

Willert, and the dedicated principals, teachers, and staff. The students and staff at Marshall Public Schools understand that, in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must also provide a nurturing environment where students can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and students at Marshall Public Schools should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate the Marshall Public School District in Marshall for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota.●

**WALKER-HACKENSACK-AKELEY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT'S SPEECH  
TEAM, WALKER, MINNESOTA**

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, today I honor Walker-Hackensack-Akeley School District's speech team, in Walker, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

The Walker-Hackensack-Akeley speech team is truly a model of educational success. The team has demonstrated that when a school establishes a reputation in a specific area, this promotes high expectations, community involvement and support, and an atmosphere encouraging further success. The competitive speech program at Walker-Hackensack-Akeley High School truly sets this school apart from most others in the State. The program is primarily for senior high school, but exceptionally gifted seventh- and eighth-graders can also participate.

The speech program focuses on the Minnesota State High School Speech Competition and the National Forensic League. Both areas of concentration have brought numerous awards and recognition to Walker-Hackensack-Akeley communities. More important, the program has helped develop students' skills and led them, in some cases, to world-class opportunities.

Walker-Hackensack-Akeley's speech program has produced more State champions and medal winners at State-level competition than any school its size, and the high school consistently ranks among the top schools throughout Minnesota. Many students have gone on to compete in the prestigious National Forensic League, and 10 former students have achieved National Forensic League Academic All-American status. Many have also pursued distinguished careers in law, medicine, and business.

The Walker-Hackensack-Akeley speech program has a 40-year record of success, during which participants earned 163 State speech medals, including 31 individual State championships. Participants of the program have competed 21 times at the national level and have won dozens of invitational, subsection, and sectional titles.

Last year, the high school's graduating class of 61 students received in excess of \$650,000 in merit-based scholarships from universities and colleges across the country.

Much of the credit for the Walker-Hackensack-Akeley's speech team's success belongs to its coach, Chuck Cravens. The students and staff at Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Schools understand that in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must also provide a nurturing environment where students can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and students at Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Schools should be very proud of the accomplishments of its speech team.

I congratulate the Walker-Hackensack-Akeley School District's speech team in Walker for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota.

**WABASSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS,  
WABASSO, MINNESOTA**

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, today I honor the Wabasso Public Schools, in Wabasso, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

The Wabasso Public Schools are truly a model of educational success. The district is a small, rural district that has a single building for its entire program, prekindergarten through grade 12. Superintendent Ted Suss describes the District as the "center of local activity, the most important institution within its community, and the emblem of community pride." Wabasso Public Schools have demonstrated that quality education can be provided in a small, rural school district. The district prides itself for its success in academics, athletics, and the arts.

Wabasso Public Schools' amenities include a comprehensive early childhood education program, a formal pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds and an all-day kindergarten. In the high school, Wabasso offers a full-year physics class and a full-year calculus class. The vocational agriculture department offers additional opportunities for students to earn science credits, including hands-on learning in floriculture, agriculture, crop science, and animal science. The district will begin offering advanced placement classes next year, which very few rural districts are able to do.

The Wabasso community is proudest of a Future Farmers of America Chapter in which 25 percent of all students in grades 9 through 12 won the opportunity to compete at the FAA State Convention; the Wabasso High School choir, which won three "superior" ratings, the maximum possible under Minnesota State High School League rules;

the Wabasso High School Rabbits, which have an extraordinary record of success, including State championships in girls' fast-pitch softball and basketball; the boys' wrestling team has qualified for the State tournament in 2 of the past 3 years, winning second place in 2001 and reaching the semifinals in 2003; and the football team has also advanced to the State tournament in 2 of the past 3 years. The success of the football team is even more impressive, given that the school has opted to play in the more competitive 11-man league even though the small enrollment would have allowed them to compete in the 9-man league.

To control costs, the Wabasso School District has hired a single dean of students to serve as the principal for the elementary school, middle school, and high school. A site council makes many of the decisions traditionally made by a school principal.

The Wabasso Elementary School received a four-star rating in math and a five-star rating in reading from the department of education, while the high school received three-star ratings in both math and reading. Last year, every 10th-grade student passed the state MCA writing test on the first attempt. Well over 90 percent of the class of 2005 continued on to a postsecondary education program or entered the military.

Much of the credit for Wabasso Public School's success belongs to its superintendent, Ted Suss, its dean of students, Amy Iverson, and the dedicated teachers and staff. The students and staff at Wabasso Public Schools understand that, in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must also provide a nurturing environment where students can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and students at Wabasso Public Schools should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate Wabasso Public Schools in Wabasso for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota.●

**THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH  
SCHOOL, BLOOMINGTON, MINNESOTA**

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, today I honor Thomas Jefferson High School, in Bloomington, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

Thomas Jefferson High School is truly a model of educational success. The school is to be commended for its overall commitment to quality education, including its curriculum and scheduling, staffing, materials and equipment, and facilities. The quality of Jefferson's programs in the sciences, mathematics, language arts, health,