
Governor Thompson's remarks
Wisconsin 2000 kick-off
November 21, 1991
Bradford High School, Kenosha

HELLO RED DEVILS!

**TODAY, WE LAUNCH WISCONSIN 2000 -- A WAY TO RETHINK EDUCATION:
CLASSROOM BY CLASSROOM, SCHOOL BY SCHOOL, COMMUNITY BY
COMMUNITY, AND STATE BY STATE.**

**I HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF WISCONSIN AS THE "SHINING STAR OF
THE MIDWEST."**

**FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU LOOK AROUND THE REGION, WISCONSIN'S
ECONOMY IS HOLDING STRONG, WHILE OTHERS ARE STRUGGLING.**

**AND, IF YOU LOOK AROUND THE REGION, WISCONSIN'S SCHOOLS ARE
ABOVE AVERAGE: OUR GRADUATION RATE IS AMONG THE BEST IN THE
NATION, AND WE CONTINUE TO RATE NUMBER ONE IN NATIONAL TEST
SCORES.**

WHY, THEN, DO WE NEED WISCONSIN 2000?

**TO STAY ON THE CUTTING EDGE. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF MY
ADMINISTRATION, WISCONSIN HAS BEEN ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF
EDUCATION REFORM, AND WISCONSIN 2000 WILL HELP US TO STAY
THERE.**

**WHEN WE CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF SCHOOL CHOICE -- A PLAN TO
GIVE INNER-CITY AND LOW-INCOME FAMILIES THE SAME CHOICE THAT
MOST FAMILIES HAVE, THE CHOICE OF WHERE TO SEND THEIR
CHILDREN TO SCHOOL -- WE DIDN'T SHY AWAY FROM ALL THE UPROAR
AND FUROR. WE PUT IT IN PLACE . . . AND TODAY OVER 500 MILWAUKEE
SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE GOING TO SCHOOL WHERE THEIR PARENTS
WANT THEM TO GO -- AND WE'RE SEEING IMPROVEMENTS.**

**WE CAME UP WITH ANOTHER IDEA CALLED LEARNFARE -- A PROGRAM
THAT SAYS IF YOU'RE RECEIVING WELFARE PAYMENTS, YOUR
CHILDREN ARE GOING TO GO TO SCHOOL, OR YOU WILL LOSE SOME OF
YOUR BENEFITS. AGAIN, THERE WAS A LOT OF FUSS, AND AGAIN, WE
PUT IT IN PLACE . . . AND WE'RE SEEING VERY ENCOURAGING RESULTS.**

WHEN WE SAW THAT OUR SCHOOLS WEREN'T PERFORMING AS WELL AS WE WANTED THEM TO, I SET UP THE COMMISSION ON SCHOOLS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY -- ALSO KNOWN AS THE FISH COMMISSION ((AND I WANT TO COMMEND ODY FISH -- WHO IS HERE -- ON A JOB WELL DONE)).

THIS COMMISSION -- WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF EDUCATION, BUSINESS, LABOR, AND THE STATE GOVERNMENT-- DEVELOPED MORE THAN 150 RECOMMENDATIONS, ALL OF WHICH WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE LEGISLATURE.

ALL OF THESE EFFORTS HAVE KEPT WISCONSIN IN THE FOREFRONT OF EDUCATION REFORM -- AND TODAY'S KICK-OFF OF WISCONSIN 2000 IS ONE MORE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT STEP ALONG THE PATH TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE.

WISCONSIN 2000 IS AN INVITATION TO RETHINK EDUCATION, AND IT OFFERS A REFRESHING FROM-THE-BOTTOM-UP PHILOSOPHY -- A PHILOSOPHY THAT RECOGNIZES THAT THE CHALLENGES FACING EDUCATION IN WISCONSIN ARE AS VARIED AS EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU ARE.

IT IS A PHILOSOPHY THAT RECOGNIZES THAT THE CHALLENGES WE FACE ARE AS VARIED AS EACH ONE OF OUR COMMUNITIES IS ... WHAT WORKS IN KENOSHA WON'T NECESSARILY WORK IN DODGEVILLE ... OR MILWAUKEE ... OR BLOOMER.

IT IS ALSO A PHILOSOPHY THAT RECOGNIZES THAT TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS AND PARENTS -- THOSE WHO ARE ON THE "FRONT-LINE" OF EDUCATION -- NEED TO BE HEARD.

WISCONSIN 2000 MEANS THAT WE AS A STATE AGREE TO REACH THE SIX NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS -- GOALS THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND ALL 50 GOVERNORS AGREED TO AT AN UNPRECEDENTED EDUCATION SUMMIT IN 1989.

