



THE PANTHER PRESS

CAMPUS NEWS

ADMIN. MESSAGE

As we begin our second semester, we want to take a moment to reflect on the many accomplishments, challenges, and moments of growth we have shared as a school community in the first half of the school year. This semester has been filled with hard work; by our students, who have shown determination and curiosity in their learning; by our teachers and staff, who continue to go above and beyond to support every learner; and by our families, whose partnership and encouragement make such a difference each day. Together, these efforts create the strong, supportive environment that defines our school.

Our students have made meaningful academic progress, participated in enriching activities, and demonstrated resilience when faced with challenges. Just as importantly, they have continued to grow socially and emotionally, learning to collaborate, problem-solve, and care for one another. These skills will serve them well far beyond the classroom.

As we look ahead to the second semester, we do so with excitement and optimism. There will be new goals to pursue, new opportunities to explore, and continued growth for every student.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our school community. We are proud of what we have accomplished together this semester and look forward to all that lies ahead. We hope all our students take advantage of the many opportunities afforded to them because of the hard work and dedication of the Panther Families!

Thank you,
Stephen Bollinger

LOOKING AHEAD

Feb 16 ~ No School (President's Day)

April 6-10 ~ Spring Break

May 8 ~ Prom

May 25 ~ No School (Memorial Day)

June 5 ~ Graduation

June 10 ~ 8th Grade Promotion

June 11 ~ Last Day of School

SPOTLIGHT ON THE LEVY

see pages 7-8



CHARACTER COUNTS!

Anytime, anywhere.

Even when no one is watching!

HOMECOMING 2025

Sophomores Win Homecoming Week in a Stunning Upset



**Pyramid Schemes
Panther Style**



Decorating the fence



**And the
Crowd
goes wild!**

In a week packed with spirit, competition, and friendly rivalry, the Class of 2028 rose to the occasion and claimed the coveted title of Homecoming Week champions. Their victory didn't just break expectations; it energized the entire school and proved that the youngest competitors can absolutely take the crown. From the moment Spirit Week kicked off, sophomores showed up ready to dominate. Whether it was dressing head-to-toe for theme days, building over-the-top decorations for the fence decorating competition, or bringing unmatched energy to pep rallies, their presence was impossible to ignore. Teachers even noted that the sophomores were the first to show up to events, and the last to leave. But what really sealed their win were the competitions. The sophomore class stood out with their creativity and attention to detail in fence decorating and dress up days. In the lunchtime games, they pulled off some of the most surprising wins of the week, edging out upperclassmen in multiple games. Their teamwork and spirit made it clear they weren't there to simply participate, they were there to shine. The week wrapped up with the Homecoming pep rally, where the sophomore section erupted as the final results were announced. The moment the class was declared the overall winner, the gym thundered with cheers, and a whole lot of Panther pride. Winning Homecoming Week is more than bragging rights, it's a sign of the unity and passion within the class. The Class of 2028 has set the bar high for next year, proving that school spirit knows no age or grade level. Congratulations to the sophomores on a well-earned victory! If homecoming week is any hint, this class has a lot more in store.

HOME COMING 2025

MEET OUR HOME COMING ROYALTY!



Juniors Daniel Lyon, Mya Lee, Miley Duclos, and Judah Sutton
Seniors Makli Browneagle-Branson, Isaiah Martin, Bowen Kramer, Jazzlyn Carrasco, Dalilah Littlecrow-Curtis, and Taylor Ickes
Pee wee Ellianna Ziesmer-Wynne and Soren Piengkham

King Taylor Ickes
and
Queen Dalilah
Littlecrow-Curtis



The Captain Lineup



PeeWee Royalty
Ellianna Ziesmer-Wynne
and Soren Piengkham

Cusick Students Raised Funds for Washington, D.C. Civics Trip

Students hosted a successful fundraiser dinner and auction to support their educational trip to Washington, D.C., marking the second time the district will send students to the nation's capital as part of its expanded civics program.

