide stay on average only 2.3 years.

“That’s a problem,” she said.

Goldenberg credited Beverly and Mainland for maintaining administrative consistency to implement programs and give them time to develop and grow.

Marrone’s presentation showed the board how his district improved from 2009 through 2017, also noting that much of the administrative staff had remained in place.

Giacobbe, Marrone and other Lighthouse District leaders will have the opportunity through the initiative to share with other districts what practices have worked for them.

Giacobbe said she is proud of what has been accomplished in Beverly and looks forward to sharing it.

“To be charged with leading the pack going forward, it’s obviously an honor and is very humbling,” she said. “But it just celebrates that we’re doing the right thing for kids.”