THESE GOALS ARE OUR MEANS OF MEASUREMENT. THEY WILL TELL US WHETHER WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS IN MAKING AMERICAN STUDENTS THE BEST IN THE WORLD:

BY THE YEAR 2000, EVERY CHILD IN AMERICA WILL START SCHOOL READY TO LEARN.

BY THE YEAR 2000, THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE WILL INCREASE TO AT LEAST 90%.

BY THE YEAR 2000, ALL GRADUATING STUDENTS WILL HAVE DEMONSTRATED COMPETENCE IN CORE SUBJECTS SUCH AS ENGLISH, MATH, SCIENCE AND HISTORY.

BY THE YEAR 2000, U.S. STUDENTS WILL BE FIRST IN THE WORLD IN SCIENCE AND MATH.

BY THE YEAR 2000, EVERY ADULT AMERICAN WILL BE LITERATE, AND POSSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NECESSARY TO COMPETE IN THE MARKETPLACE.

AND, BY THE YEAR 2000, ALL SCHOOLS WILL BE FREE OF THE SCOURGE OF VIOLENCE AND DRUGS.

THESE ARE AMBITIOUS GOALS . . . BUT, AS I HAVE SAID MANY TIMES BEFORE: I THINK WISCONSIN IS IN A UNIQUE POSITION TO NOT ONLY ACHIEVE THESE GOALS, BUT TO SURPASS THEM.

I WANT WISCONSIN TO BE NUMBER ONE IN THE NATION, AND WORKING TOGETHER, I KNOW WE CAN DO IT.

MANY OF YOU MAY BE THINKING THAT ALL OF THIS TALK ABOUT GOALS AND WISCONSIN 2000 AND "FIRST IN THE NATION" IS ALL VERY WELL AND GOOD . . . BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME? HOW DOES WISCONSIN 2000 AFFECT ME?

WELL, FOR THE FOURTH GRADERS FROM HARVEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HERE IN THE FRONT ROW, THE GOALS SHOULD MEAN A LOT.

2000 IS THE YEAR ALL OF YOU WILL BE GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

THEREFORE, IT IS YOUR HARD WORK AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS THAT WE WILL BE LOOKING AT TO SEE IF WE'VE ACHIEVED WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO.

WE ARE LOOKING TO YOU TO GREET THE NEW CENTURY WITH THE BEST EDUCATION IN THE WORLD UNDER YOUR BELT.

THAT'S A LOT OF PRESSURE, I KNOW. BUT IT DOESN'T LET THE REST OF

US OFF THE HOOK -- NOT BY A LONG SHOT.

TO THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE PARENTS, OR TEACHERS, OR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS . . . WE ARE LOOKING TO ALL OF YOU TO WORK TOGETHER -- AS A COMMUNITY -- TO DECIDE WHAT WILL WORK BEST FOR YOUR SCHOOLS . . . FOR YOUR STUDENTS . . . FOR YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO TRY SOMETHING NEW. BREAKING A NEW PATH CAN OFTEN HAVE SOME MARVELOUS RESULTS.

FOR INSTANCE, BRADFORD'S DAILY 15-MINUTE SILENT READING PERIOD. OR YOUR TEEN EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM WITH MCDONALD'S.

YOUR PROGRAM WITH MCDONALD'S IS EXACTLY THE KIND OF INITIATIVE THAT WISCONSIN 2000 IS ALL ABOUT -- WORKING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY TO MAKE OUR STUDENTS MORE SUCCESSFUL.

TO WORK FOR MCDONALD'S, YOU MUST SIGN A CONTRACT -- NOT JUST WITH THEM, BUT WITH THE SCHOOL AND YOUR PARENTS.

IF YOU MAINTAIN A GOOD ATTENDANCE RECORD AND DO WELL IN YOUR CLASSES, YOU GET AN HOURLY RAISE. IF YOU SKIP SCHOOL OR DO POORLY IN CLASS, YOUR WEEKLY HOURS ARE CUT.

ABOUT TWO THIRDS OF BRADFORD STUDENTS HAVE PART-TIME JOBS. THE WORK EXPERIENCE IS IMPORTANT, AND FOR SOME OF YOU IT IS NECESSARY.

BUT NEVER FORGET THAT YOUR NUMBER ONE JOB WHILE YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL IS TO GET AN EDUCATION . . . AND THAT EDUCATION WILL BE WORTH MORE THAN ANY WEEKLY PAYCHECK YOU EARN AT A PART-TIME JOB.

WE ARE LOOKING TO ALL OF YOU TO KEEP WISCONSIN ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF A RAPIDLY CHANGING GLOBAL ECONOMY.

TODAY'S STANDARDS SIMPLY WON'T CUT IT IN TOMORROW'S JOBS.

