

facility that every child in America deserves. The district also received three fire safety grants totaling \$75,000 to install new hoods in the kitchens at the elementary and high schools, to install fire alarms and door closures and make other repairs.

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 Greene Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Gary Hatcher, Laura Schafer, Troy Feldman, Barbara Brinkman and John Moellers and former board members Sara Trepp, Stanley Cousins, Robb Holtz, Jeff Lindell and Warren Van Dyke. I would also like to recognize superintendent Steve Ward and John Backer for his leadership of the citizens' committee which supported the bond referendum for the project.

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 Greene 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.●

#### KEOKUK 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 Keokuk 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 Keokuk Community School District received a 1999 Harkin grant totaling \$750,000 which it used to help renovate Hawthorne Elementary School and build a library addition for the Middle School. And in 2002, the district began construction of an alternative school with a \$481,250 Harkin grant, as well as funds from a bond referendum and proceeds from a local option sales tax. This facility opened in 2005 and provides an unique learning environment for 75–100 students each day. In addition, nearly \$455,000 in Harkin Fire Safety Grants have been awarded to the Keokuk Community School District between 1999 and 2004 for the new alarm systems, new windows, and fire doors to assure the safety of students, teachers and staff. These schools are 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.

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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.

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public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them and wish them a very successful new school year.●

#### MARTENSDALE-ST. MARYS 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 Martensdale-St. Marys 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 Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District received a 2003 Harkin grant totaling \$500,000 which it used to help build a classroom addition and perform renovations in the existing school. The district also received a \$25,000 fire safety grant to upgrade lighting and wiring in the area of the stage. 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 Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Velvet Van Hoose, Scott Anderson, Cathy Seymour, Nicole Bunch, and John Della Vedova, and former board members Merle Allen, Larry Henson, Pat Connor, Dean Gavin, and Holly Estell. I would also like to recognize superintendent Jean Peterson, former superintendent Peggy Huisman, business manager Jane Cassidy, and maintenance director Jim Lynch.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that