

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

COMMENDING BOONE 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 Boone 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 Boone Community School District received a 2005 Harkin grant totaling \$183,500. The grant helped the district renovate and convert several classrooms at the high school into state-of-the-art science labs, install technology infrastructure at a new middle school, and provide a fiber optic connection to Franklin Elementary School, to provide high speed Internet access. This project provides the type of facilities that befit the educational ambitions and excellence of this school 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 Boone Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the members of the school board, Dr. Jeff Anderson, Pam Boehm, Everett Johnson, Kirk Leeds and Brad O'Neal and former members Stan Brandmeyer, Jim Malloy, and Paulette Newbold. I would also recognize superintendent Dr. Theron Schutte, high school principal Dave Kapfer, former middle school

principal Nate Heying, Franklin principal Dan Gould, technology coordinator Bog Patterson, director of buildings and grounds Dean Berkland, and John Haila from Haila Engineering.

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 got to do better.

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

COMMENDING CLEAR CREEK 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 Clear Creek Amana 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 Clear Creek Amana Community School District received a 2005 Harkin grant totaling \$500,000, which it used to help build North Bend Elementary School in North Liberty. This school is a modern, state-of-the-art facility that

benefits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, it is the kind of school facility that every child in America deserves.

Excellent new schools like North Bend Elementary 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 dedicated educators in the Clear Creek Amana School District, which serves the towns of Tiffin, Oxford and North Liberty, as well as the historic Amana Colonies. The district has 1,420 students in grades K-12, and is growing steadily. It takes great pride in its teaching staff of 118 fully certified teachers, more than 30 percent of whom have been with the district at least 15 years. To have so many long-serving teachers is unusual in education today, and it speaks volumes about the quality of this school district, as well as the dedication and loyalty of its teaching staff.

I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Clear Creek Amana district. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of Lisa Green-Douglas and Jeanne Goldsmith who served as the cochairs of the committee that won passage of the \$25.5 million bond issue to build a new elementary school and a new high school in the district. I would also like to recognize the members of the school board: Jim Seelman, Don Schaapveld, Tim Hennes, Kathi Huebner, Kevin Kinney, Elizabeth Momany, Matthew Croco, and Kathy Zimmerman as well as Superintendent Paula Vincent and elementary school principal Brenda Parker.

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