

Views aired at area hearing

County school board setup under scrutiny

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Don't tear down the building to get rid of the mice... just remodel.

That was essentially the advice received Wednesday night when seven representatives of the Ohio School Boards Assn. met with local board members and administrators in Buckeye Joint Vocational School.

William Lewis, immediate past president of the OSBA, presided over the third of six regional hearings scheduled around the state to hear pro and con opinion as part of an assessment study on the county board of education system in Ohio.

The hearings are designed to gain input on the present system of delivering education services, particularly between county and local districts, and any possible changes in the state structure of education.

LEWIS EXPLAINED that last year's

state convention mandated a needs assessment of the county school board system. He said a questionnaire would be mailed to board of education members in the state in the next 10-15 days.

Findings from that and the regional sessions will be compiled and presented to the OSBA in July. Any recommendations for change would then go to the state board of education, and from there, to the Legislature.

A group of 30 local and county superintendents and school board members from Tuscarawas, Stark and Columbiana counties were on hand last night to hear 13 different speakers express their opinion in a program that lasted 35 minutes longer than planned.

Among the speakers were C. Robert Thomas of the Tuscarawas County school board, Wayne Patterson from the Farm Bureau and Garaway board, Mrs. Mary Lee McClave of the Claymont and Buckeye Joint Vocational boards; Rich-

ard Ronald, county superintendent; Don Brown, Garaway superintendent; Larry Stucky, Indian Valley superintendent; and John Regula of Navarre and the Stark County board of education.

RONALD BRIEFLY pointed to the historical role of county boards in both the old and modern educational methods. "What we might call ourselves in the future is not as important as the continued service we must give," he said. "I admit some statutory requirements still on the books are antiquated. For example, I still have to sign work permits from the local schools and I may not have ever met the student.

"And, I admit, we don't do a good job of selling. Many local board members don't know what we do. But the answer is not tearing down the old, but changing for the new."

Regula, brother of U.S. Rep. Ralph Regula, R-Navarre, said that 20 years ago he felt the county board of education

had "run its course. But today we need an intermediate service agency... we just may not need 87 of them." (There are 87 county boards in Ohio.)

Brown said the Garaway district sends \$28,000 annually to the county board, "But if we were to keep that money ourselves and attempt to buy the same services provided (by the county), we would fall well short, and it would be the children who would suffer."

STUCKY SAID the entire discussion "is misdirected... we should be discussing not the county school board, but what services must and should be continued and how are they to be continued.

"Three factors must be taken into consideration," he said. "First is population base for proper financing, second is area topography, and third is distance.

These dictate what services you can deliver, and state standards plus local vocational needs dictate what you should deliver."