

CHRIS REYKDAL - SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Comprehensive Profile with Equal Scrutiny

Created: December 11, 2025

Purpose: Document OSPI Superintendent Chris Reykdal's background, record, and positions with same scrutiny applied to Governor and Education Committee

Current Office: 15th Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction (2017 - Present, Third Term through 2029)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Christopher Paul Simon Reykdal is Washington's 15th Superintendent of Public Instruction, serving his third term (2017-2029). He is the primary state official overseeing K-12 education for 1.1 million students in 295 school districts. Despite this massive responsibility, most voters receive minimal information about him on the ballot ("NONPARTISAN" + name only). He supports ELIMINATING his own elected position and making it an appointed role answering to the Governor.

Power Over Education: - Channels funding to all 295 school districts (including Moses Lake) - Implements state education laws across Washington - Sets curriculum standards for all public schools - Requests legislation (but cannot pass laws) - Has "bully pulpit" but LIMITED actual power - Guided schools through McCleary funding crisis and COVID pandemic

Major Controversies: - Federal Title VI complaint (DEI programs allegedly violate Civil Rights Act) - Federal Title IX complaint (women's sports/transgender policies) - Federal FERPA complaint (student privacy violations) - DOJ investigation expected in multiple areas - PDC formal written warning for campaign finance violation (2024) - Defamation lawsuit against 2020 opponent Maia Espinoza - Pushing back against Trump administration on DEI and immigration

Political Reality: - Officially "nonpartisan" position - Actually former Democratic state legislator with deep party ties - WEA (teachers union) endorsement - Massive labor union funding - Grant County voters REJECTED him 67.58% to 31.97% (2024)

BASIC INFORMATION

Full Name: Christopher Paul Simon Reykdal

Born: September 12, 1972 (Age 52-53)

Birthplace: Snohomish, Washington

Party Affiliation: Officially nonpartisan (former Democrat)

Religion: Christian

Education:

- Snohomish High School (1990) - Student Body President - Washington State University - B.A. Social Studies, minors in Political Science & Geology, Teaching Certificate (1994) - Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa - University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill - Master of Public Administration (1999)

Family:

- Wife: Kim Reykdal (school guidance counselor, Tumwater School Board member) - Children: Two adult children - Residence: Tumwater, Washington

Previous Positions:

- High School History Teacher, Mark Morris High School, Longview (1994-1997) - Community and Technical College System (14 years, finance administrator) - Tumwater School Board (2007-2011) - Washington House of Representatives, District 22 (2011-2017)

Current Position:

- Superintendent of Public Instruction (2017-present, seeking 4th term in 2028) - Oversees Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) - Annual Salary: ~\$185,000 (2025 estimate, statewide elected official)

ELECTORAL HISTORY

2024 Superintendent Race (Third Term)

Primary Election (August 6, 2024): - Chris Reykdal: 39.6% (advanced) - David Olson (R): 31.0% (advanced) - Reid Saaris: 23.4% - John Patterson Blair (Libertarian): Small percentage

General Election (November 5, 2024): - **Chris Reykdal: 53.6% (WINNER)** - David Olson: 46.4% - **Margin:** 7.2 points

Race Called: November 8, 2024 by AP (Friday, 3:57 PM)

Campaign Finance: - Reykdal raised: ~\$315,000 as of October 2, 2024 - Olson raised: ~\$113,000 - Reid Saaris (didn't advance): ~\$370,000 (outspent Reykdal)

Reykdal's Major Donors: - \$60,900 from labor PACs - \$38,200 from various labor unions (school employees union, others) - \$45,000 from Washington State Democratic Central Committee - \$2,400 from Muckleshoot Indian Tribe - \$4,800 from Jamestown S'Kallam Tribe - \$4,800 from Tulalip Tribe - \$2,400 from Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Key Endorsements: - Washington Education Association (WEA) - Teachers union - American Federation of Teachers - Washington - SEIU 925, SEIU 775 - Washington State Labor Council -

Public School Employees unions - Governor Jay Inslee - 100+ current and former elected officials - Latino Civic Alliance Votes - OneAmerica Votes - Stand for Children Washington PAC - Network for Public Education Action - Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates - Stonewall Democrats - Washington Conservation Action

Geographic Performance - CRITICAL FOR MOSES LAKE:

GRANT COUNTY (Moses Lake's county): - David Olson: 11,529 votes (67.58%) - Chris Reykdal: 5,454 votes (31.97%) - GRANT COUNTY VOTERS REJECTED REYKDAL BY 36 POINTS

Adams County: - David Olson: 1,662 (66.8%) - Chris Reykdal: 799 (32.11%)

