

Schools *from A1*

In Elkton, both the city and school came to a halt with power out everywhere and no way to get in touch with anyone. On top of those issues, most individuals were stuck at their houses due to the roads being blocked by downed trees. On Thursday Feb. 28, Boe was able to make his way to Cottage Grove where he, for the first time all week, had the chance to start making some phone calls. Boe was told that power in Elkton was predicted to be out for at least the next four weeks.

In conversations with the Elkton school board chairman and maintenance director, it was decided that the district would get generators at both the high school and the grade school. Each generator costs \$9,000 a week to rent in addition to fuel costs. Boe estimated that the school will pay over \$50,000 for the generators.

"We can't not (have the generators).

Our option was don't run school and I thought it was better to get kids in school. That was the right decision even though it will cost so much money," said Boe.

But the generators quickly went beyond helping just the school as the Red Cross set up an emergency shelter in the Elkton gym on Saturday March 2. By Sunday, the word was out and people made their way to the gym where they were able to get a hot shower, warm meal and a place to charge their phones.

"People were so appreciative," said Red Cross Regional Volunteer Services Officer Hanna Malak who was at the site from Saturday to Wednesday. "The way they looked and felt after a shower, it seemed so simple. I shower every day and I can't imagine going a full week without a shower and these folks didn't have the option."

The gym, which also had cots for individuals to stay the night, stayed busy throughout the week but peaked on Monday with 143 served at dinner. In

addition to the Red Cross, two members of the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief were on hand with a trailer that has four additional showers, one washing machine and one dryer. Elkton residents put left their laundry in the gym and the Southern Baptist volunteers washed, dried and folded the clothes.

"We're working from day up to dark to try and get through the laundry," said 82-year-old volunteer Howard Martin.

At of this printing, the Red Cross had not identified an end date for operating at Elkton High School.

With the Red Cross in place and power at the school, classes resumed, with a two-hour delay in place until power comes back on, on Monday March 4 across Elkton.

"The community really feels like this is the right place for kids to be, even though they have fires to set at home and water to draw and all that stuff. People are serving kids and that's really cool," said Boe. "I know it's really, really hard for people but they're not saying

it. They're not expressing it. I mean, it's just, let's go do this type of thing."

The Elkton school district has school four days a week which will allow the schools to add any missed days on various Fridays throughout the rest of the year. The district may also tack on an additional day at the end of the year.

In Cottage Grove at the South Lane School District, the schools, except for Dorena, were able to start back up last Monday. Cottage Grove High School had minor water damage but as a whole, the district withstood the storm.

"In all, the staff did remarkable. It was just that no one ever expected this," said SLSD interim superintendent Dr. Larry Sullivan. "You can plan and we'll certainly go over our procedures in the short term and we'll do that and see what we can do better. We plan for some things but not something with that significance and that level."

After the roads began to clear up, the next step for SLSD was to get schools up and running again, a process that

Sullivan estimates takes a day and a half. That process includes getting the buildings heated, clearing debris in parking lots and ensuring the kitchens are able to prepare meals.

Similarly to Elkton, SLSD also worked with the city and Red Cross as they got the old Harrison building back and running to prepare an emergency shelter in Cottage Grove.

"That took an immense amount of work to get that building up and going so we could house the shelter. The Red Cross folks were absolutely phenomenal," said Sullivan.

In North Douglas and Yoncalla, the schools had a similar experiences of cancelling school for the week but were able to avoid any large-scale damage.

"When you look at our facilities and the surrounding area, we survived pretty well," said North Douglas superintendent John Lahley. "Building wise we had no issues."

It was the sentiment in Yoncalla. "It could have been a lot worse for us," said Yoncalla superintendent Brian Berry.

Dorena *from A1*

noted that it was a near miracle that no trees fell on the building and that the school was fortunate that last year's leaky roof was replaced this summer.

"If we hadn't got that new roof on that building, I imagine we would have had some pretty good water damage," she said. With the school closed, the teachers made their way to the SLSD office, where they put together a plan for the week.

SLSD interim superintendent Dr. Larry Sullivan worked with Folkman and SLSD Director of

Director of Human Resources and Director Staff Effectiveness Brian McCasline to come up with a solution of what to do with Dorena. It was resolved that the 76 Dorena students, along with teachers and staff, would spend the rest of the week at Harrison Elementary School.

"We have space [at Harrison]. The building was built for 615 students and we have 450," said Sullivan. "It worked out really well."

At Harrison, each grade level shares a common area with four different classroom spaces — or "pods" — attached to it for

each specific classroom teacher. With Harrison in its first year of the building, the district decided at the start of the school year to just fill three of the four pods at each grade level. The open pods were filled for the week by Dorena Elementary students while the middle school students worked in a room off the library. Now with a place to learn, it was another endeavor for teachers to determine exactly what they needed to bring from Dorena to Harrison.

"The teachers were kind of on their own. They had Monday to plan and I said to them on Monday, 'Plan for sure on three

days but think about the whole week.' And so they packed according to what they needed," said Folkman. Adding, "It was dependent on the teacher on what they wanted to bring up. And the fact that I said, 'Hey, what you bring up you have to haul back so be aware. Pack wisely.'"

In addition to adjusting to being in a new building that dwarfs the size of their school, the Dorena students, many still without power at home, had other needs for things such as a warm shower, a hot meal or their clothes washed — all of which were provided for them at Harrison. Once the necessities were taken care of, then learning could begin again.

"Now when everyone's pretty comfortable we're getting to some more academics. But I thought about what was going to engage them and keep them interested. What was going to give them an opportunity to voice all the stuff that has been going on in their lives," said Ariel Pavlak, a Dorena teacher of the second and third-grade

blended classroom.

Sitting in her temporary classroom on Friday, she went over how the key to keeping her students engaged and transition them into an academic mode was to continue to talk, think and write about their experience with the snow.

Each year, Pavlak's class publishes a book and after recent events, the class will now focus on the events of "Snowpocalypse 2019." To start their brainstorming, her class shared their favorite and least favorite parts of their week of snow. The high-lights and lowlights spanned a wide range from typical snow day events such as snowball fight and getting to play board games to low lights that featured trees falling near their house, no internet and stepping in dog poop and not being able to wash it.

Pavlak, and those at Dorena, expressed gratitude to the district for getting their school quickly plugged into another school and to the Harrison teachers for offering assistance as needed. But after four days at

Harrison, she echoed a shared feeling: it was time to go back to Dorena.

"We all felt like country bumpkins that first day. It was like, 'Whoa... check this place out everything is new and shiny. There's an elevator!'" said Pavlak. "But now they're like, 'Are we going back to Dorena on Monday?' They miss their school. We do have a really unique, small community up there and it's very comfortable and safe for all of us. So definitely a lot of small fish in a big pond feeling."

Monday morning back at Dorena, students recounted their favorite memories of their time at Harrison. They enjoyed the state of the art technology, a bigger library and a hill out on the playground that they got to slide down. But now, they were back where they belong.

"We're finally back into our regular classrooms and doing our regular stuff," said an excited student in the second and third grade blended class.



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