

OSU survey team reports:

Birth rates on decline in New Phila and Dover school districts

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fifth in a series of articles detailing the finds of an Ohio State University survey team which led it to the conclusion that the Dover and New Philadelphia school districts should merge.)

In studying the enrollments of the Dover and New Philadelphia school districts, the survey team analyzed four educational factors:

- (1) — Non-public school enrollments.
- (2) — Kindergarten enrollments.
- (3) — Changes in school district boundaries.
- (4) — Grade-grade survival rates.

They found that the general decline in the birth rate for the State of Ohio is reflected in the declining birth rates of Tuscarawas County, Dover and New

Philadelphia.

It also was noted that Dover shows a more marked decrease in birth rate for the past three years than New Philadelphia.

"The slight increase in the populations of Dover and New Philadelphia indicates that migration has not been a significant factor and no significant in-migration is anticipated in the near future," the survey team reported.

Non-public school enrollments have decreased substantially from 1961-62 when 13 per cent of the school-age children attended non-public schools to 1969-70 when only 8 per cent attended non-public schools. New facilities for the Tuscarawas County Central Catholic High could reverse this trend.

Kindergarten enrollments in both districts have increased during the last 10 years.

The ratio between kindergarten enrollment and first grade enrollment the following year shows that better than 9 out of 10 children who enroll in the first grade have had the kindergarten experience.

According to the survey team the ratio is somewhat inflated because the kindergarten enrollment includes some children who attend kindergarten in the public school, but attend first grade in the parochial school.

It was noted that the only territory added to either district in the past 10 years was the Stone Creek school district, which was accepted by the New Philadelphia district in 1965. No future additions are anticipated by either district at this time.

Other findings were: Elementary enrollments have held relatively stable for the past seven years while showing an

overall 15 per cent increase in the 10-year period; junior high enrollment, which gradually increased from 1961-62 until 1968-69, underwent a significant increase in 1969-70; senior high enrollment in 1969-70 was 75 per cent higher than the 1960-61 enrollment.

Total enrollment in grades 1 through 12 has gradually increased until the 1969-70 enrollment is 22 per cent high than the 1960-61 enrollment.

"The 10-year average grade-to-grade survival ratios indicates an overall stable pattern in both systems," the survey team concluded.

Also reported along this line were:

(1) — The retention rate in both districts is higher in the first grade than in any other grade. The non-graded elementary program that has been implemented in Dover could be

expected to change this retention rate.

(2) — The increase in seventh grade enrollment can be attributed to children transferring from non-public schools after completing the elementary grades.

(3) — The dropout rate in grades 10 through 12, while not excessively high, indicates that the present program is not satisfactorily meeting the needs of some students.

Projections of the enrollments for Dover and New Philadelphia follow a somewhat similar pattern.

The projections for Dover are:

— A six-year projection of elementary school enrollments indicates a decline at the low projection and a slight increase followed by a decline on the high projection.

— Junior high enrollment will be stable for a four-year period followed by a decline at the low projection and a gradual increase at the high projection.

— The low projection for the senior high indicates a very stable enrollment for the six-year period while the high projection indicates a gradual increase.

The projections, for New Philadelphia are:

— The elementary school projection indicates a dramatic decline in enrollment at the low projection and a decline at the high.

— The junior high low projection indicates a stable enrollment for a three-year period followed by a decline. The high projection indicates a gradual increase in enrollment.

— The senior high enrollment

projections indicates a rather stable enrollment at the low projection and a gradual increase at the high projection.

"Even at the high projection, elementary school enrollments in grades 1 through 6 for the combined districts show a decrease of over 300 students by 1975-76," the survey team reported.

They stated that projections for junior high enrollment show a gradually declining enrollment at the low projection an increasing enrollment at the high projection.

Low projections indicate a very stable enrollment for the senior high school while high projections indicate a gradual increase.

(NEXT: Administrative structure and operation of the Dover school district.)