



## Transcript of League of Education Voters [LEVinar](#) with Washington state Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal on Washington Schools during COVID-19, May 22, 2020

**Arik Korman** [00:00:03] Hello, I'm Arik Korman, Communications Director at League of Education Voters and the parent of a fifth-grade son in the public school system who receives special education services. Like many of you, I'm trying to do Coronavirus Triple Duty: working, parenting, and teaching from home. In case you're not familiar with us, League of Education Voters is a statewide nonprofit working with families, educators, and leaders to build a brighter future for every Washington student. Our website is [EducationVoters.org](https://EducationVoters.org). Our vision is that every student in Washington state has access to an excellent public education that provides an equal opportunity for success. Welcome to our free online webinar series, [Lunchtime LEVinars](#). We started this series six years ago to share information and build knowledge on important and timely issues.

**Arik Korman** [00:00:53] Today's webinar features Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal on Washington Schools during COVID-19. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all public and private schools in Washington state are closed until the end of the academic year in June. School districts across Washington state are implementing continuous learning plans and students, parents, and educators are trying to navigate new systems and expectations. In this webinar, Superintendent Reykdal will outline the current status of our schools and answer your questions.

**Arik Korman** [00:01:28] A couple of housekeeping items before we begin. You'll notice a Q and A function at the bottom of your screen. This is the space for you to submit questions to us. As always, feel free to send any feedback about the webinar quality to us on the chat function or at [info@educationvoters.org](mailto:info@educationvoters.org).

**Arik Korman** [00:01:48] As someone who believes his path in life is largely owed to the public education he received, Superintendent Chris Reykdal has dedicated his career to ensuring all learners have equitable opportunities for high-quality public education. Since taking office in January 2017 after serving three terms in the Washington State House of Representatives, Chris has centered OSPI's work on equity and supporting the whole child, reinvigorated career and technical education pathways for students, and strengthened the agency's partnership with the legislature. In addition, under Chris's leadership, the legislature provided the first increase to the funding model for serving students with disabilities in nearly 25 years. Chris will continue advocating for enhanced funding until school districts no longer rely on local funds to provide these essential services. Chris and his wife Kim live in historic Tumwater with their two smart, talented, and hilarious children, Carter and Kennedy. Welcome, Superintendent Reykdal!

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:02:52] Well, thank you for having me. And it's good to virtually be with everybody today. I know we've got a lot of questions to get to. It's good to be back. I will just briefly say that things continue to move very quickly here. We tried to give the big bulk of our guidance so far to our districts for how they finish their year. And I remind

everybody, of course, that all of those decisions on how to deploy and the content details, and all that most families experience are local school district decisions. So we set guidance here and framework here. So today, I know we'll focus on statewide questions and some of the bigger picture pieces that are moving forward. We're definitely working with the governor right now to understand our opportunities this summer. We think our schools will be more available this summer to finally bring back some one-on-one services and some compensatory services and some activities that our facilities are often used in. But it has to all coordinate with public health, of course, and make sure that they're safe. And then we are definitely all hands on deck for this fall trying to get our schools open in a way that is safe and healthy. But a lot of health considerations there and a lot of flexibility will be needed. Some districts will have a bigger opportunity than others, depending on where they are and the incidence of the virus and candidly, how we all perform over the next couple of months. It's all about personal hygiene, social distancing, wearing our face mask, keeping the incidents of the virus down, and keeping stress off the health care system. The better we do with that, the greater our opportunities. So that's all I've got for intro. Thanks for having me back. And let's get into those questions.

**Arik Korman** [00:04:21] All right. Great. Well, you'll notice the Q&A function at the bottom of your screen. That is the space for questions. So feel free to go ahead and input them. No question is too basic. Also, there was a question about closed captioning and unfortunately, I was unable to provide that this time. But I will be providing a written transcript of this webinar afterwards so that we'll be able to access it that way. There will be a recording that's accessible in addition to the transcript. All right. The first question I have, Superintendent Reykdal, is on reopening schools. Thank you for your care for our students across the state and for your guidance during these challenging times. Do you have a date certain that you'll know what school will look like in the fall? As a parent, it would be greatly appreciated to have as much advance notice as possible for planning my work obligations, but also helping set expectations for my second and tenth graders.

