

Stephens and former Fulton principal Roy Hansen.

As we mark the tenth 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 Dubuque 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.●

EMMETSBURG 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 Emmetsburg 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 Emmetsburg Community School District received a 2001 Harkin grant totaling \$133,333 which was used to help build an addition on an elementary school. The district has also received \$110,085 since 2000 in fire safety grants which have been used to improve the fire safety doors, alarms and smoke detectors in all their buildings. The fed-

eral 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 Emmetsburg Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education Karla Anderson, Dave Van Oosbree, Kent England, Don Hagen, Steve Pelzer, Linda Tienter and Laurie Oppenheimer and former board members Gary Kauffman, Dean Gunderson, Mary Cooper, Mike Brown, David Kassel, Kris Ausborn and Steve Nelson. I would also like to recognize superintendent John Joynt and former superintendent Paul Tedesco.

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MAPLE VALLEY COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Maple Valley Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

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The Maple Valley Community School District received 2002 and 2003 Harkin grants totaling \$690,000 which it used to help renovate the high school into a new elementary school. 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 six fire safety grants totaling \$148,300 to install fire safety doors and update wiring and fire detection systems across 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 Maple Valley Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Kathy Dirksen, Ed Maier, Joanne Maynard, Dale Wimmer, and Tammy Flanigan, as well as former board member Tracy Hesse. I would also like to recognize superintendent Steve Oberg, fire marshall Amy Fratzke, grant writer Linda Steele, Heath Opfer of Radek Construction, and site architect Mike Berg of DLR Group.

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