

46th District Democrats Legislative & Statewide Questionnaire

Candidate Information

Candidate Name: Chris Reykdal

Office sought: Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Have you read the 46th LD Democrats Draft 2016 Platform? Yes ___X___, No _____
(Go to http://www.46dems.org/2016_ld_caucus and click "Draft Platform")

Why are you running for this office?

It's time for a strong SPI that has both the education background and the executive finance and policy experience to fight for progressive solutions to funding, testing, CTE pathways, and equity. I believe I am the only candidate with the comprehensive background and experiences to effectively carry out this role from day one.

Please briefly describe your qualifications for this office and your personal and professional background.

I'm a born and raised Washingtonian – 17 years in our public K-12 and higher education system. I was a classroom teacher, local school board member, parent volunteer, and fourteen years as an education finance executive. The office apportions, allocates, and grants over \$9 billion in operating funds and has a staff of over 400 state employees. As a former Deputy Director of a state education agency of over \$1 billion in operating and capital funds, my experiences and proven progressive values give us the best opportunity to advance education funding, policy, and our Democratic values.

Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Have you ever been a member of another party? Have you been actively involved with the Democratic Party?

I am a lifelong Democrat – my kids' names are Carter and Kennedy. I have been a local PCO in Thurston County (Tumwater Precinct 415) for the better part of the last 16 years. I'm not borrowing a party label – I'm fulfilling my duty as someone who believes deeply in our party values. I'm an elected Democrat to

the State House of Representatives with a 97% environmental voting record (WCV), and a 99% labor voting record (WSLC). That said, I am also proud to maintain excellent relationships with GOP members of the legislature. We have common interests in supporting schools and kids, we simply have to work together to find more common solutions.

What's your plan to win?

\$300,000 (\$101,000 to date); 30,000+ road miles to every community (already at 14,100 miles), strong labor support including the sole endorsement of WEA and many affiliates of the State Labor Council. Social media (earned and sponsored), as well as other media that we will reveal in the primary and beyond. I am also proud to have some business support where we have found alignment on expanded CTE and workforce development options.

What do you see as the most important functions of the position you are running for? What qualities do you possess that make you the candidate best suited to this role?

- 1) Legislative advocacy for PUBLIC K-12 (17 years of legislative advocacy experience);
- 2) Budget development for the K-12 system (14 years of education budget development experience);
- 3) Advocate for kids, parents, and teachers' rights (a classroom teacher and legislator);
- 4) Effective and efficient management of 400-person agency (six years as deputy director at the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges);
- 5) Strong data, professional development, and policy support for local school districts (14 years at the CTC system supporting our state's 34 community and technical colleges – local control with state support!); and
- 6) Spokesperson for public education and equity in education (prime-sponsored legislation to support low-income and students of color via: Opportunity scholarships; Opportunity Grants; Equal Opportunity Gap Legislation; Student data privacy bill; Assessment reform (delinking standardized tests); financial aid for dual credit – low income students. And dozens of other bills and budget provisos that empower kids – particularly first generation college students and communities of color.

If elected what would your top three priorities be?

- 1) Develop a credible McCleary funding plan that includes property tax levy reform, a capital gains tax, and some adjustments to the state's B&O tax;
- 2) Delink standardized tests from graduation requirements, and give students coursed-based standards-aligned courses to graduation; and
- 3) Return Career and Technical Education Programs as pathways to graduation in our schools – this requires us to have students build high school and beyond plans by middle school. Not to lock in students to a pathway but to get them focused on efficient pathways to their passion – instead of one-size fits-all university prep track.

How will you support women and families' economic opportunities? Would you support legislation closing the wage gap, funding childcare options, and requiring paid family leave?

Yes! I have prime sponsored or co-sponsored all of these! A progressive SPI will not shy away from making these equity and education issues. One of the strongest predictors of student success is the economic success and literacy of their mothers. Empowering parents, especially women, means empowering kids!

How will you work to address racial equity?

- 1) Fix our levy system that has a racial neighborhood bias built into the current system.
- 2) Fully fund and operationalize the Equal Opportunity Gap bill we passed this year. We added \$1.4 million in funding to get it started. The next SPI will need specific budget requests tied to the policies to ensure cultural competence training for all school personnel; recruiting educators of color; requiring disaggregated student performance and discipline data by race; and local district policy and practice audits on disparate discipline and academic practices.

Describe your stance on Washington's tax structure. What needs to be changed? What should stay the same?

Senator Frockt and I wrote the only comprehensive tax bill of the last six years. We eliminated B&O tax on the non-service sector, cut the sales tax rate to 5.5% and added a flat income tax. We knew it wouldn't pass, but we wanted to demonstrate that we can write a much better tax code and give big wins to both sides. In the immediate future, we need to fully fund education without carving up the social safety net by fixing our local levy system, using state property tax capacity, and adding a capital gains tax between 5% and 7%.

Are there issues that you've worked on or are excited to work on that are not receiving much media attention?

ELL for second language learners; STEM programs that lead kids to diverse careers, not just Engineering; and defending migrant farm workers and local community schools from pesticide drift overspray. As a progressive Democrat in the South Sound, the Seattle media market is crowded, so you don't hear about the areas where I have been leading but progressive allies and the 46th LD delegation are very aware. I am honored to have the sole endorsement of all three members of the 46th LD and former 46th House Member Phyllis Guitierrez Kenney.

How will you combat climate change?