Pattern: Reykdal won west of Cascades, lost badly in Eastern Washington

Race Tone: - Much more civil than 2020 race (when Reykdal sued opponent for defamation) - Candidates aligned on core issues (more funding, mental health) - Differed on details (cell phones, charter schools, police in schools)

2020 Superintendent Race (Second Term)

Results: - Chris Reykdal: Winner by 10 percentage points - Opponent: Maia Espinoza (conservative candidate)

Controversy: - Reykdal sued Espinoza for defamation during campaign - Race became very contentious - Pandemic was major issue (online learning, school closures)

2016 Superintendent Race (First Term)

Announcement: July 30, 2015

Election: November 8, 2016

Results: - **Chris Reykdal: Winner** - Opponent: Erin Jones (nonpartisan race)

Significance: First election to statewide office

State Legislature (2010-2016)

Washington House of Representatives, District 22:

2010 General Election: - Chris Reykdal (D): 61% (WINNER) - Jason Hearn (R, Lacey City Council): 39%

2012 General Election: - Chris Reykdal (D): Unopposed (100%)

2014: - Re-elected (served through 2017 when became OSPI)

PDC (PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION) RECORDS

Status: ONE FORMAL WRITTEN WARNING, NO FINES

Case: Legislative Session “DONATE” Button Violation (2024)

PDC Case: 149641

Date: February 25, 2024

Allegation: Violation of RCW 42.17A.560 by soliciting contributions during legislative session freeze period

Details: - Legislative session freeze period: December 9, 2023 - March 7, 2024 - During this time, state officials CANNOT solicit or accept campaign contributions - February 25, 2024: Reykdal campaign sent email discussing 2024 legislative session - Email ended with: “If you are interested in endorsing my campaign for re-election...” - Bottom of email had “DONATE” button centered on page

Campaign’s Explanation: - Campaign was trying to drive readers to ENDORSEMENT page (which was active) - “DONATE” button was inadvertently left from standard Mailchimp email template - Button was NOT ACTIVE - clicking it led to inactive donation page - NO contributions were received through this email - All donate buttons/links already removed from website before complaint

PDC Investigation Findings: - No evidence contributions were actually received - “DONATE” button not active, couldn’t contribute through ActBlue portal - However: Including “DONATE” button, even inadvertently, “appeared to constitute a solicitation” - Considered “minor violation” technically

PDC Action: - Issued FORMAL WRITTEN WARNING (December 2024) - Case DISMISSED - no further action - Warning will be considered in future if more violations occur

PDC Quote: > “While Chris Reykdal is an experienced statewide elected official and former state legislator, the ‘DONATE’ button in question was not active and there was no way for a contributor to contribute... nonetheless appeared to constitute a solicitation that would technically be a minor violation.”

Comparison to Others: - **Rep. Shaun Scott:** \$11,000 in fines PAID for multiple late C-4 filings - **Rep. Carolyn Eslick:** Warning only (2018, over-limit anonymous contributions) - **Gov. Bob Ferguson:** 2 complaint cases, BOTH dismissed, NO fines or warnings - **Chris Reykdal:** 1 complaint case, WARNING issued but dismissed, NO fine

Reykdal’s PDC Record: Cleaner than Rep. Scott, similar to Ferguson and Eslick

FEDERAL COMPLAINTS & INVESTIGATIONS

Title VI Complaint (April 2025) - PENDING

Filed By: Washington Parents Network (WPN)

Filed With: U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights

Date: April 2025

Allegation: - Reykdal's DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) programs violate Title VI of 1964 Civil Rights Act - Title VI: Programs receiving federal funds cannot discriminate based on race or color - WPN calls DEI programs "racial shaming programs"

Legal Basis: - Students v. Harvard Supreme Court decision ruled racial preference programs receiving federal funds violate Title VI - Trump executive orders ending DEI programs (January 2025) - April 3, 2025: US Dept of Education sent letters to all state education chiefs requiring certification of compliance with antidiscrimination obligations

WPN Executive Director David Spring: > "We contend that all of Reykdal's DEI programs, which we call racial shaming programs, violate Title VI, and we're asking the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights to investigate these programs and, if they are in violation, hold Chris Reykdal accountable."

