



Laura Phillips (left) waves a rainbow flag while Everett Public Schools Superintendent Ian Saltzman raises a large rainbow flag at the district's Pride month celebration Wednesday in Everett. (Olivia Vanni / The Herald)

Pride flag flies over Everett Public Schools headquarters

In a show of support for students and staff, the rainbow LGBTQ flag will be up all month.

By Ben Watanabe

Thursday, June 2, 2022 5:38am | [LOCAL NEWS](#) [AS SEEN ON INSTAGRAM ...](#) [EDUCATION](#)

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EVERETT — Staff cheered and waved tiny rainbow flags as Everett Public Schools Superintendent Ian Saltzman cranked a large version atop a pole Wednesday in honor of Pride month.

The district is flying the rainbow flag at the headquarters on Broadway to support everyone who learns and works in the administration and schools.

“In Everett Public Schools, we do believe all students belong in our schools,” district diversity, equity and inclusion director Joi Odom Grant said.

It will share the rope and pole with the district’s flag, next to poles bearing the U.S. and Washington flags.



People pose with a pride flag during the Everett Public Schools Pride celebration Wednesday in Everett. (Olivia Vanni / The Herald)

Saltzman said he hopes raising the flag and planting Everett as a place where the spectrum of gender and sexuality is welcome encourages other school districts to follow.

Staff and students told the district they wanted more inclusive curricula, said Aissa Moody, assistant for diversity, equity and inclusion.

The district bought books for all of the school libraries featuring stories about people of color, with disabilities and who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex or asexual.

About 26% of Snohomish County students in 12th grade reported their sexual orientation as something other than heterosexual in last year's Healthy Youth Survey. More than 15,000 students in the county responded to the survey.



Literature and pamphlets at the Everett Public Schools district headquarters Pride month celebration Wednesday shows some of the material available at schools. (Olivia Vanni / The Herald)

“A lot of our students are in fear of showing up and being their true selves,” Odom Grant said.

She and other district leaders hope the Pride flag shows the district is safe for students. They also see it as an extension of district and state policies around inclusion.

The Everett School District’s strategic plan calls for a workforce more representative of the student population, including ethnicity, gender, race and sexual orientation.

“It’s unapologetically supporting our students,” Odom Grant said.

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People pose with a pride flag during the Everett Public Schools Pride celebration Wednesday in Everett.
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