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:05:14] Yeah, I wish I had a perfect certainty for sure. We're guided by obviously the research and the public health. We're about 14 weeks away from school starting and I want everyone to imagine what life was like 14 weeks ago. There are people who hadn't even heard of COVID-19, right? There were no significant impacts. That's how rapidly all that changed. So unfortunately, we don't know exactly. We hope to give guidance to districts by the first or second week of June. We need to give them three things. All the health requirements and those will be very strict. That's what the Department of Health leads on. The legislature needs to give us some confidence about our budgets next year. And then would OSPI deliver is a menu of opportunities for districts based on again where they are and what the local decision making is in the context of that health and those financial opportunities. So by early June, we hope to have districts in a good position to plan all summer for their fall open or their fall models. But boy, if something changes a lot over the summer, obviously the governor will take a different action.

**Arik Korman** [00:06:10] Great. OK. And here's a related question, which is, are you considering offering an exclusively online curriculum for the 2020-21 academic year for those students who wish to remain at home during this uncertain time?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:06:23] Well, curriculum is definitely decided by local school districts. Even when we guide it with standards here at OSPI, which is really our role, the

curriculum itself is either built or purchased or delivered by local districts. I think you're going to see a lot of districts create really two pathways. One is a face-to-face return if they can and if it's safe and healthy, one that is at a distance, a remote model. And a lot of them will blend that together. They'll have a hybrid model where there may be a combination of those in every district will be encouraged to have a process in place in case they come back face-to-face and there's an incidence of virus and they have to close down temporarily or for longer. They need to be able to make the transition next time. We've gotten better at this. Our educators are better at it. There's a lot more sophistication out there, but it's still an enormous challenge for parents to be at home with kids, especially as the rest of the economy unlocks. So we are truly trying to figure out how to get schools open in a safe and healthy way. But everyone needs a plan B in case that can't happen. And that's what the online models are. Curriculum will be decided, however, locally.

**Arik Korman** [00:07:25] Okay, great. And here's a related question to that. What, if anything, is under discussion to assist families where parents have to return to work out of the house?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:07:35] Yeah, again, this is what's top of mind for all of us. We have 2 million parents out there, most of whom want to get back to work or have the opportunity to if their employers can have them. So the plan is to get us back to school. What we have to do is communicate mostly through Department of Health, if that seems to be at risk over the course of the spring here, late spring and summer, so that families can have plans in place. I would say that some of the hardest impacts of all this have been for our early childhood education providers. Anytime you send a million kids home and you send two million people out of work and at home, they made wise decisions since they were at home with their kids to try to guide learning and didn't need to pay for child care slots. And so we've got a lot of small business owners in the childcare world who will have to rebuild that opportunity. And this summer, I think they're going to get some chance to do that as a lot of parents want to go back to work and have the chance to do so. So we're all kind of in concert together. There's nothing that isn't connected to something else. And for this to work well, we need a good plan for the fall in K-12. Our teachers need to be prepared and our child care providers, in all of our communities, have to be kind of built back up to handle the capacity that they need to handle.

**Arik Korman** [00:08:44] Great. Thank you so much. So here's another question about reopening schools. Can you let us know more about the models under consideration? What would Continuous Learning 2.0 look like or what options are being discussed? What options are under discussion for hybrid, in-person, and distance learning?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:09:03] So this working group we put together, just by way of background, is 123-plus people and we actually have subgroups to it. We will bring in additional experts. But it's parents, students, teachers, counselors, mental health experts, school board members, elected officials, community-based groups. We've really tried to have a lot of voices there. And of course, we can't get everyone there, but they're really diving into some mechanical stuff. So like, what is transportation look like in this world and how do you run lunch lines if kids can't be in a cafeteria in as many numbers as we've had in the past? How does that work? So there's really mechanical work to be done. And then there's more higher-level policy questions. What does teaching and learning look like? What are the models? So that's really the heart of this question. On one extreme is we come back and we do it in a way that's safe and healthy and we have social distancing and maybe we