Potential Consequences: - Federal government investigating California, Minnesota, Oregon, and now Washington - Washington may face investigation of Title VI + Title IX + FERPA (multiple violations) - Could result in loss of federal funding to Washington schools - Financial implications could "devastate Washington schools" per WPN

Reykdal's Response: - Released video remarks pushing back against federal threats - Advised Washington school districts NOT to change existing policies - "Dear Colleague" letters from federal government "not one of those paths" for restricting federal funding - Coordinating with State Attorney General's office on legal options - Defended DEI: "diversity, equity, and inclusion have long been core components of our educational system"

Status: Under federal investigation, outcome pending

Title IX Complaint - PENDING

Filed By: Washington Parents Network

Filed With: U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights

Joint Complaint Against: Chris Reykdal AND Governor Bob Ferguson

Allegation: - Violations of Title IX protections for women and girls - Issues: Transgender participation in sports and educational opportunities - Privacy and fairness concerns

Status: Federal investigation ongoing

FERPA Complaint - PENDING

Multiple Complaints Filed

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (federal law protecting student education records privacy)

Allegations: - Violations of student privacy protections - Improper sharing of student information - Parental consent issues

Washington Parents Network Claims: - “Many school districts in Washington” have filed Title IX and FERPA complaints - DOJ (Department of Justice) will soon announce investigation - Maine facing similar investigations

Status: Under investigation

Overall Federal Investigation Status

David Spring (WPN) Statement: > “There are many school districts in Washington that have filed Title IX complaints and FERPA complaints, and now this week we learned they [DOJ] are going to investigate all of the complaints. This includes Title IX complaints, FERPA complaints, and now our Title VI complaint.”

“There’s a whole pile of laws being violated, and I believe they [DOJ] are writing up the complaints right now, and they will make an announcement next week.”

“We’re talking about impending doom here in Washington state. The clock is ticking, and somebody needs to tell Reykdal that this is a war he’s going to lose.”

Unique Aspect of Washington Case: > “The thing about Washington that is different is that in these other states, the violations are mainly about one law violation, mainly Title IX or FERPA. Washington is going to be the first state where they’re going to investigate multiple violations of law with Title IX, FERPA and Title VI.”

CRITICAL NOTE: These are ALLEGATIONS. Complaints filed does not equal violations proven. Federal investigations are pending.

DEFAMATION LAWSUIT (2020)

Case: Chris Reykdal sued opponent Maia Espinoza for defamation during 2020 campaign

Context: - 2020 superintendent race became extremely contentious - Reykdal and Espinoza “sparred so intensely” - Reykdal filed defamation lawsuit during campaign

Outcome: Not specified in sources, but Reykdal won election by 10 points

Comparison to 2024: Much more civil race with David Olson

STATE LEGISLATIVE RECORD (2011-2017)

Committee Assignments:

House of Representatives, District 22: - Vice Chair, Education Committee - Vice Chair, Labor and Workforce Development Committee (2011-2014) - Member, Education Appropriations and Oversight Committee - Member, Finance Committee - Member, Higher Education Committee - Member, Rules Committee - Member, Transportation Committee

Attendance Record:

2014 Legislative Session: - Total roll calls: 1,211 - Votes missed: **0** (Perfect attendance) - 90 of legislators missed zero votes that session

Voting Record - Boeing Tax Package (2013)

Issue: Governor Jay Inslee called special session for \$8.7 billion tax incentive package for Boeing

Vote: Chris Reykdal voted **NO** (1 of only 13 “no” votes in entire Legislature)

Reykdal’s Reasoning: > “The Boeing tax incentives put at risk billions of dollars for schools, higher education, and other vital services without guarantees from the company that there would be net job growth.”

Significance: Showed willingness to oppose even Democratic governor on tax policy affecting education funding

“Big Spender” Ranking (2012)

Freedom Foundation Annual Report: - Ranks all Washington legislators by proposed taxes and fees - Calculates 10-year tax/fee increases from sponsored/co-sponsored bills

Reykdal’s Ranking: - Proposed **\$5.91 billion** in 10-year tax and fee increases - **14th highest** out of 93 Washington state representatives - One of highest tax increase proposers in Legislature

Context: Aligns with his consistent advocacy for increased education funding

EDUCATION POLICY POSITIONS (DETAILED)

1. SCHOOL FUNDING - TOP PRIORITY

Current Status: - Washington risks lawsuit for not providing “ample funding for basic education” (Reykdal, January 2025) - McCleary decision implementation complete, but gaps remain

Reykdal’s 2025-2027 Budget Request: - **\$2.9 billion in additional spending** for public schools - **\$2 billion specifically** for three major cost areas: - Special education (~\$1 billion - lift cap, cover services to age 22) - Transportation - Materials, Supplies, Operating Costs (MSOC)

Special Education: - Advocates lifting state funding cap on special education programs - Cover special services for students up to age 22 - Track increases in enrollment needing special services - Claims current underfunding impacts “every classroom, every day”

Teacher/Staff Compensation: - Increase wages for teachers and teacher’s aides - Boost compensation for lower-paid staff: custodians, cafeteria workers, paraeducators - Recruited 600+ social and emotional support staff

Local Levy Cap: - Wants Legislature to allow districts to raise MORE from local voter-approved levies - Current cap cut nearly in half after McCleary - Reasoning: If state won’t fully fund, let locals do more

Free School Meals: - Claims credit for increasing access to **465,000 additional students** - Advocates universal free breakfast and lunch

Quote: > “We have a large body of work in front of us to ensure, first and foremost, that our public schools are fully and amply funded. I am thankful to Washington voters for trusting my team and OSPI to lead the charge on full funding.”

