

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends, but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends exactly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Denison Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them, and wish them a very successful new school year.●

ESTHERVILLE-LINCOLN CENTRAL COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes, today, to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Estherville-Lincoln Central Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Estherville-Lincoln Central Community School District received three fire safety grants totaling \$350,000 to make safety improvements throughout the district, including the installation of new fire alarm systems at the elementary and middle schools and replacement of doors and hardware at the high school. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Estherville-Lincoln Central Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the Board of Education—president Molly Anderson, vice president Karen Butler, Nancy Anderson, Mike Karels, Don Schlitz, Jodie Grieg, and Duane Schnell and former board members, Gordon Juhl, Tom Ross, and Gary Feddern. I would also like to recognize superintendent Richard Magnuson, elementary principal Kris Schlievert, former middle school principal Steve Schroeder, former high school principal Susan Bish, business manager Kate Woods, maintenance supervisors Al Hall and Larry Enderson, Estherville Police Chief Eric Milburn and Estherville Fire Chief Randy Cody.

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MFL MARMAC COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes, today, to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the MFL MarMac Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

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The MFL MarMac Community School District received a 2001 Harkin grant totaling \$162,500 which it used to help build an addition at the high school for the music programs and to remodel the former music classrooms to expand the library. The district also received a 2003 fire safety grant for \$25,000 to upgrade the fire alarm system in the Monona building. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the MFL MarMac Community School District. In particular, I'd like to recognize the leadership of the Board of Education, president Jill Winkowski, vice president Patti Ruff, Patty Burkle, Toni Niel, Brian Meyer, Terry Mohs and Greg Formanek and former members Craig Strutt, Norm Lincoln and Jerry Schroeder and superintendent Dale Crozier. I would also like to recognize the many individuals who served on the MFL MarMac facility committee which provided valuable input on meeting the needs of the school district.

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