

Schoolchildren Shine During Power Outage - Omaha World-Herald (NE) - November 18, 1992 - page 13sf

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The pupils at **Howard Kennedy Elementary** got a lesson in dealing with adversity Wednesday morning.

But the children didn't seem to think a power outage, caused when a vehicle struck a nearby power pole, was any problem. In fact, many said, it was fun.

Principal Bill Lutz said Omaha School District officials decided early Wednesday that classes could be held despite the outage, which occurred at 12:10 a.m. Power was restored at 10:41 a.m.

Mark Gautier, an Omaha Public Power District spokesman, said the area initially affected by the outage was bounded by Ohio and Binney Streets to the north and south and 28th and 31st Streets to the east and west. Power to all but the school was restored by 2:40 a.m.

Hallways were dim when pupils arrived, but most classrooms were lit by the school's large windows. The big brick building retained enough heat to keep temperatures comfortable, Lutz said.

Milk in the school's cafeteria refrigerators remained cold enough for the school to serve cold cereal for breakfast, Lutz said. A portable generator was brought in to provide lights in the cafeteria, which is on a windowless lower level of the building.

In some cases, classes or reading groups simply dealt with the outage by moving to available light.

Nancy Balcetis, a reading teacher with the Omaha School District's reading services center, moved one of her special reading sessions under a window.

"It was fun," said Michael King, 7, one of her pupils.

The school district's food services arranged to heat pizza at another school so that pupils could have a hot lunch.

"Pizza is going to be truly carried in today," Lutz said.

The only people truly inconvenienced by the outage, he said, were parents who were not able to take pictures during a breakfast for third - grade honor pupils.

Jim Purnell, however, was a bit chagrined when he arrived for his first meeting with Tremayne Cooper, 8, son of Lisa Cooper. Purnell, an OPPD account executive, is participating in the utility's new mentoring program.

"It was a total surprise to me," he said of the outage.

CITATION (APA STYLE)

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