have wellness checks for every kid in the morning and maybe we have PPE that's required - that'll be kind of guided by health. On the other extreme, maybe it's a community that just because of the incidents of the virus, they can't move and they are on continuous learning 2.0. And what we mean by that is: let's have a better understanding of our learning management systems so that five different teachers don't have five different systems in a district. We really want districts to narrow in on a system that's consistent - a platform that works across their district. We want obviously more professional development so our teachers are prepared to do that really effectively. Obviously more hardware deployment and hotspot deployment and connectivity for families and a better understanding of how the schedule might work in a district that's continually online. So those are really two extremes. And then everything in between is kind of a hybrid of that. Maybe it's a day on, day off if we can't have, you know, all our students and our buildings at one time. Maybe it's differentiated. Elementary kids get most of the face time. High school kids get more of the online time. This is the kind of stuff the group will work through to build a menu. And then local districts will have to build a system that makes the most sense for them.

**Arik Korman** [00:10:58] All right. Thank you very much. I have a question that's about the workgroup itself, which is: with regard to the work being done to consider how to reopen schools, it seems that making a balanced decision, considering the needs of students, staff and parents would be desired. What are you doing to ensure that the parent and student voice is part of the decision-making process? How well-represented are they on the committee? And what about including groups such as black-brown, Indigenous and other persons of color, disabled and neurodivergent folks, people from LGBTQ plus, et cetera. And in general, individuals who have been historically and systemically underserved?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:11:39] We were really intentional to build the group with those representatives there, so we absolutely have organizations that represent LGBTQ youth, all of our commissions - Hispanic Commission, African-American affairs, Black Education Strategy Roundtable, we've got folks who represent the disability community. We were very intentional to build a group around them. Probably 30 or 40 members of that group or people of color. Parents is harder, right? We think 80-plus percent of our group are parents. Now, did they come there just with the parent voice? No. These are principals who are parents, but also PTA members. These are teachers who also parents. These are disability advocates who are parents as well. So you always take criticism when you build a group, whether it's five people or 123, that you didn't get enough in there. And I respect that. I know that that's really tough to do. But we try to grab a lot of voices and then we've made them ambassadors back to their communities. So every region of the state is represented and management, labor. And so all of that is there. It's really important to have those voices. And sometimes when we don't get it right, we kind of deputize folks to get to those communities and have a very special focus on them to bring back into our planning work. And that's what we'll do here as well.

**Arik Korman** [00:12:51] Great. Thanks. So here's a completely different question, which is about funding. Are you anticipating a cut in funding to schools? And if so, by what percentage? I'm hearing a cut of 15 percent.

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:13:03] So let me really be clear about that 15 percent. The governor's office has issued guidance - strong recommendations - to state agencies to say, "Be prepared for the possibility of up to 15 percent cuts." These are agencies, including my

own, that is not protected by basic education or some other constitutional or statutory requirement. That's very different than our schools. We think over 96 percent of the money that we apportioned to our schools is protected and we're confident that the bipartisan legislature will continue to protect those dollars. It's their paramount duty. There's a little risk, right? There's some stuff outside of education that is really essential for us that isn't quite in the box, but almost all of it is. But OSPI in particular will have a lot more risk. We'll be considered more state agency. We don't have those protected funds. And so we'll have programs that get impacted in some of our staff potentially if we can't manage those reductions appropriately. So I'm quite optimistic for this next year. After that, it gets a little more challenging. And then what I would also say, particularly to, you know, League of Education Voters viewers and followers, you are all groundbreaking in supporting levies and supporting school districts, local resources. You've also been leaders in making sure that basic education gets paid for by the state and these levies are enrichment. We're almost there. And I say almost because there are still districts who need some of these levies to fund essential services. So my biggest worry, to be honest with you, are districts that have levies up, and this is a tough time to pass a levy in some communities. These are property taxes by legal definition. And that's tough. So biggest risk not passing your levy. The state itself will be quite, quite stable. The federal money will be quite stable. And there's a chance that we get a little more additional federal help. We've gotten a little bit so far. There's talk of a lot more. I'm not counting on it, but it could be an opportunity.

