

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 got to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Clear Lake 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.●

COON RAPIDS-BAYARD 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 Coon Rapids-Bayard 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 Coon Rapids-Bayard Community School District received a 2002 Harkin Grant totaling \$142,000 which it used to help build an addition to the middle/high school building and make improvements to Deal Elementary. The district also received two fire safety grants totaling \$75,000 to install fire detection systems, upgrade electrical wiring and make other repairs throughout the district. 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 Coon Rapids-Bayard Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Alan Schroeder, Mike Oswald, Jim Schwaller, Roger Tapps, Larry Nees, Pat McAlister, and Nancy Hagan and former board members Mark Thomas, Brian Kinnick and Dr. John Clayburg. I would also like to recognize superintendent Rich Stoffers, former superintendent Dennis Wentz, business manager Gail Hopkins and high school principal Shawn Zanders.

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.

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DURANT 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 Durant 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 Durant Community School District received a 1998 Harkin grant totaling \$250,000 which it used to help build an addition to the elementary school for prekindergarten programs including Head Start and for the Cracker Box Center to provide before and after school programs for students in the district. The district also received two fire safety grants totaling \$50,000. 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 Durant Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education, president Richard Stoltenberg, vice president Sheila Compton, Brian Fargo, Steve Ralfs and Cheryl Telsrow and former board members Jane Lichtenstein, Pam Sissel, Gary Workman and Kenneth Huesman. I would also like to recognize superintendent Duane Bark, former superintendent James Wagner and elementary principal Rebecca Stineman.

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VALLEY COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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