The event was held at the Cusick American Legion, where community members gathered for chicken fried steak dinner before participating in a live auction to raise funds for student travel expenses. Proceeds from the evening helped offset the cost of the trip for participating students. There will be no out of pocket costs for any of our students again this year due to the successful Auction, students working basketball concessions and several large monetary donations from community members. The Washington, D.C. trip has expanded on Cusick's long-standing civics education efforts, which previously focused on visits to the Washington State Capitol in Olympia. A total of 9 students in grades 8–12 were selected for the trip based on essays, academic performance, and citizenship. For many students, the trip represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Several participants will be traveling by airplane and using public transportation for the first time while experiencing national monuments, museums, and historic sites tied directly to their social studies coursework.

School staff and organizers expressed appreciation for the strong community support and noted that the success of the fundraiser made the trip possible.



2026 DC Students:

L to R, Back Row: AvaLilly Revais, Jazzlyn Carrasco, Trevin Williams, Thoren Holmes, Jeremiah Barret

L to R, Front Row: Lonna Stigall, Marshal Eveland, Hiccup Hardwick, Mya Lee



thanks
for your
support

SPOTLIGHT ON BROADCASTING



This year marked an exciting first for Panther Broadcasting as students successfully completed their inaugural season of broadcasting Panther basketball games. What started as a new challenge quickly turned into a memorable experience that brought our school community closer together and showcased student talent in a whole new way. Throughout the season, student broadcasters worked behind the scenes and on the mic to deliver live game coverage, including play-by-play commentary, camera operation, graphics, and production setup. Broadcasting live sports pushed students to think quickly, communicate clearly, and work as a team in a fast-paced environment; all while representing our school with professionalism and pride. From learning how to manage live equipment to adapting on the fly during games, students gained real-world experience that extended far beyond the classroom. Their dedication and growth were evident with each broadcast, as confidence increased and production quality continued to improve over the course of the season. The success of this first year would not have been possible without the commitment of the students involved and the support of staff and families who encouraged them every step of the way. Their efforts helped create an exciting new way for fans near and far to stay connected to Panther athletics.

As Panther Broadcasting wraps up its first season of basketball coverage, we celebrate this major accomplishment and look forward to even bigger opportunities in the future. Congratulations to our student broadcasters on a job well done—and go Panthers!

BROADCASTING

ELEMENTARY CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The elementary students once again participated in the Christmas Concert. Students in grades Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through 5th grade sang to their family and friends. Miss Seaney did a wonderful job practicing and conducting the concert. Thank you to all the family and friends that attended; it was greatly appreciated by all the staff and students.



*Merry
Christmas*



Educational Programs and Operations Levy

We have held numerous Educational Programs & Operations Replacement Levy (EP&O Levy) meetings over the past several weeks and the following question was asked on multiple occasions!

How is the District able to keep our levy request rates so low, compared to other area schools?

The short answer is simple...

The Cusick School District Board of Directors, Anna Bluff Armstrong, Tye Shanholtzer, Mark Cutshall, Paul Edgren and Jason Lyon are very conscious about keeping local taxes as low as possible while continuing to provide quality educational programs and activities for our students. Therefore, they requested that our team identify and pursue other revenue streams, rather than attempting to put it on the backs of our local taxpayers through a capital project levy and/or bond to address our aging facilities and the corresponding needs.

***The following information is simply factual information as it relates to the Cusick School District and is in no way meant to undermine other area schools and their proposed ballot measures. I am unfamiliar with the dynamics or needs that those Districts are faced with on a daily basis and am in no way qualified to speak on those issues. These facts are simply to inform our local Cusick School District patrons with the facts that answers the following question: How is the District able to keep our levy request rates so low, compared to other area schools?

Under the direction of the Board of Directors our team went to work identifying alternate funding sources that would bring dollars into our district to address some of our building and physical plant needs. With that said, we have secured approximately \$9,237,297.00 in this area over the past couple of years.

Below is a snapshot of these dollars and how they are being used.