**Arik Korman** [00:15:00] Got it. And here's a follow up question, which is: online learning is not cheaper. PPEs cost money and double shifts require more transportation. Are you advocating that funding comes from local levies or could it come from somewhere else?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:15:14] Well, this is going to be the most impossible challenge for our districts because there are definitely some aspects of service delivery. If you're face-to-face and need more PPE (personal protective equipment), there's cost. If you're at a distance, there can be more cost. And so there won't be a lot of new state money would be my guess. So definitely counting on some federal dollars to help us out here and no, not counting on local levies because there is a cap to them. There's a legal restriction now on how high they can go. A lot of districts have moved their levies to their cap. There's a little capacity for some, but there's also a huge lag in that they would vote on this year. They wouldn't be in effect until calendar year, really 2022 at this point in time. So I don't expect levies to be a big backfill at all here. It's going to come from federal emergency funds or if the legislature really makes some bold decisions, possibly some help from them. But we should expect to do this with the resources we have at this point.

**Arik Korman** [00:16:06] Great. Thank you. So here's a question about mental health. Before COVID, schools did not have the systems in place to support the mental health needs of our students. As a result, students of color and students with disabilities have been disproportionately excluded, disciplined, restrained, and isolated. Now students are experiencing significant trauma due to a variety of factors, including food and housing instability. As schools reopen, how will schools address the significant mental and behavioral health needs of students in a way that disrupts instead of strengthens the School-to-Prison Pipeline?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:16:40] These things certainly work together with each other, so we don't doubt for a second that the dislocation of students out of our buildings has reduced

the opportunity to support them. Candidly, though, there are some students that I talked to who say, hey, high school mostly, "This has been great. Like I would prefer this." There's all kinds of pressures at school. So it isn't 100 percent that students would prefer to come back to school, but most do, because that's where support systems have been built. We changed our discipline rules a year and a half ago to really focus on the fact that there was disproportionate discipline by sex and by race. Those systems were just being put in place. We've guided districts to be intentional on the return about student evaluation and student analysis around who didn't get connected. Where were your risks before and where do you think students may have struggled even more as a result of being at a distance? So that is part of our formal guidance to them. We have really good partners who help us with this, including some folks at the University of Washington who are just absolute experts in mental health. They're working on a little guide for us right now. Checklist, if you will, that districts really ought to be thinking about for their students in the return. Last thing I'll say about this is this is the direction we've been going. We rewrote the prototypical school model a year ago to start moving resources towards mental health and comprehensive supports with a lens on disproportionality getting into communities and students that needed the most. We had just got elementary counselors, for example, in bigger numbers this last year and it fell by way of the veto pen. So we are poised to move aggressively and progressively on this. But this is going to be a really tough environment for the legislature to regain the momentum that they had started.

**Arik Korman** [00:18:27] Right. Thank you so much. We'll move to graduation pathways and standards for this one. Due to fewer testing opportunities with the Smarter Balanced assessment and other exams, do you anticipate the graduation pathways requirement to change for the class of 2021 and 2022?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:18:45] Yeah, this is an awesome question. The legislature will ultimately decide that because they set the kind of compass. The State Board of Education definitely has a role in some of this work as well. And then we, of course, have a lot of expertise here about the content, the pathways, and how courses really meet our standards. We have a waiver in place right now for the current seniors. I think the legislature will examine that again next year, especially if a lot of districts are in an online or hybrid model. Students may not get their thousand hours or their 180 days. We're gonna have to keep making the turn to a standards-based system and not grading students based on the volume of homework they turn in. And we're gonna have to move towards competency. What do students really know and what can they demonstrate that they know instead of just, you know, how many hours did you sit in a chair and how many credits did you take? These are the ways we've built systems for 100 years and it's gonna have to transform. But I don't expect the radical change in the short term. We've got to get back to school in a healthy and safe way. And then as the legislature gets back to town this winter, we have posed some really tough questions for them to say, "Don't miss this moment and this opportunity to really rethink school and rethink what student learning is all about." The testing is another one that is actually in the control of the feds. They mandate third through eighth grade in English and math. Once in high school and three times in science. And so unless they give us another or new waiver, we're going to have some obligation on standardized testing next year. I think a lot of states are going to push back and ask for flexibility again. We will be one of those states. But there's nothing formal about that yet.

