

people about our priorities. We have to do better.

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

DAVENPORT 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 Davenport 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 Davenport Community School District received a 2000 Harkin grant totaling \$500,000 which it used to help build a gym addition and for interior remodeling at Smart Intermediate School. A second Harkin Grant was awarded to the district in 2003 for \$399,000. Matching funds were available through the passage of a Local Options Sales and Service Tax. The remodeling of classrooms and improvements to the media center at Harrison Elementary School were made possible by the combination of these funds. Additionally, between 2000 and 2005, the Davenport Community School District has received more than \$900,000 in fire safety grants. Early warning systems, fire alarms and emergency lighting were installed in school buildings through the district to assure the health and safety of students, teachers and staff. 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 Davenport Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the current board of education including Patt Zamora, Larry Roberson, Richard Clewell, Nikki DeFauw, Ralph Johanson, Ken Krumwiede and Tim Tupper and former board members Denise Hollonbeck, Jamie Howard, Steve Imming, Gary Kleinschmidt, Susan Low and the late Jim Hester. I would also like to recognize superintendent Julio Almanza, former superintendent Jim Blanche and several other members of the administration and support staff, Christie Wallace Noring, Linda Doran, Marsha Tangen, Tom Wagner, Howard Hunigan, Bill Good, Donna Cooper, Kris Kleinsmith, Marti Timmerman, Rachael Mullins, Tom Hunt, Karen Farley, Linda Smith Kortemeyer, the late Jane Grady and the late David Lane; and the commitment of community leaders like Dan Portes and Dave and Peggy Iglehart.

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.

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STORM LAKE 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 Storm Lake Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

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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 Storm Lake Community School District received several Harkin fire safety grants totaling \$221,274 which it used to upgrade fire alarm systems at East Elementary and the Storm Lake High School; install fire detection systems at West and North Elementary Schools; and bring district facilities into fire inspection compliance through installation of emergency lighting, electrical upgrades made necessary due to expanding technology needs, and installation of fire safety doors and stairwell separators. 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 superintendent Paul Tedesco and the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Storm Lake Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Dan Douglas, Barb Seiler, Leslie Cutler, Ed McKenna, and Todd Nicholson. Former superintendent Dr. Bill Kruse was also instrumental in the application and implementation of the grants, and public safety director Mark Prosser and Storm Lake fire chief Mike Jones supported the district's efforts by assisting in the assessment and identification of fire safety needs of the district.

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