Emergency Repair Grant #1: \$500,000.00

These dollars combined with dollars from our capital project fund were used to complete phase one of the Jr./Sr. High School roof replacement.

Emergency Repair Grant #2: \$330,000

These dollars will be used to complete phase two of the Jr./Sr. High School roof replacement. The plan is to complete this project in Summer 2026.

Plumbing Infrastructure: \$1,891,297.00

These dollars are earmarked to replace water lines, pipes and other plumbing infrastructure in the Cusick Jr./Sr. High building. This phase is still in the planning stage and will be completed at a date to be determined.

Small School District Modernization Grant: \$6,000,000.00

These dollars are earmarked to address many of the Bess Herian Elementary building needs. This includes, but is not limited to an upgraded heating system, new flooring and a new roof. All left over dollars will be put towards any other prioritized District building needs. These projects are still in the planning stage and will be completed at a date to be determined. We hope to begin in the Summer of 2026.

***Only Districts with an enrollment less than 1,000 students are eligible to apply for this grant.

Urgent Repair Grant: \$281,600.00

These dollars are earmarked to be used towards a roof replacement on the Adam Wike Gymnasium. The plan is to complete this project in Summer 2026.

PUD/BPA Energy Efficiency Upgrade: \$24,400.00

These dollars were received as reimbursement for upgrading all district lighting with much more efficient LED lighting.

High Demand Grant: \$35,000.00

These dollars were used to buy technology equipment for our CTE programs.

Core Plus Grant: \$25,000.00

These dollars were used to buy equipment and a small enclosed trailer for our CTE programs.

Equipment Grant: \$150,000.00

These dollars were used to upgrade equipment and infrastructure in our shop classes.

It should be noted that these five board members have been extraordinary stewards of the overall district budget. This fact, coupled with their foresight in requesting us to seek alternative funding sources to address our aging facility issues, allows the district to put forth an EP&O levy request at a lower rate than other Districts may be able to.

Cusick School District is eligible to run a maximum EP&O levy at a rate of \$2.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. However, due to the outside funding we have secured, our estimated Replacement EP&O levy is as follows:

2027 - \$1.02 per \$1,000 of assessed property value

2028 - \$1.01 per \$1,000 of assessed property value

2029 - \$1.00 per \$1,000 of assessed property value

This proposed three-year Replacement EP&O levy allows us to maintain existing programs and to accommodate increased expenses for the enrichment and operation of our District that...

1. Meets the learning needs of our students.
2. Allows us to maintain safe, secure and healthy facilities.
3. Provides student programs that enhance learning, living and contributing as world citizens.

In closing, Levy ballots are being sent out by the County over the next couple of days and are due back no later than February 10, 2026. It is our hope that these facts allow you to make an informed decision when voting. Please do not hesitate to reach out to a District administrator by stopping by in person, calling (509) 445-1125 or via e-mail if you have any further questions.

Please vote with Panther Pride!



Cusick School District serves up local bison!



92% of students loved or liked the Farm to School Meal!



Local Producer Highlight

Kalispel Tribe's Department of Agriculture provided bison for this event. Located 5 minutes down the road from the school, the business operates a mobile butcher shop for local farmers and ranchers. They are focused on increasing food security in the county and increasing access to bison for their community.

We are grateful for this partnership!



Cusick School District Nutrition Services launches new recipe featuring local bison from the Kalispel Tribe!

On November 25, the Cusick Nutrition Team hosted its first Farm to School celebration of the year, featuring bison from the Kalispel Tribe Department of Agriculture's Buffalo Boys. The Bison and Lentil Chili was a big hit, with 92% of students voting that they loved or liked the new recipe. Some students even shared that it was the best meal they've ever had at the school! We look forward to continuing to feature local foods and highlight new recipes in the coming months.

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SPORTS

2025-2026

JH Boys Basketball

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

02/02 @ Columbia

02/06 @ Selkirk

02/09 @ Valley

02/11 Home Vs Valley Christian

02/12 Home Vs Selkirk