**Arik Korman** [00:20:21] Thank you. So this is a question about year-round schools. Is it time to switch to year-round schools? Why or why not? And what are the challenges?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:20:31] Well, I think it's been time for a couple of decades. As you know, I've been pretty vocal about this. But I really would encourage everyone to think about it two ways. You can take the current model of supports for students and families, whether you like or don't like the 180-day requirement and a thousand structural hours. It's actually quite consistent with other countries around the world I mean, relatively speaking. What's different is the US is still jamming that all into a nine-and-a-half-month model, where everyone else is taking the same hours and the same days and they've stretched it - longer breaks in the winter, longer breaks in the spring. They might make terms where they end a term and have a two or three-week break. They avoid summer learning loss or summer melt by restructuring or balancing their current calendar. I think we have been ready for that for a very long time. There are agricultural communities, though, who really rely on their kids a lot to be in that industry so it wouldn't work everywhere. We want to give flexibility. The question I keep getting though is, is it time to add more and more days to the 180? And again, there are very few countries who do that. And I don't think there's evidence that that would necessarily be successful if you didn't give kids and educators the proper mental health breaks and the ability to disconnect. And the cost of that would be enormous. So a balanced calendar. Absolutely. It is time and nothing is in the way of districts from doing that right now. If they want to. But obviously it's a negotiation because our calendars and working conditions is a partnership between management and our local labor organizations. So they could be in earnest on that right now if they wanted to. That wouldn't require statutory change.

**Arik Korman** [00:22:03] Great. Thank you. I have a question here about standards. What are your suggestions for a return to standardized testing in the fall or when schools reopen, specifically iReady and the MAP test? Can you suggest that formative evaluation by teachers would be less time-consuming and perhaps more informative and caring and personal?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:22:24] The answer for me is yes. And I do think we have another wave of testing discussions coming in the United States, not just in the state of Washington. So formative assessment for those you who are sort of in this world is really, you know, you're assessing learning in real-time so that you can respond with teaching supports, education supports, versus summative assessments where you're testing sort of for final knowing - generally associated with accountability to the feds or the state governments. We spend in this state alone an extraordinary amount of money on sort of that summative standardized tests. We do it because the feds mandate it in part and we do obviously want to know how the system is performing. I think there's a better way. I think we should trust teachers to create assessments that make sense for them. Formative assessments along the way let those accumulate towards an understanding of what students know and can be able to demonstrate. And then I really am a fan of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, called NAEP. It's a sampling methodology. It is a fraction of the costs nationally and is a fraction of the time. And it's a common assessment among the 50 states. So it's the only thing that tells us how Washington is actually doing relative to other states. And it doesn't slam every kid with hours and hours of tests every year. And it's really reliable. So I will personally be advocating for ultimately a total abandonment of the testing regime of the feds. Third through eighth grade every year, three

subjects kind of approach, and moving to a sample methodology for system and state accountability. And then obviously, though, we need formative assessment along the way that's meaningful and understandable so that families and kids understand how they're doing and how they're learning and growing. That's a better model to me. It has been forever. I know not everyone agrees with me, but we've been moving to pathways and really recognizing the importance of our educators because the standardized testing regime has been a very expensive endeavor. And I would argue the testing itself didn't deliver results for us. It did focus us around standards. And that's been the real positive part about it. But the testing itself is not - there's not a value add relative to the hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars that we spend on it nationally.

