

School to provide space for a media center, a 2002 construction grant for \$200,000 was used to provide classrooms for the Little Lions preschool at a new K-8 school and a 2005 construction grant for \$500,000 was used to help build Linn Grove Elementary School. These schools are the modern, state-of-the-art facilities that befit the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, they are the kind of schools that every child in America deserves. The district also received two fire safety grants totaling \$425,000 to install sprinkler systems at Excelsior Middle School and Linn-Mar High School.

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 Linn-Mar Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—president Robert Crawford, vice president Ann Stark, Barry Buchholz, Bob Gilchrist, David Nicholson, Jim Green, Erik Miles and Helen Romanowsky and former board members Swati Dandekar, Mark Klopfenstein, Tom Manor, David Meyer, Tom Miller, Lorna Richards and Steve Colton. I would also like to recognize superintendent Dr. Kathleen Mulholland, former superintendent Dr. Joe Pacha, business administrator Dave Nicholson, former business administrator Dave DeWall, and principals Dona Miller, Kent Stock, Dan Ludwig, Shannon Bisgard, Dr. Marc McCoy and Jerry VanDyke.

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 Linn-Mar 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.●

MAQUOKETA 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 Maquoketa 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 Maquoketa Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$228,750 and a 2003 Harkin grant totaling \$240,000. The 2002 grant was used to help build four new classrooms and a restroom at Cardinal Elementary. These new classrooms allowed the district to expand their preschool program and dedicate part of the space for special needs students. The 2003 grant was used to relocate the middle school office from the second floor to the first floor main entryway, resulting in a safer and more secure environment. The district also received two fire life safety grants totaling \$35,000 for updating fire alarm systems, fire doors, and fire walls. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

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NASHUA-PLAINFIELD 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 Nashua-Plainfield Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the tenth 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 Nashua-Plainfield Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$104,200 which it used to help replace windows at the school in Plainfield. The Federal grant has made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

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