

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 Chariton Community School District received several Harkin fire safety grants totaling \$193,750 which it used to install fire alarm systems with emergency lighting and smoke detectors, replace doors with fire rated doors, and upgrade emergency exits in all five district facilities. 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 Paula Wright and former superintendent Robert Newsum, the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Chariton Community School District. In particular, I'd like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—president Chuck Crabtree, vice president Nick Hunter, Craig Huff, Craig Scott and Dave Rich as well as buildings and grounds director; Dave DeBok.

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 Chariton 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.●

#### CLARKE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Madam 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 Clarke 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 Clarke Community School District received three Harkin fire safety grants totaling \$331,099 which it used to replace wiring and install fire escapes, fire doors, alarm systems, heat detectors, emergency lighting, and firewalls in district school buildings. 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 Ned Cox and former superintendent Steve Waterman and the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Clarke Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—president Linda Henry, vice president Ed White, Michael Evink, Mark Jones, Jeff Wilken, Steve O'Tool, and Larry Gibbs, and former board members Doug Stearns, Kris Lange, Kathy Seelinger, Duane Otto, Darwin Downing, Joni Nelson, Chuck DeVos, Carol Reisinger, Roger Cole, Michael Motsinger, and Kevin Dorland.

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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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 Clarke 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.●

#### DOWS COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Madam 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 Dows 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, 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 Dows Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$77,787 to help replace boilers and ceiling tiles at the elementary and middle schools. The district also received two fire safety grants totaling \$51,291 for emergency lighting, heat detectors, and other repairs at the schools. 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 Dows Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Marty Osterman, Kristi Hinkle, Jon Bakker, Betty Ellis, and Corey Jacobson, and former board members Shelly Howard and Steve Tassinari. I would also like to recognize superintendent Dr. Robert Olson,