**Arik Korman** [00:24:33] OK. Thank you very much. Here's a question, and there might be a couple here, about special education. What do you envision for the special ed population and how this could look in the fall? They are the population most needing face-to-face instruction. And how will you ensure that students who require special ed services will receive the education they need to meet state standards?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:24:55] Yeah, this has been one of those persistent conversations through the start of this and even before COVID-19. I mean, this is where this state has come to understand that even after investing significantly more in the last couple of years, we have to change our approach to supporting students with disabilities and the way we approach IEPs and support services. This event exacerbated it. So we've asked districts to document, document, document, deliver what you can, be effective as you can, but be clear that some services are not going well and can't be delivered well in a two-dimensional flat screen. We think this summer will be an opportunity to reengage students in some places where that makes sense, to get them compensatory services and to really rebuild our understanding of their needs for the fall. We're about ready to issue guidance to districts on the limited federal money we've gotten so far to tell them that really our first priority is OSPI is they prioritize those Easter dollars, we call them - these recovery dollars. We want them to focus on populations that we know were disproportionately impacted during all this. Our students with disabilities, our English language learners, our students who really were completely disconnected due to the technology issues. Then there are others. So we've focused policy on it. We've put additional money on it. We've guided districts to focus on those gaps. And then the best thing we can do is, again, within safety protocols, get our schools opened up where all those wraparound supports have been built and developed for a very long time.

**Arik Korman** [00:26:20] Great. Thank you very much. Here's a question about teacher contracts, or at least teacher workforce. If we know that we can't go back to school five days a week in the fall, can OSPI recommend that districts divert transportation budget resources to increasing tutors for more one-on-one time for students or provide more professional development for educators to strengthen their online teaching skills?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:26:44] Oh, this is a more complicated question than folks realize. It may not be the case at all that there's any savings in transportation. If today you can put 50 kids on a bus and somehow health guidelines come along and say you can only put twenty or twenty-five kids on a bus, you're either running double shifts for your buses or you're only going to school every other day, for example, in some scenarios. In which case there's absolutely no savings, you're still running your bus routes, you're burning up fuel and



all that. So there are a lot of people who want to point to another place in the system to say, "Let's get some savings there and bring it over here." We have a hard time finding where those are right now. If, in fact, you believe in sort of the positive civil right of kids to get to school, to learn at school, and to get access to learning, there's very few places to thin it out. The larger and powerful question, I think in it is, you know, we do have to keep focusing on professional development. If this model is continuing to be one we have to rely on in whole or in part or at least in certain geographies, we have to think pretty seriously about that. So if we can't transport kids at all, for example, then there may be opportunities to make those shifts. And it will be an allowable opportunity if the legislature gives us a little help. And I say that because sometimes the legislature gives us buckets of money and say you can only spend on that thing. Well, that thing isn't functional right now. Are you sure we can't spend it over here to get a better outcome? And that's the kind of flexibility we're gonna have to work on with our legislators. But given the opportunity, districts will make those shifts. They will transition those dollars to better uses and better opportunities. And they're pretty darn good at that if they get the flexibility to do that. So I wish I had all the answers, but sometimes and most of the time, it's actually not up to me. I broker policy solutions with the legislature on behalf of the system. And this is one where I need flexibility with those dollars. Right now, we don't have all those flexibilities.

**Arik Korman** [00:28:40] Thank you very much. Superintendent, what is your time constraint look like? Do you need to leave right at one or could you stay a few extra minutes?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:28:47] Let's hang out through a couple more questions here, especially if there's some content area we really haven't covered at all.

