

LT. GOVERNOR SCHUNK'S REMARKS

Thank you. You may all sit down.

It was just 10 short weeks ago that I closed my desk drawer at Phalen Lake Elementary School in St. Paul School District, hugged my kids one last time, and moved to the State Capitol.

I thought it was going to be a lot different until I realized just yesterday that I went from my classroom teaching people how to count, how to learn new things, and how to get along – to a new place teaching people how to count, how to learn new things, and how to get along! (I'll be giving out report cards and holding conferences in February.)

Nothing prepared me for the telephone call I received last spring from a committee searching for a Lieutenant Governor. I went home and asked my husband who this Jesse Ventura was, and he said, "Oh, he's the wrestler." And I puzzled a bit, because it wasn't ringing a bell. And then he went on to say, "You know...the one who wears the tights and the feather boas...kind of a bad actor." And I said, "Oh that just won't work at all."

But when I talked to Jesse on the phone, and then we met, I knew it would work.

He picked a teacher because he believes in public education.

I agreed to run with him because I believe in him ...and public education.

We traveled across Minnesota talking with teachers and parents and students and some of you in this room. We found out Minnesotans care about public education.

And we won.

Our own learning is not done on every issue, and we will continue to learn in these new jobs we have. Some of you are newly elected – I know, because I went to school with you yesterday across the street in Phase One and Two Training with the MSBA. Together, we can grow into these jobs quickly and make a difference for kids across Minnesota.

The best way to learn is by actually experiencing what's happening in classrooms. I will lead by example by continuing to accept invitations to visit schools across Minnesota. I've been to Alexandria and Fairmont, Minneapolis and Randolph and Farmington and numerous others already. I receive hundreds and hundreds of letters from students and teachers and others about issues that deserve our attention.

These issues are already deep in my heart because of the life experience I bring to this job.

When you speak to me about Limited English Proficiency, I'm the young girl who went to school fluent in Croatian and learned English by learning how to read – and went home to sit in my father's lap with my little books where we learned English together.

When you speak to me about Class Size – I'm the one who has experienced the difference between 17 and 28, and has seen the difference it makes in student achievement.

When you speak to me about Gifted Programming, I'm the one who held that job for the St. Paul Public Schools, singling out children like my darling Pancho, who discovered his talent for art and blossomed to find his confidence at school because of it.

I'm going to let the Governor talk about counting – The Budget

I'm going to leave you with a sense of how we want to get along.

On the stage with us today are people familiar to you as elected leaders in the House and Senate who work hard on K-12 education issues.

Please join me in welcoming to share this stage with us the following people who took time to come here and demonstrate their own goodwill for our public schools:

_____ representing Senator Larry Pogemiller
Senator Gen Olson
Representative Harry Mares
Representative Lyn Carlson
Representative Gene Pelowski
Committee Administrator Greg Marcus representing
Representative Alice Seagren

Please join me in welcoming them here today.

And now, it is my pleasure to introduce our Governor. Jesse, you may address the group now...

GOVERNOR'S REMARKS

Thank you ...and thank you all for inviting us here today.

I understand it's been awhile since a Governor showed up here.
Mae and I have acquired a knack for shocking the world.

- We shocked the world by winning
- We shocked the world by going into state departments after we were elected – and found out no Governor had been in some of those places for 30 years.
- And so we are here today, in a show of good faith for public education, surprised that it's shocking to invite legislators to be here with us. In fact, it's just the right thing to do when we're coming off of years and years of bashing public education. It's time to say we're healed and get on to the business of making Minnesota's public schools the best they can be for kids.

THE TRANSITION WAS ABOUT LEARNING FIRST AND THEN LEADING.

- We are setting an example about how to govern. You need to get out there and mix it up with the people. Don't sit in your board rooms and pretend you know what's going on – get out there and be with the teachers and the kids.
- Don't be afraid to say you don't know – get out there and find out. Ask questions. There is no such thing as a stupid question.
- Let's talk with the people in language they understand – not all this jargon that divides us. KISS.

