

demonstrate a need. Once the construction grants had been awarded, the community responded by providing the local matching funds necessary to complete the projects. 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 five fire safety grants totaling \$420,788 to upgrade fire alarm systems, to install fire doors, emergency lighting and make other repairs at schools throughout the district to meet current fire safety compliance. Without the assistance of the grants, many of the safety improvements would not have become a reality. 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 Norwalk Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education president Katherine Schmidt, Tom Phillips, George Meinecke, Deborah Hobbs and Rick Kaul and former board members Diane Shivers and Deb Ostrem. I would also like to recognize superintendent Dr. Dennis Wulf, former superintendent Anne Laing, business manager Kate Baldwin, high school principal Dale Barnhill, Eastview principal Mary Crady, middle school principal Ken Foster, former Oviatt principal Ed Johnson and buildings and grounds staff Tom McLaughlin and Richard Sleeth.

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 Norwalk 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.●

PRESCOTT 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 Prescott 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 Prescott Community School District received several Harkin fire safety grants totaling \$127,188 which it used for improvements to the fire safety system including fire doors and exits, electrical work, sheet rock paneling, smoke and heat detectors, and emergency lighting. 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 Steven Callison, former superintendents Graham Quinn, Mac McKown, and Eric Wood, the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Prescott Community School District. In particular, I'd like to recognize the leadership of the board of education Marnie Cline, Doug Birt, Randy Cooper, Brian Fitzgerald, former members Karl McCarty, Kevin Schafer, Kathy West, Cheryl Blazek, Matt Wood, and Wayne Laird and custodian Mary Adkins, who was instrumental in the implementation of the grants.

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 build-

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RUDD-ROCKFORD-MARBLE ROCK 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 Rudd-Rockford-Marble Rock 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 Rudd-Rockford-Marble Rock Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$60,865 which it used to help correct problems throughout the building due to ground water seepage and flooding. The district also received a 2004 fire safety grant totaling \$17,640, to install electromagnetic door holders at the elementary and junior and senior high 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 Rudd-Rockford-Marble Rock