**Arik Korman** [00:28:53] Okay, well, here's one. This is about sports and physical education, which is: how do you foresee P.E. classes looking as we move into next year? What are some possible limitations, and what would fall sports look like?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:29:06] Boy, we get this question a lot. I joke, but only like half-seriously - everyone's a cross country runner in P.E. this next year, right? Keep 'em about six feet apart and tell 'em to go a different direction and keep some distance. I'm kidding about that. So what's becoming very clear about the virus is it's a droplet function. Like most viruses, this is transmitted by droplets. You've got to keep space and distance. You want to be protected and you don't want individuals in close contact. That reduces risk. So there are some things we will not be able to do - putting kids in tight spaces in our cafeterias that are, you know, half-cafeterias, half-gymnasiums. We'll probably have far less opportunity. On things that go on outdoors, we'll have a greater opportunity, but probably not playground equipment in some places because they're touching all the time, right? And so this is what we're learning from other states and other countries. They have brought back some physical education and some sports, but they've tried to figure out a way to do that in which they are mostly outdoors. They are very well spaced. So, you know, soccer - pretty cool. You're really in a big space. You're 11 athletes. But your goal in soccer is often to maintain space. Your goal in football is to make contact. So football is a different environment, right? And 50, 75, 100 kids packed together in their gear on the sideline - that might have to look differently. And if we can get back and do some sports this fall, it may be that as parents, we're not shoulder-to-shoulder with each other, you know, in grandstands Friday night under lights. And so all of this is part of that really hard everyday kind of working through the issues, trying to get schools open to be effective and healthy and safe, including sports.

But we've got to do it within health guidelines. So expect it to be different, but expect some opportunities.

**Arik Korman** [00:30:51] Great. Thank you. Here's a question about technology access. There's a chance that students will still be at home in September. Are you working with other officials at the state level to ensure that all students have access to the Internet?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:31:04] Yeah, we've got a lot of great partnerships. The Department of Commerce and their broadband office has been a real leader with the legislature in deploying these hotspots you may have read about around the state. It's not ideal. So these aren't broadcasting into homes for connectivity. But they're locations - libraries and schools and other places in a community where a student who just has no connection can get brought there or can drive up to it themselves if they have that. And they get connection, they can meet the teacher, they can get online for a class, they can upload assignments and download. It's a solution and it's narrow, but it's important. The other thing we're doing is trying to build partnerships with our private sector partners, where I use federal dollars to purchase in-home high connection for free and reduced-price lunch families who have the ability to connect but haven't been able to afford it. We want to do that for a year. We want to purchase that service for an entire year for them, where the companies will provide the first couple of months for free and I'll use federal emergency dollars to do the rest. So we really are trying to build partnerships as best we can. It will require the legislature, though, as I keep referring to, to then make hard decisions after that year. Technology needs to be a basic education right. It's not a luxury. It's not a convenience. It shouldn't be a function of who can pass a tech levy. It's essential to learning and essential to student development. And this is as maybe our collective next big passion, right? All of us together, 7 million strong making connectivity really a public interest, a public utility, possibly. Certainly a public basic ed right. And we're going to build it out this year as much as we can. And then we need the legislature to really make a big policy push on this.

**Arik Korman** [00:32:43] Great. Thank you very much. I've got one last question for you. And I want to say, by the way, I've been watching the chat and it's been very robust. And I want to let everyone who has been chatting - I want to let you know that I'll be sending a transcript of what's been going on in the chat to the superintendent's office. So, Superintendent Reykdal, you'll get to see what people have been saying. The last question about school reopening is: is there any possibility that Washington state may follow what's happening in California, which just announced that it will be up to local districts to decide when and how to reopen?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:33:17] So there is a possibility and the way I keep describing it, is the health officials will really be - there'll be a floor right for us. There's some things we will have to do and we can't go below it. And maybe a ceiling, they'll tell us some things that won't be allowed. But all the space in between is going to be up to our districts and they already control their calendars. So their start times are already up to them. And as I said, and I know it's not really an experience people have in our state, but theoretically, you could be a school district that decides to start in October and finish in August if you want to. You could take two months off in the middle of winter if you're a school district. That calendar is locally determined, it's locally bargained. And so there's a lot of potential out there to get creative with calendars. We won't dictate any of that stuff for sure. We'll give districts what the options are, what the blended models might look like in sports, within the

context of the Department of Health giving us those guidelines. So California also says a lot of things, and because they're really structured differently. Interestingly, their county governments - they have county superintendents, if you will, with quite a bit of authority over their local superintendents. And we just aren't structured that way at all. Our power in this state is very much about our locally elected school boards, and it really works well for us. And I don't see us getting away from that.

