

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 College Community School District received a 2000 Harkin grant totaling \$500,000 which it used to help build a new elementary school—the first new school the district had built in 30 years. This school is a modern, state-of-the-art facility that befits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, it is the kind of school facility that every child in America deserves.

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 College Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—president Randy Bauer, vice president Greg Kelsey, Norm Zahradnik, Dawn Tucker, John Titler, Lauri Hughes, Dot Pospischil and board secretary Jim Rotter as well as former board President Sandy Flatgard and former secretary Jim Steffen. I would also like to recognize superintendent Richard Whitehead and former superintendent Mick Starcewich.

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 College Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I sa-

lute them, and wish them a very successful new school year.●

GEORGE-LITTLE ROCK 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 George-Little Rock 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 George-Little Rock Community School District received a 2005 Harkin grant totaling \$500,000 which it used to help renovate an old gymnasium into a fine arts center and two accessible special education classrooms. This addition is a modern, state-of-the-art facility that befits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, it is the kind of facility that every child in America deserves. The district also received two fire safety grants totaling \$44,900 which it used to install smoke and heat detectors and update fire alarm notification systems throughout the district.

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 George-Little Rock Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education president—Warren Tiedeman, Terrence Clark, Donell Nagel, Amy Jurrens, Doug Krull and board secretary Delinda Kruger as well as former board members Roger Jurrens and Kory Hayenga. I would also like to recognize superintendent David Ackerman; former superintendent Joanne Smith; elementary and middle school principal Janel Guse; the teaching and custodial staff of George-Little Rock; the team of ar-

chitects at Neumann, Monson and Victor; Hoogendoorn Construction; the membership of the project steering committee; and the staff of the Little Rock Freelance and the Lyon County News.

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LINN-MAR 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 Linn-Mar 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 Linn-Mar Community School District received five Harkin grants totaling \$1,625,000. A 2000 construction grant for \$500,000 was used to help renovate Bowman Woods Elementary