

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Alburnett 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 Alburnett Community School District received a 2005 Harkin grant totaling \$500,000 which it is using to help expand and renovate the high school facility. Although parts of the construction project are still under way, this school will be a modern, state-of-the-art facility that befits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, this is the kind of school that every child in America deserves. The district also received a fire safety grant in 2002 totaling \$50,000 which was used to construct a fire wall and repair existing exit signs.

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 Alburnett Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—president Barry Woodson, Mike Olinger, Dee Luedtke, Cindy Francois, David Kirk and Rhonda Lange, and former board president Duane Bolton and vice president Cregg Smith. I would also like to recognize the leadership of superintendent Mike Harrold and former superintendent Angel Melendez.

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 Alburnett 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.●

BEDFORD 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 Bedford 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 Bedford Community School District received several Harkin fire safety grants totaling \$174,000 which it used to improve fire safety systems and included such things as emergency lighting and exit doors, new wiring and other electrical improvements, heat detectors, and sprinkler systems. The auditorium which was built in 1926 was renovated and the grant was used to update the wiring, install heat detectors and replace exit doors. The district had been cited by the State Fire Marshall for severe deficiencies in fire safety. 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 Joe Drake and the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Bedford Community School District. In particular, I'd like to recog-

nize the leadership of the board of education—president Tony Brown, Layne Thornton, Mike Irvin, Ed Hensley, Jack Spencer and Rodger Ritchie. District staff who were helpful in the grant application and implementation process were business manager Sharon Hart, grant writer Paul Boysen, and buildings and grounds supervisor Dan Walston.

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 Bedford 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.●

BELMOND-KLEMME 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 Belmont-Klemme 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 Belmont-Klemme Community School District received a 2005 Harkin

grant totaling \$500,000 which it used to help build a new elementary school. This new school is part of the district's goal to modernize schools in the district which will include renovating the high school. The new elementary 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. The district also received fire safety grants totaling \$100,000 to install new fire alarms, to update electrical wiring and to make other safety improvements in schools 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 Belmond-Klemme Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Jim Swenson, Dennis Lowenberg, Claude Post, Steve Tenold, Mark Jenison, Lynn Loux and Curt Stadtlander and former board members Jodi Pentico, Kevin Brunen and the late Stan Olsen. I would also like to recognize superintendent Larry Frakes, interim superintendent Dave Sextro, grant writer Trish Morris, maintenance director Steve Dougherty, the committee supporting passage of the bond referendum and Richard O. Jacobson for his generous financial contribution to the district.

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 Belmond-Klemme 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.●

CEDAR FALLS 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 Cedar Falls 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 Cedar Falls Community School District received four Harkin grants totaling \$1,481,178. A 1999 grant for \$393,466 which was used to help build classroom additions at Hansen Elementary and at Southdale Elementary; a 2000 grant for \$487,712 which helped build Cedar Heights Elementary and a 2001 grant for \$500,000 for an addition and renovations at Cedar Falls High 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 a 2005 fire safety grant for \$100,000 to install fire alarms systems at Peet Junior High School, Holmes Junior High School and Cedar Falls 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 Cedar Falls Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education Deon Senchina, Dr. James Kenyon, Dan Battcher, Joyce Coil, Duane Hamilton, Susan Lantz and Richard Vande Kieft and former board members Marlene Behn and Tom Reisetter. I would also like to recognize former superintendent Dr. Dan Smith, former business manager Dr. Craig Hansel, Hansen principal Dr. Tony Reid, former high school principal Dean Dreyer, former Cedar Heights principal Chris Smith and former Southdale principal Tom Galligan.

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 Cedar Falls 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.●

JESUP 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 Jesup 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 Jesup Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$1 million which it used to help build a new school to serve students in pre-kindergarten through 8th grade. 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. The district also received \$71,800 in fire safety grants.

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