**Arik Korman** [00:34:36] Well, thank you so much, Superintendent Reykdal, and thank you for all you do to support our students and our educators and our parents in Washington state. And thank you to all of you for participating and submitting questions. We had more than four hundred questions submitted during this time, and I apologize to everyone whose question was not answered. If your question wasn't answered, Superintendent Reykdal, how should people contact you?

**Superintendent Reykdal** [00:35:03] Well, as you might imagine, with 7 million Washingtonians, you know, 3 1/2 million grandparents, two million parents and a million students, we can't answer seven million questions. So we do have a superintendent inbox and we get to as many of those as we can. Having them come through your organization when this is how they found the conversation is really helpful because you and our educational service district partners have been able to consolidate a lot of duplicative questions and say, "Hey, we really need an answer on this thing" and we can start talking to folks who have a similar question. So coming through you is a really powerful way to do it. They come straight to us on our website ([www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us)). Our e-mail is right there on the front page. And we're happy to answer as many as we can get to with our limited staff and time, but we're going to get to all the big ones. That's the thing that's important to remember, is there's a process to get to all the big stuff for sure. It just may not be the detailed questions. Right now, the good news is: whatever we do here is guidance and framework, and our local districts are really the place where the magic happens. And I always encourage folks, if you really want to understand how schools work, get to your school board meetings. Right now, they're at a distance. But this is where the vast bulk of the decisions are that directly impact students and families. So thanks, everybody.

**Arik Korman** [00:36:14] Great. Thank you, Superintendent Reykdal. I appreciate all that you do. I know you gotta jet, so feel free to go ahead and move on to whatever you need to do and I'll close out the LEVinar. Again, thank you for everything. League of Education Voters has gathered resources available in communities across Washington state to help us get through this difficult time. Everything from meal services, distance learning resources, school guidance from OSPI, college and scholarship supports, and mental health supports. Also Internet and technology resources, childcare and employment resources. You'll find our COVID-19 Resources page on our website, [EducationVoters.org](http://EducationVoters.org).

**Arik Korman** [00:36:52] Our next LEVinar is on [Wednesday, June 3rd](#). It will focus on how individual schools are keeping students engaged during this time of continuous learning. South Shore Pre-K through 8 in Seattle and the community school in Spokane, which serves students in grades 9 through 12, will share what is working and will answer your questions. You can register by visiting our website, [EducationVoters.org](http://EducationVoters.org), and clicking on events, then [Lunchtime LEVinars](#). I'll also send registration information in a follow-up email.

**Arik Korman** [00:37:23] Also coming up on [June 11th](#), a panel of superintendents from across Washington state will share what is working in their districts and what they need now to better support students during COVID-19. Seattle Superintendent Denise Juneau, Spokane Superintendent Shelley Redinger, and Everett Superintendent Ian Saltzman are now confirmed. And we're working to fill out the panel with a small rural district and a tribal compact school.

**Arik Korman** [00:37:49] Thanks to each of you for joining us today. If you have additional questions or comments, please send them to me at [arik@educationvoters.org](mailto:arik@educationvoters.org). A recording of today's presentation will be available on our website, [EducationVoters.org](https://EducationVoters.org), and will be sent to you in the follow-up email which should land in your inbox in 24 hours. I will also provide a written transcript of today's webinar. Please feel free to share the recording and the transcript with your friends and colleagues.

**Arik Korman** [00:38:19] If you'd like to learn more about League of Education Voters or to support our work, please visit our website, [EducationVoters.org](https://EducationVoters.org). Thank you again for attending. Each of us has the right to feel safe and valued. We hope you will join us at future LEVinars.

Our vision is that student in Washington state has access to an excellent public education that provides an equal opportunity for success.

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