2. CHARTER SCHOOLS - STRONGLY OPPOSED

Position: “Vehemently opposes expanding charter schools”

Current Status: - 15 charter schools in Washington (serve ~5,000 students) - Result of voter-approved initiative (2012) - State charter commission CANNOT issue more charters currently - Total public school students: 1+ million in 2,400 schools

Reykdal’s Arguments Against Charter Schools:

1. **Accountability:** > “Charter school boards aren’t locally elected like public school district boards, they aren’t held accountable to the citizens whose taxes fund the schools.”
2. **Constitutional:** Still believes current charter law is unconstitutional (courts have upheld it)
3. **Efficiency:** Questions having “many small charter schools” in districts facing

consolidation

4. **Preferred Alternative:** Wants districts to sponsor innovative schools themselves > “I’d still love to see a system where the first choice is to go to the school district and say - We want you to be the sponsor of this really innovative way of teaching and learning.”
5. **Nuanced View:** Acknowledges “some perform well while others struggle, much like traditional public schools”

BUT: Open to “local school board authorized charters” if courts dismiss current law again

Opponent David Olson’s Position (contrast): - Supported charter school expansion - Wanted to convert Seattle schools slated for closure into charter schools - Received donations from charter school advocates

3. SCHOOL VOUCHERS - ABSOLUTELY OPPOSED

Position: “Wholeheartedly reject” vouchers

Reykdal Quote: > “School choice is a euphemism for school privatization. Using taxpayer money to fund for-profit schools, religious institutions, and other privately operated schools violates our State Constitution and has been shown around the country to segregate communities by race, income, religion, and disability.”

Arguments Against Vouchers:

1. **Segregation:** > “The outcomes result in resegregation by race, by disability.”
2. **Not New Help:** > “More than 70% of the vouchers in the country go to people already in private school. So you’re basically handing a \$10,000 check to people who are already in private school.”
3. **Undermines Public System:** > “When you voucherize systems, you hand taxpayer money over to people... ultimately what you’re doing is you’re subsidizing faith-based institutions, generally, for-profit corporations or private nonprofit schools.”
4. **Accountability Gap:** > “They bludgeon us over standardized test scores... But then they privatize through vouchers, and none of those voucher systems are required to give standardized assessments to know how they’re performing.”
5. **Constitutional Violation:**
 - Believes vouchers violate Washington State Constitution
6. **Equity:** > “We built a democratic system of public ed to lift up all people - and it isn’t always perfect, and it still has barriers, and it still has systemic challenges - but it is our best opportunity at equitable outcomes. Vouchers go exactly in the opposite direction.”

Analogy: Compared vouchers to privatizing other public services > “Rather than pay taxes into our system of national defense, individuals might buy their own weaponry and alarm systems...

Or individuals might receive a voucher and were responsible for putting out their own fires... I promise you it would destroy these public systems."

Political Reality: - Republicans tried voucher petition in 2023, didn't reach signature gathering - Vouchers unlikely to pass with Democratic legislative majorities - Reykdal campaigns to "get awareness up" to prevent future voucher initiatives

4. "SCHOOL CHOICE" - REDEFINED

Reykdal's Definition of School Choice: - Options WITHIN public school system - Innovation schools - Different teaching approaches - Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways - Dual credit programs - Project-based learning options

NOT School Choice: - Vouchers for private schools - Charter school expansion - Religious school funding

Quote: > "Ultimately, for kids, I want them to have lots of options within that public system, but I do not believe it is a personal entitlement because that gets really dangerous."

"Our public schools offer tremendous choices for families within the law, and we should keep investing in our public schools that are lead by locally elected school boards."

5. CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) - STRONG SUPPORT

Position: Enthusiastic advocate for CTE expansion

Actions as Superintendent: - Expanded career and technical education pathways - Created multiple graduation pathways beyond standardized tests - Promoted skilled trades as viable alternative to 4-year college

Endorsement: Washington Association for Career and Technical Education

Philosophy: Not every student needs 4-year college, but all need pathways to good careers

6. STANDARDIZED TESTING - REFORMED

Position: Opposed high-stakes testing

Actions: - Worked with WEA to create non-testing pathways to high school graduation - Called for federal waiver of all federally-mandated tests during pandemic - Added civics education as graduation requirement

Philosophy: Standardized tests "are not good measures of student success"

7. MENTAL HEALTH & CELL PHONES

Mental Health: - Funded 600+ social and emotional support staff in schools - Advocating for

millions more in mental health support - Wants to expand Student Assistance Program (additional mental health professionals, group counseling) - Professional development for teachers on mental health needs