OSPI’s role is much better energy standards for school construction and renovations. We can also push our walk and roll, and sidewalk infill strategies to get more kids walking to school safely instead of being driven by parents who often add miles and carbon emissions in the opposite direction of their employment.

The SPI also sits on the Board of Natural Resources where one must balance the needs of local jobs, school funding, and forest health. The BNR makes important decision about state forest trust land harvests – excises taxes from the sale of timber partially funds K-12 schools.

| Question | Support | Oppose | Qualify, if needed |
|--|---------|--------|--|
| Do you support or oppose Raise up Washington’s initiative to increase the minimum wage? | X | | |
| Do you support or oppose access to safe and legal abortion? | X | | |
| Do you support or oppose amending Washington’s Constitution to require a two-thirds vote to raise revenue? | | X | I was a named-plaintiff to defeat Eyman’s 2/3rds at the State Supreme Court. |
| Do you support or oppose allowing coal or oil to be exported from Washington State’s ports? | | X | 100% oppose coal and support a phase out of oil. This can’t happen all at once for all practical purposes. |
| Do you support or oppose making two years of community college or technical school tuition-free? | X | | Need to start with 100% cost-free dual credit programs (Running Start and College in the High School). These have fees and costs that still keep low-income students from accessing. |
| Do you support or oppose requiring paid vacation and sick/safe leave? | X | | I cosponsored this legislation! |
| Do you support automatic voter registration? | X | | I co-sponsored this legislation. I also think that voter registration or pre-registration should be a high school civics graduation requirement (with an opt out option of course 😊) |

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| Do you support or oppose the death penalty? | | X | |
| Do you support or oppose barring employers from asking criminal history questions in job applications? | X | | I am a co-sponsor of the ban-the-box legislation! |
| Do you support or oppose legislation to fix Washington's "three strikes" law? | X | | Costly, unequitable, and in desperate need of fixing! |

The following questions are position specific. You only need to complete the questions for the position that you're running for.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

How will you work to address the achievement gap in our public schools?

Fix our broken levy system that systemically raises more money in white-suburban neighborhoods and less money in more diverse rural – low-income communities. Fully fund the EOG bill (HB-1541, see above elements in earlier question), change the "data" office at OSPI to a research shop that focusses on equity in education research to support policy makers and districts. Partner and invest heavily in early learning with targeted funds in poverty communities.

Please describe your position on standardized testing.

I've written, and passed four times off the House floor, the only bill the last two years that delinks standardized tests from high school graduation. This year's bill had a legal opt out right and it too passed with 87 votes! The bill is blocked by the Senate Early Learning and K-12 chair because of his close ties to corporate-style education reform efforts. Standardized testing is holding us back! Instead of using assessments to target student supports, we simply place students into test prep and "portfolio" courses which look backwards instead of forward on student growth and progress.

Given the *McCleary* decision, what legislation do you support or propose to fully fund education and maintain funding for other basic services? Do you support increasing revenue? Given existing public needs and the state of the economy, should such legislation include increasing revenue?

- 1) Fix local levy system by shifting approximately \$2 billion per biennium from local levies to the state property tax levy (don't eliminate local levies however, simply bring them down to comply legally with the court). This shift ensure the court that basic education funding will be borne by the state and not subject to the inconsistent vote of local levies – this is a key tenant of the McCleary decision.
- 2) Add a capital gains tax between 5% and 7%. This would still leave us below Oregon and Idaho and would generate about \$1.5 billion per biennium.
- 3) Close tax preferences that are not tied to jobs, wage standards, or effective outcomes.

These efforts would “fix” McCleary but more importantly they would add billions of dollars of new resources to schools without harming the social safety net, public safety, or environmental/natural resource programs. This plan also would generate debt service capacity to build roughly \$1.5 billion in new schools that we are desperate for given all-day kindergarten and lower class sizes. My plan will put tens of thousands of our brothers and sisters in the trades to work just as our economy approaches zero growth (or recession) over the next two years.

Do you support or oppose charter schools? Why or why not?

I oppose charter schools and I have the public voting record to back up my opposition. This is a core item in the Democratic platform. It's time for Democrats to ask all of the candidates if they have ever testified in support of opening a charter school before the Legislature or the Charter Commission.

Secretary of State

How will you work to increase voter enfranchisement?

Legislature (House and Senate), Governor, Lt Governor

Given the *McCleary* decision, what legislation do you support or propose to fully fund education and maintain funding for other basic services? Do you support increasing revenue? Given existing public needs and the state of the economy, should such legislation include increasing revenue?

Do you support or oppose charter schools? Why or why not?

Lt Governor

How would you use your office to promote international economic development that benefits our state?

When the Governor is out of state or otherwise incapacitated, the Lt. Governor becomes the acting Governor. How would you handle that responsibility? What kind of actions would you take?

Commissioner of Public Lands

In 2015, Washington faced the largest and most destructive forest fires in history. What will you do as Lands Commissioner to prevent or respond to wildfires?

Timber, many parts of the state, is a hot button issue. While some want to protect our forest canopy, others see jobs and resources for building schools as more important. Where do you land in this debate? How will you use your position to find compromise?

Treasurer

What role does the Treasurer hold in maintaining a healthy credit and bond ratings for the state of Washington? Do you see room for improvement?

Auditor

How will you restore confidence in the office of Auditor as a successor to Troy Kelley?

How will you prioritize agency and organizational audits?

Attorney General

What accomplishment from your tenure are most proud of?

Insurance Commissioner

What accomplishment from your tenure are most proud of?