WE EACH NEED TO PLAY OUR RESPECTIVE ROLES TO FULL POTENTIAL.

- I am building the best executive branch of government:
 - The best and brightest I can find to work in the administration: Yesterday I appointed Christine Jax to be the new commissioner of the department which oversees public education; since the beginning of the transition, I've had Wendy Wustenberg on board as Director of Government Relations. We have a team at the top who will get the job done for public schools.
- The Legislators are here today out of respect for their role in providing funding and determining the policies by which we will fulfill the Constitutional Obligations to educate every child.
- You are here because you've accepted a huge responsibility for local control over what happens with those resources. The success of every child happens, or doesn't, in your classrooms.
 - You hire the teachers – and tell them what to teach.
 - You decide whether or not to keep the buildings in repair.
 - You decide who passes from 4th grade to 5th.
 - You decide whether or not to create a culture where parents are respected in their advocacy for their child's needs.
 - You are accountable for graduating young adults capable of surviving in a work world of full employment and competition for skilled, smart workers.



The ultimate report card on how you are doing is whether the word **VOUCHER** disappears from our vocabulary. And I'm here to tell you that it isn't in mine...and it isn't in Mae's.

The budget will be out in two short weeks, and then we'll have some real numbers to wrestle around with...(look at the legislators) and if anybody wants to take me on, I'm still in pretty good shape.

You all need to remember that I'm a product of public schools. Roosevelt High School was central to my community in Minneapolis when I lived there. It was the place where everybody came...and still does. My first official day performing duties as Governor-Elect took me back there. I was flooded with memories, looking out at a group of young people filled with promise. I stood there at 47, and told them what I believe in:

1. I believe in self-sufficiency and individual responsibility. It is the job of government to provide educational opportunities, but it is the job of every child and their parents to do the learning. We need to put accountabilities where they rightfully reside...and it's time we clarify the difference between being accountable for teaching kids and raising them.
2. I believe in an accountable and limited government doing what the people cannot do for themselves.
 - If there aren't six people left in this state who can explain the K-12 funding formula, it's time to start over. Wendy Wustenberg and new State Planning Agency Director Dean Barkley are beginning work on what a study of the big picture problems and determine who all needs to be involved.
3. I believe in an informed, active citizenry – never fewer than 70 percent voting in a general election.
 - Make your board rooms welcome places for the public.
 - Encourage students to become **INVOLVED** in your decisions...teach them how to love democracy.
 - Explore the best possible labor-management practices you possibly can to provide **INCENTIVES** for your own employees to be excellent, every day in what they do for kids and student achievement.



IT'S TIME FOR INVESTMENT – SPECIFIC DETAILS TO FOLLOW SOON WHEN I ANNOUNCE MY BUDGET.

1. I will propose a long-overdue increase to the per pupil formula.
2. It's time to address the issue of special education funding in a significant way. I do not believe in unfunded mandates...PERIOD.
3. Mae and I have made no secret of our fundamental belief that K-3 class size reduction must happen to ensure that every child – no matter what language they come to school speaking – can read, write and do math during the years when they need to learn it. Either you local leaders will see the light and value this as highly as we do and advocate for the little children, or you won't. But there will be major incentive dollars that you can use to leverage your own resources and get the job done. We very much appreciate the support we are sensing from the legislative leadership as we pursue how best to get this job done once and for all...and we will appreciate yours as well.

Most importantly, and this goes back to what I said about building the best executive branch of government...we need to straighten out the priorities of the Department of Children, Families and Learning.

I believe we start by putting the name in the right order. Actually, this was the Lt. Governor's idea. We don't expect any trouble while we do the right thing and rename it the Department of Education, Children & Families. It's time to put Education first.

And with that, I would like to thank you very much for inviting us all here today. We hope you learn wonderful new ideas to take back home to help the students in your local districts. And we look forward to the best years public education has ever had.

Please let me introduce, to have the last word, your new commissioner of education – Christine Jax.