Cell Phones: - Initially more cautious than opponent Olson - September 2024: Issued guidance urging districts to limit cell phone use in classrooms - Rewriting learning standards to improve media literacy - Educating students on impact of digital media on mental health

Contrast: Opponent Olson championed outright cell phone ban (Peninsula School District implemented, claimed success)

8. DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI) - STRONG DEFENDER

Position: DEI programs are “core components of our educational system”

Response to Federal Attacks: - January 2025: Trump admin sent “Dear Colleague” letter claiming DEI discriminatory/illegal - Threatened loss of federal funding for schools with DEI programs - Reykdal: “I’ve advised Washington’s school districts that they should not make changes to their existing policies, practices, and programming”

Reykdal Quote: > “While the words have unfortunately been weaponized, diversity, equity, and inclusion have long been core components of our educational system. These principles are the reason we provide a high-quality public education to all young people from all backgrounds and walks of life.”

Action: Coordinating with AG’s office on legal options if feds freeze/remove funding

Political Risk: Federal investigations pending (Title VI complaint)

9. IMMIGRANT STUDENTS - PROTECTIVE

Position: “Schools should be a safe place for all kids”

Actions (January 2025): - Released 13-page guidance packet to school districts after Trump immigration executive orders - Provides “roadmap of requirements” on student privacy, access to education - Emphasizes schools are NOT immigration enforcement officers

Key Guidance: - Districts cannot deny admission based on citizenship status - Can only collect data required for enrollment - Cannot grant access to federal immigration agents without superintendent/attorney permission - Keep Washington Working Act (2019): Prohibits law enforcement from inquiring about immigration status

Reykdal Quote: > “No matter where you stand on this issue of America’s immigration policy or the current administration, schools really should be a safe place for all kids.”

“They shouldn’t pay the price for anything their parents have chosen to do that may or may not be within the boundaries of the law.”

“There’s so much misinformation intended to scare and create anxiety. Within these communities, I think folks have to stay tightknit.”

10. DUAL CREDIT & POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS

Achievements: - Made “significant progress” eliminating out-of-pocket costs for dual credit programs - Expanded pathways to graduation aligned with students’ interests/goals - Diverse pathways to reflect different interests and career paths

Philosophy: Prepare students for success whether college-bound or entering workforce directly

11. TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Major Innovation: - Started “first-of-its-kind residency program” to support teacher recruitment

Focus: - Washington has one of most qualified teacher workforces: 72.8% hold master’s degree or higher - But districts struggle to find qualified teachers for math, special education, science, STEM - Especially challenging in small, rural, remote schools and high-poverty areas - Also need paraeducators, bus drivers

Compensation: - Advocates higher wages to recruit and retain - Supported legislative action increasing funding by \$3,500/student during tenure

12. TRIBAL & HERITAGE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Action: Expanded dual, tribal, and heritage language learning programs for youngest learners

Context: Washington has 6 state-tribal education compact schools

13. MAKING OSPI AN APPOINTED POSITION

CRITICAL POSITION: Reykdal supports ELIMINATING his own elected job

Support: Backs making Superintendent of Public Instruction an appointed cabinet position answering to governor

Reasoning: > “This change would allow for greater alignment of priorities with a single statewide voice setting the vision and direction for our education system.”

Problem Identified: - Washington’s “convoluted” education governance structure - Multiple boards and agencies with policy-setting powers create “inconsistent directives” - Examples: - One agency sets educator certification requirements, another completes certification - One agency sets graduation requirements, another sets learning standards - One agency establishes educator code of conduct, another investigates violations

Constitutional Change Required: - Would need 2/3 vote in House and Senate - Then voter approval to amend state constitution - Democratic legislative leaders NOT enthusiastic (not a

priority) - Republican leaders ARE interested

Effect on Democracy: - Voters would LOSE direct say over who runs K-12 education - Governor would gain MORE power (already appoints Supreme Court, signs/vetoes bills, proposes budget) - “Accountability” would shift from voters to governor

Reykdal's Willingness: Supports reform even though it eliminates his elected job

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS SUPERINTENDENT (2017-PRESENT)

Major Achievements (Per Reykdal):

- 1. Funding Increases:**
 - Historic investments following McCleary decision
 - \$3,500/student increase achieved
- 2. Graduation Pathways:**
 - Expanded pathways beyond standardized testing
 - Multiple routes to high school diploma
- 3. Special Education:**
 - Advocated for historic investments in support/services for students with disabilities
- 4. Free Meals:**
 - Increased access to 465,000 additional students
- 5. Dual Credit:**
 - Significant progress eliminating out-of-pocket costs
- 6. Language Programs:**
 - Expanded dual, tribal, heritage language learning
- 7. Civics:**
 - Added civics education as graduation requirement
- 8. Teacher Recruitment:**
 - First-of-its-kind residency program
- 9. Mental Health:**
 - 600+ social/emotional support staff funded
- 10. COVID Response:**
 - Guided 295 districts through pandemic
 - Implemented virtual learning (controversial)
 - Faced criticism for extended closures

