

# Community Prevention & Wellness Initiative

Partners for Healthy Communities

## Coalition Mission

The **Mission** of the Panther Country Coalition is to *prevent youth substance use* by promoting health and safety through education, community bonding, and personal empowerment.



## Coalition Coordinator

**Carrie McKinley, CPP**



509-447-6419

[cmckinley@pendoreille.org](mailto:cmckinley@pendoreille.org)

Pend Oreille County  
Counseling Services

## Panther Country Coalition

Cusick, WA



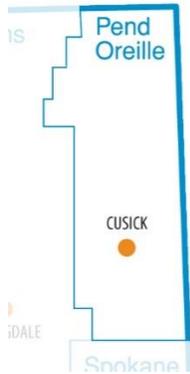
## About the Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI)

CPWI is a partnership of state agencies, counties, schools and local prevention coalitions supporting communities in preventing alcohol and other drug abuse and its negative consequences. CPWI priorities include reducing underage drinking, marijuana use and opioid misuse/abuse among middle and high school aged youth. By providing evidence-based practices and promoting the positive changes in communities, we can build healthier communities.

## About the Coalition: Communities & Schools Working Together

Panther Country Coalition (PCC) is a grassroots volunteer organization formed in August of 2013 to mobilize the Cusick community. Our goal is to prevent and reduce youth substance use. We work in partnership with youth, law enforcement, local government, healthcare, faith-based organizations, volunteer groups, youth organizations, parents, businesses and community members to support our youth living substance free lives. PCC is governed by citizen volunteers and representatives from local agencies. We work in collaboration with the Cusick School District, Northeast WA Educational Service District, The Kalispel Tribe, The Town of Cusick and Pend Oreille County.

Cusick and Usk have a rich history. The earliest inhabitants were Indian tribes. Archaeological evidence shows Native American presence as early as 11,000 years ago. In 1809 the North West Company explorer David Thompson (1770-1857) made his first trip down the Pend Oreille River. The Indians he found were the Kalispels, which means "camas people," after a root that was their staple food, and the Pend Oreilles. The Kalispels have a reservation near Usk and are still a prominent part of the community. By the 1850's timber was the major extractive industry. Today the main employers are the Kalispel Tribe, Ponderay Newsprint Company, and the Cusick School District.



Teepee and Canoe - Pend Oreille River, 1860

## About Our Community

The Panther Country Coalition serves the communities of the Cusick School District which includes a population of approximately 1,300. The School District serves 240 students in grades K-12 including those from the nearby Kalispel Indian Reservation. We are located in beautiful Pend Oreille County in the northeast corner of Washington State, 50 miles north of Spokane and 20 miles from Newport.

### General Statistics

Zoning – Rural

**Cusick median household income (2016) = \$22,629**  
 compared to WA median household income = \$67,106

### Student demographics for 2016 (K-12)

October 2016	Student Count	240
Male		55%
Female		45%
Free or Reduced Meals		64%

### Race/Ethnicity

American Indian/Alaska Native	30%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.3%
Hispanic/Latino	7.5%
White	46%
Two or more races	15%

## About Prevention Programs in our Community

Some of our goals and strategies include decreasing favorable attitudes among youth towards drinking and marijuana use and increasing their perception of harm and risks associated with underage alcohol and marijuana use. We are implementing anti-drug messages and programs that bring awareness to our community about underage drinking and youth substance use through media campaigns such as Start Talking Now and You Can. Another strategy is to increase family management skills and effective communication between parents and youth. We offer a parenting program called, “Guiding Good Choices” twice annually. Additional evidenced based programs offered are “Sport Prevention & Wellness” and the culturally centered “Healing of the Canoe” curriculum. Collaborating with our community partners remains a high priority.

## Other Contacts

Student Assistance  
 Program Specialists

Chris Evers



509-445-1125  
[cevers@esd101.net](mailto:cevers@esd101.net)

Cusick School District



Donna Anderson, Chair



303-249-2198

**CPWI is funded by**

Washington State  
 Health Care Authority

For more information  
 about CPWI visit

[www.TheAthenaForum.org](http://www.TheAthenaForum.org)