

'Never Interrupt Me Again,' Putin Tells Nizhny Novgorod Governor

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Nizhny Novgorod Governor Valery Shantsev received a sharp rebuke from President Vladimir Putin on Friday after the regional leader proposed a solution to problems in the housing and utilities sector.

At a meeting of the State Council, an advisory body that includes all regional governors and several high-ranking federal officials, Shantsev voiced the idea of increasing the salaries of workers in the sector to the level of teachers.

Putin rejected the scheme, saying "We cannot practice wage-leveling."

"If we say that education is one of the most important spheres defining the future of our country, we need to act like it. And not be ashamed of it," Putin said.

When Shantsev tried to object, Putin scolded him.

"I listened to you carefully and I would ask you please never to interrupt me again. That way we'll have a discussion, with you saying one thing and I another," the president said.

Putin regularly upbraids government officials, often during apparently orchestrated meetings shown on national television, reinforcing his image as a demanding leader.

His subordinates rarely talk back to him, and when they do, there often seem to be consequences. Earlier this month, former Deputy Prime Minister Vladislav Surkov disagreed with Putin's statement that the Cabinet had failed to properly fulfill presidential orders. A few days later, it was announced that Surkov had been dismissed from his post.

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