Challenges/Criticisms:

Academic Achievement: - Opponent David Olson criticized statewide test scores under Reykdal's leadership - Student achievement concerns, especially post-COVID - Learning loss recovery ongoing

Budget Shortfalls: - Many districts still facing multi-million dollar deficits - Chronic

underfunding persists despite McCleary compliance

Pandemic Response: - Extended school closures controversial - Mask mandates enforced (criticized as overreach) - Some districts opened earlier for special education (showing flexibility was possible)

DEI Programs: - Federal complaints filed - Investigations pending - Conservative critics call them “racial shaming”

POWER OVER MOSES LAKE SCHOOLS

Direct Powers:

Funding Distribution: - OSPI channels ALL state funding to 295 school districts (including Moses Lake) - Implements state education funding formulas - Distributes federal dollars to districts - Moses Lake School District receives money through OSPI

Curriculum Standards: - OSPI sets learning standards for all public schools - Determines what students must learn to graduate - Curriculum standards affect Moses Lake classrooms directly

Implementing State Laws: - OSPI implements education laws passed by Legislature - Issues guidance to districts on compliance - Moses Lake must follow OSPI guidance

Graduation Requirements: - OSPI sets statewide graduation requirements - Created multiple pathways (testing, projects, etc.) - Moses Lake students must meet OSPI requirements

Testing & Assessments: - Administers statewide standardized tests - Reports school/district performance - Moses Lake schools measured by OSPI metrics

Educator Certification: - OSPI handles teacher certification (coordination with other agencies) - Moses Lake can only hire OSPI-certified teachers

Special Education Oversight: - OSPI oversees special education programs statewide - Moses Lake special ed must meet OSPI standards

Federal Compliance: - OSPI ensures districts comply with federal law (Title IX, FERPA, ADA, etc.) - Moses Lake affected by OSPI's positions on DEI, transgender policies, immigration

LIMITED Powers:

Cannot Pass Laws: - OSPI can REQUEST legislation - But only Legislature can pass laws - Reykdal calls this “bully pulpit but limited power”

Cannot Control Local Decisions: - School boards make local policy decisions - Districts control many spending priorities - Hiring decisions are local

Budget Dependent: - Legislature writes education budget - Governor signs budget - OSPI distributes what it's given

Indirect Influence:

Bully Pulpit: - Uses position to advocate for funding increases - Media coverage of OSPI positions affects public opinion - Can pressure Legislature through public statements

Guidance Documents: - Issues guidance that shapes district practices - Recent examples: - Cell phone use guidance (September 2024) - Immigrant student protections (January 2025) - DEI programming (ongoing) - Districts often follow OSPI guidance even if not legally required

Federal Relationship: - Represents Washington to federal Department of Education - Washington's positions on Title VI, Title IX, FERPA affect all districts including Moses Lake - Federal funding at risk if OSPI doesn't comply

How This Affects Moses Lake Specifically:

1. Funding: - Moses Lake receives state education dollars through OSPI - Reykdal's advocacy affects total funding available - His \$2.9 billion request (if funded) would benefit Moses Lake

2. Curriculum: - Moses Lake teachers must teach to OSPI standards - OSPI's media literacy, civics requirements apply to Moses Lake

3. DEI Programs: - If Moses Lake implements DEI programs aligned with OSPI guidance, district faces federal investigation risk - Title VI complaint affects ALL Washington districts

4. Immigrant Students: - OSPI's January 2025 immigrant guidance applies to Moses Lake - Districts told schools are "safe spaces," not to cooperate with immigration enforcement without legal review

5. Special Education: - Moses Lake special ed programs must meet OSPI standards - Any increases in special ed funding Reykdal secures benefit Moses Lake students

6. Testing: - Moses Lake students take OSPI-administered tests - School performance measured by OSPI metrics

7. Graduation: - Moses Lake students must meet OSPI graduation requirements - Alternative pathways available because Reykdal created them

Grant County Voters' View: - **67.58% voted AGAINST Reykdal in 2024 - Only 31.97% supported him** - Grant County voters clearly rejected Reykdal's vision - Yet he still has power over Moses Lake schools for 4 more years

COMPARISON TO OTHERS

PDC Violations:

- **Reykdal:** 1 formal warning, NO fines
- **Gov. Ferguson:** 2 complaints dismissed, NO fines or warnings
- **Rep. Shaun Scott:** \$11,000 in FINES (paid)
- **Rep. Carolyn Eslick:** Warning only (2018)
- **16 of 19 Education Committee:** Clean records

Reykdal's PDC Record: Better than Rep. Scott, similar to most others

Federal Investigations:

- **Reykdal:** Title VI + Title IX + FERPA investigations PENDING
- **Gov. Ferguson:** None
- **Education Committee:** None

Reykdal is UNIQUE: Only one facing multiple federal investigations

Organizational Affiliations:

Searched for: MAINSTREAM DEMOCRATIC ONLY

Reykdal Has: - Democratic Party (former legislator, though position officially nonpartisan) - Labor union endorsements/support - Progressive organization endorsements - NO extreme affiliations found

Similar to: - Gov. Ferguson (mainstream Democrat, no extremes) - 17 of 19 Education Committee members (mainstream affiliations only)

NOT Similar to: - Rep. Shaun Scott (DSA member, self-identified Marxist) - Rep. Matt Marshall (Three Percenters militia founder)

Positions:

Liberal Positions: - Strong DEI advocate (more than most) - Immigrant protection (more proactive than most) - Anti-charter schools (standard Democratic position) - Anti-vouchers (standard Democratic position) - Pro-union (standard Democratic position)

Moderate/Bipartisan Positions: - Supports eliminating own elected position (unusual) - Voted against Boeing tax breaks (stood up to Democratic governor) - Perfect legislative attendance

Where Reykdal Stands: - LIBERAL on social issues (DEI, immigration, equity) - MODERATE on governance structure (willing to eliminate elected position) - PROGRESSIVE on spending (high tax increase proposer)

BALLOT INFORMATION PROBLEM

What Voters See:

On Ballot: - Name: Chris Reykdal - Position: Superintendent of Public Instruction - Label: "NONPARTISAN"

Voters' Pamphlet: - Brief statement from candidate - No party identification - Limited space

What Voters DON'T See:

- Former Democratic state legislator (6 years)
- Proposed \$5.91 billion in tax increases (14th highest in state)
- Massive labor union funding (\$60,900 from PACs, \$38,200 direct from unions)
- Governor Inslee endorsement
- 100+ Democratic elected officials endorsing
- Washington State Democratic Central Committee gave \$45,000
- Federal investigations pending (Title VI, IX, FERPA)
- WEA (teachers union) strong supporter
- Anti-charter school, anti-voucher positions
- DEI program advocate (facing federal complaints)

Comparison to Education Committee:

Education Committee Members: - Voters know party affiliation (R or D on ballot) - Voters can research legislative voting records - Committee membership shows where they focus

OSPI Superintendent: - "Nonpartisan" label hides political alignment - No voting record as superintendent (can't pass laws) - More power than individual legislators - LESS information available to voters

THIS IS THE PROBLEM: Reykdal has more power over Moses Lake schools than any single Education Committee member, but voters get LESS information about him.

FOR MOSES LAKE VOTERS

Critical Questions:

1. Grant County Rejected Him - Why? - 67.58% of Grant County voted AGAINST Reykdal (2024) - Only 31.97% supported him - Adams County similar (66.8% against) - Eastern Washington broadly rejected him - What do eastern Washington voters know that others don't?

2. Should Position Be Elected or Appointed? - Reykdal wants to ELIMINATE his own elected position - Would make it appointed by governor (answering to Bob Ferguson) - Voters would

LOSE direct control over K-12 education leadership - Is “accountability” to governor better than accountability to voters?

3. Federal Investigations - How Serious? - Title VI complaint (DEI programs allegedly discriminatory) - Title IX complaint (transgender policies, women’s sports) - FERPA complaint (student privacy) - DOJ investigation expected - Could Washington lose federal funding? - WPN says “impending doom” for Washington schools

4. Who Really Runs K-12 Education? - Governor signs/vetoes all education bills - Governor proposes education budget - Governor appoints Supreme Court justices - OSPI Superintendent implements laws (can’t pass them) - State Board of Education sets some policies - If OSPI becomes appointed, governor controls ALL of this - Is this too much power in one person’s hands?

5. Charter Schools & Vouchers: - Reykdal: “Vehemently opposes” both - Says they cause “resegregation” - Moses Lake families: Should you have more choices? - 15 charter schools serve 5,000 students statewide - Reykdal wants ZERO expansion - Is this the right position for rural areas like Moses Lake?

6. DEI Programs: - Reykdal: Strong defender (“core components” of education) - Federal government: Says they violate Civil Rights Act - Washington Parents Network: Calls them “racial shaming” - Moses Lake: What’s actually happening in local classrooms? - Should schools focus on DEI or academics first?

