The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Lighthouse District Initiative recognizes districts that have demonstrated measurable progress across diverse groups of learners. The NJDOE is proud to welcome the Ocean City School District to the second cohort of Lighthouse Districts.

The Ocean City School District works with all students and guardians to ensure that expectations for students are clear, and to provide materials, guidance and other forms of support to help students succeed. Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, the district launched the *Raider Ready* program to give new students and their families opportunities to become acclimated with the school and its staff before they even enroll in the district. The program offers sessions, which all have an academic component to help the students entering Kindergarten, 4th or 9th grade with a strong skill set from which to build. The sessions provide them with foundational skills and concepts needed to be successful in that grade, promote daily attendance, further develop social competence and interpersonal skills as well as strengthening them as competent learners. Another key factor in these programs is working with the parents to connect with them as partners in their child's educational career.

The development of Raider Ready is an example of the teamwork and forward-thinking that makes Superintendent Kathleen Taylor, Ed.D., proud of her district. She considers herself "most fortunate to be working with such an outstanding leadership team and faculty, who strive every day to ensure that we scaffold our work to best address the needs of our students in meeting and exceeding our high expectations for them." To ensure all students are successful and cared for, the district participates in the New Jersey Consortia for Excellence through Equity (NJCEE). As a member of the consortia, administrators and faculty participate in meaningful professional learning and networking opportunities, all of which are brought back and shared within the district to help initiate new, or strengthen existing, programs focused largely on increasing student performance in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics.

The summer enrichment program provides targeted academic assistance in both ELA/literacy and mathematics to assist K-8 students. The district also runs a version of this program after school during the school year to provide students focused assistance in literacy or mathematics. As a result of student benchmarking systems, teachers can focus on the students' targeted areas for improvement while strengthening students' developed skills. These and other programs also include college and career readiness standards.

In response to data analysis, the Ocean City School District implemented curricular, programmatic and instructional changes, and increased professional development opportunities, in mathematics. The *Get Raider Ready for Algebra* course helps students better prepare for concepts introduced in Algebra I at the high school level. Through the course, students work to develop strong mathematical study skills and learning strategies. Data analysis also prompted Dr. Taylor and her faculty to pursue a waiver from the New Jersey Department of Education to more heavily weigh annual student achievement data in educator and leader evaluations, with a strong focus on closing achievement gaps between the general school population and the special education and economically disadvantaged student populations. This is an example of the district's genuine commitment to helping all students reach their greatest potential.

Facilitating students' health and wellness is a significant goal for the Ocean City School District. With this goal in mind, the district has worked to improve the overall school climate and culture Through staff, resources, apps, the *Lifelines* curriculum and a Wellness Center in both the High School and Intermediate School, the district has created safe spaces to provide students with the opportunity to reduce stress and anxiety and develop healthy strategies and self-care. When students feel safe and secure, they can focus and learn. To stay connected and keep families informed about the rapid-paced, ever-changing world in which our students live, the district helps parents learn and navigate a range of issues their children are facing, from social and emotional learning to character development through a digital toolkit.

Ocean City School District Demographic Information
Grades Served: Pre-K to 12
Number of Schools: 3
Total Enrollment: 2,124
Economically Disadvantaged: 22.2%
Students with Disabilities: 11.3%
English Learners: .9%

Ask Ocean City to Share Their Story
1) Telling student stories with data
2) Infusing equity and addressing the achievement/opportunity gap
3) Student mental health and wellness
4) Building foundational academic skills for equitable access to coursework

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