AND KENOSHA KNOWS BETTER THAN MANY WISCONSIN CITIES HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO KEEP UP. YOU'VE SEEN INDUSTRIES COME . . . AND YOU'VE SEEN INDUSTRIES GO.

ONE THAT HAS RECENTLY ARRIVED IS THE GREAT LAKES COMPOSITES CONSORTIUM -- A GROUP OF MANUFACTURERS, DEFENSE CONTRACTORS AND UNIVERSITIES INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION OF COMPOSITES -- NEW INDUSTRIAL MATERIALS ON THE LEADING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT.

WHEN IT IS FULLY OPERATIONAL, THE CONSORTIUM WILL EMPLOY 100 HIGHLY-PAID PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORKERS.

SOME OF YOU COULD BE THOSE WORKERS. SOME OF YOU -- WHETHER YOU'RE IN THE TENTH, ELEVENTH OR TWELFTH GRADE -- COULD SOMEDAY BE ONE OF THOSE HIGHLY-PAID WORKERS AT THE CONSORTIUM . . . OR AT ANY OF THE OTHER NEW INDUSTRIES STARTING IN KENOSHA.

WITH THE PROPER TRAINING, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING YOU WANT TO.

AND BY PROPER TRAINING, I AM NOT TALKING ONLY ABOUT COLLEGE.

I KNOW THAT ALL YOUR PARENTS WANT YOU TO GO TO COLLEGE. I KNOW I WANT MY KIDS TO GO TO COLLEGE.

BUT 70% OF OUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EITHER DO NOT GO TO COLLEGE, OR DO NOT COMPLETE A COLLEGE DEGREE.

AND FOR THAT 70%, WE HAVE LAUNCHED STATEWIDE SCHOOL-TO-WORK INITIATIVES . . . A PLAN TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE HAS THE SAME OPPORTUNITY FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE, WHETHER THEY GO TO COLLEGE OR NOT.

I AM MORE EXCITED ABOUT THESE SCHOOL-TO-WORK INITIATIVES THAN ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE I HAVE TAKEN ON AS GOVERNOR . . . AND I WANT SCHOOL-TO-WORK TO BE THE CENTERPIECE OF WISCONSIN 2000.

IT ALLOWS STUDENTS TO EXPLORE DIFFERENT OPTIONS WHILE THEY ARE STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL -- AND GIVES THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO GRADUATE WITH A VALUABLE SKILL ALREADY UNDER THEIR BELT -- SO THEY CAN MOVE DIRECTLY INTO THE WORKING WORLD AND SAY "HERE, I CAN DO THIS."

KENOSHA ALREADY HAS SEVERAL SCHOOL-TO-WORK PROGRAMS IN EFFECT. YOU HAVE A STRONG TECH-PREP PROGRAM, AND YOU ARE WORKING ON SOME APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.

ONE THAT COULD BE IN EFFECT AS SOON AS NEXT SEMESTER IS AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM WITH THE UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF CARPENTERS AND JOINERS.

THE PROGRAM WOULD HIRE A JOURNEYMAN CARPENTER TO TRAIN SELECTED STUDENTS, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND GATEWAY TECHNICAL COLLEGE.

THE AIM OF THIS APPRENTICESHIP, AND OF OUR WHOLE SCHOOL-TO-WORK INITIATIVE, IS TO ARRIVE AT THE DAY WHEN THAT JOURNEYMAN'S CARD IS WORTH AS MUCH AS A BACHELOR'S DEGREE.

AND THAT DAY IS NOT FAR OFF.

I LIKE TO THINK OF MYSELF AS THE ETERNAL OPTIMIST. I'M THE GUY WHO INSISTS THAT WISCONSIN WILL GO TO THE ROSE BOWL IN FOUR YEARS.

AND IF I CAN BELIEVE THAT -- THEN I KNOW WISCONSIN 2000 WILL GET US TO THE TOP BY THE YEAR 2000.

AND I ALSO KNOW THAT -- IF WISCONSIN CAN GO TO THE ROSE BOWL IN FOUR YEARS -- THEN THE BRADFORD RED DEVILS CAN BE STATE CHAMPS IN FOUR YEARS TOO!

AND NOW, I WANT TO INTRODUCE A MAN WHO IS WORKING SO HARD FOR AMERICAN EDUCATION. HE'S AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE PRESIDENT'S AMERICA 2000 PROGRAM -- WORKING HARD TO BRING IT INTO ALL FIFTY STATES.

I, OF COURSE, HAVE A SOFT SPOT IN MY HEART FOR HIM BECAUSE HE IS NOT ONLY A GREAT SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, BUT ALSO A GREAT FORMER GOVERNOR OF TENNESSEE, AND I AM VERY PROUD THAT HE IS HERE WITH US TODAY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, SECRETARY OF EDUCATION LAMAR ALEXANDER.