

Present Phila superintendent 'very open to change,' report says

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

The New Philadelphia city schools parallel the Dover city schools in many ways in terms of administrative structure and organization.

But there are some differences that can be found in comparing the emphases in the two districts. The numbers of personnel employed are very similar.

The superintendent historically has been responsible for initiating almost all program development actions and all decision-

making within the district. A primary consideration of the superintendent in decision making appears to be one of efficiency (minimizing costs).

The present superintendent (Dr. Philip Tieman), in his third year of service to the district, is very open to changing the system.

The assistant superintendent (Deo Steffen) has major responsibility for the business affairs of the district. He has responsibilities for personnel, federal programs and non-public school services financed with state or federal funds. Some of these responsibilities do not relate well to the central mission of this office. The position has both staff and line functions.

An elementary supervisor has

responsibilities in the area of kindergarten through grade 6 curriculum and supervisor. However, the role is not clearly defined within the administrative organization and there is some confusion on the part of district personnel as to whether the elementary supervisor is in a line or staff position.

The junior high and senior high each has its own administrative staff comprised of a principal and an assistant principal. Both principals deal primarily with giving leadership in the areas of curriculum and instruction, and delegate problems of discipline and attendance to the assistant principals.

The survey team again expressed its dislike with having the junior and senior highs in

the same building by pointing out:

"There are problems inherent in housing a program serving a student population with such a wide range in the same building.

"The departmental organization initiated one year ago appears to have great promise for strengthening individual programs and for providing better articulation of junior and senior high programs.

"The opportunities for total secondary school program development are limited. Few total faculty meetings or work sessions are held and there is no one at the central office level to facilitate and coordinate such action."

The survey team also took a

long look at the supervisory setup in the elementaries. This year the board of education acted to remedy shortcomings in this area by assigning 2 intern principals, teaching halftime and serving as principals as halftime, to two schools. That and other action taken has resulted in each building having a person serving in a supervisory capacity.

However, the report was in the preparation stage before this action and the survey team noted that there were five principals (or in reality four full-time equivalent principals) serving eight elementary school buildings.

"Their leadership has not been effective, partially because of their split assignments and because the lack of adequate

secretarial support shifts many time-consuming burdens to them. These principals have not been part of an effective administrative team and consequently elementary program development in the district has suffered," the team found.

Also pointed out was that almost all supervisory effort is focused on beginning teachers and teachers new to the district and that the elementary program is very traditional, with little effort expended in recent years to upgrade it.

The board of education's handbook of policies and regulations was described as comprehensive, but tending to be prescriptive, not making the necessary distinction between board policy and leaving ade-

quate latitude for the superintendent to establish administrative procedures.

The survey team found "teacher selection and budgeting have been controlled by the central office, although principals express a desire to be involved in these decisions affecting their schools."

Furthermore, it was pointed out that the centralization of decision-making and the lack of a strong district wide (K-12) instructional leadership has created a program development void.

"While there are a fair number of special service and resource personnel available, they are not utilized effectively by teachers," the survey team learned. "There is need for improved intra-district communication regarding availability of such services and improved

coordination of this source of service.

In-service programs for secondary school teachers exist, but need additional emphasis. In-service programs for elementary school teachers are practically non-existent and almost no effort has gone into in-service programs for district personnel other than teachers.

"In summary, the administrative organization of the New Philadelphia schools is very typical of many districts of this size," the team explained.

"The central office staff performs a multitude of functions. Decision-making has been highly centralized and educational program development has received inadequate attention."

(NEXT: Dover elementary school facilities.)