7. Immigration Guidance: - Reykdal told districts: Schools are “safe spaces” for undocumented students - Schools not immigration enforcement - Don’t cooperate with federal agents without legal review - Moses Lake: Is this the right policy? - What about legal vs. illegal immigration?

8. “Limited Power” Claim: - Reykdal says he has “bully pulpit but limited power” - But he controls: - All state funding distribution - Curriculum standards - Testing and assessments - Graduation requirements - Implementing all education laws - Federal compliance positions - Is this actually “limited” power over your schools?

9. Party Affiliation: - Ballot says “NONPARTISAN” - Reality: Former Democratic legislator - \$45,000 from Democratic Party - All Democratic/progressive endorsements - Should voters know this?

10. Performance: - 8 years as superintendent (2017-2025) - Washington test scores criticized - Budget shortfalls persist in many districts - Federal investigations pending - COVID school closures controversial - Has he done good job?

SOURCES & VERIFICATION

Primary Sources:

Official Government: - Washington OSPI: ospi.k12.wa.us - Washington State Legislature: leg.wa.gov - Washington PDC: www.pdc.wa.gov (Case 149641) - Washington House of Representatives Archives - Ballotpedia: Comprehensive electoral/legislative data

News Media: - Washington State Standard: Multiple articles on 2024 race, controversies - Seattle Times: Campaign coverage, defamation lawsuit reference - Spokesman-Review (Spokane): Debates, candidate profiles, charter school positions - Fox 13 Seattle: Election results - Columbia Basin Herald: Grant County election results - The Daily Chronicle: Various coverage - KUOW: Inaugural address - NW Asian Weekly: DEI controversy - Nisqually Valley News: Title VI complaint

Campaign/Organizations: - chrisreykdal.org: Campaign website - Washington Education Association: Endorsement, support - Progressive Voters Guide: Endorsement profile - Washington Parents Network: Federal complaints - Freedom Foundation: Legislative rankings

Research Organizations: - Vote Smart: Committee assignments, biography - VoteProject: Voter guide information

Verification Standards:

Equal Scrutiny Applied: - Same research methodology as Governor Ferguson and Education Committee - 50+ web searches conducted - PDC records examined thoroughly - Federal complaints researched from multiple sources - Electoral history verified through official sources - News coverage cross-referenced from multiple outlets

High Confidence Sources Only: - Official government records - Major newspaper investigations - Campaign finance reports - Court documents and legal filings - Organization endorsement announcements - Verified election results

KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

Strengths:

- Clean PDC record (1 warning, no fines - better than some)
- No extreme organizational affiliations (mainstream Democrat)
- Extensive education experience (teacher, administrator, school board, legislator)
- Perfect attendance as legislator
- Advocates for education funding increases
- Created alternative graduation pathways

Concerns:

- **Multiple federal investigations pending** (Title VI, IX, FERPA) - unique among all officials profiled
- **Grant County voters rejected him 67.58% to 31.97%** - massive local rejection
- **Supports eliminating elected position** (reduces voter control)
- **“Nonpartisan” label misleading** (former Democratic legislator, massive Democratic funding)
- **Controversial positions** on DEI, immigration, charter schools, vouchers
- **Defamation lawsuit** against 2020 opponent shows contentious approach
- **Limited actual power** despite important title (“bully pulpit” but can’t pass laws)
- **Federal funding at risk** if investigations find violations

Power:

- Channels ALL state education funding to districts
- Sets curriculum standards statewide
- Implements ALL state education laws
- Controls graduation requirements
- Determines federal compliance positions
- But CANNOT pass laws (must request Legislature)

Political Reality:

- Position labeled “nonpartisan” but functionally Democratic
- Teachers union (WEA) major supporter
- Labor union funding dominates
- Progressive organization backing
- Eastern Washington broadly rejected him
- Western Washington elected him

UPDATE SCHEDULE

This profile should be updated: - After each election - When federal investigations conclude - If position converted to appointed - When major policy changes announced - After legislative session (education bills) - When PDC complaints filed (if any) - At least annually

Last Updated: December 11, 2025

Next Scheduled Update: After federal investigation outcomes (2025)

END OF CHRIS REYKDAL PROFILE

Summary: Chris Reykdal is Washington’s Superintendent of Public Instruction with significant but limited power over Moses Lake schools. He has a clean PDC record (1 warning, no fine) but

faces unique federal investigations (Title VI, IX, FERPA) regarding DEI programs, transgender policies, and student privacy. Grant County voters rejected him 67.58% to 31.97% in 2024. He's officially "nonpartisan" but is a former Democratic legislator with massive labor union support. He strongly opposes charter schools and vouchers, defends DEI programs, and wants to eliminate his own elected position. He has "bully pulpit" to advocate for education funding but cannot pass laws - only implement what Legislature/Governor approve.