

Dover and Phila school merger series is slated

On occasion throughout the history of Dover and New Philadelphia schools and with more frequency in recent years the respective boards of education have met to explore problems of mutual concern.

They have included large quantity purchases of materials used by both districts to save money, operation of a combined service facility for school buses and vocational education.

Dominating the discussions, if not in fact at least in thought, was the ultimate possibility of merging the two districts.

With athletic traditions, enriched by a major rival match in football each fall, always a prime consideration, merger talks failed to move beyond the discussion stage.

That is until Jan. 22, 1969, when 3 consultants — Thomas Quick, assistant superintendent for instruction for the Ohio Department of Education, and Drs. Virgil Blanke and Roy A. Larmee of Ohio State University's education — met with the 2 boards.

Quick explained that under present Ohio law the decision to merge rests with the boards and the "ultimate choice lies with the voters of the districts."

All 3 suggested the boards continue to study — possibly for the next year — consolidation of the Dover and New Philadelphia districts.

On March 12, 1969, during a joint meeting, the boards of education announced they would employ an Ohio State University team to conduct an educational, facilities and services study of the two districts at an estimated cost of \$10,000 — \$5000 for each district payable over two years.

The team, headed by Dr. Marion Conrad of OSU's educational and administration and facilities unit, subsequently gathered data through questionnaires, interviews, surveying buildings, looking at the tax base, etc.

It has resulted in the definite recommendation that the two districts unite in regards to facilities, curriculum and administration. An informal report to that effect was presented to the boards on July 21.

A complete report on the survey team's findings and recommendations contained in a 226-page volume, is now being studied by board members and school administrators. Copies will be made available for public scrutiny later.

Because the merger question is so vitally important to virtually every person in Dover and New Philadelphia, The Times-Reporter will serialize the report in detail. The first story, which concerns educational needs, will appear tomorrow.