

Phila, Dover, IV schools cite growing levy needs

New Philadelphia, Dover and Indian Valley school districts will have requests for additional operating revenue resting on the outcome of Tuesday's election.

All three districts suffered setbacks during special elections in March when additional money requests were soundly defeated.

But school officials say the need hasn't lessened — it's increased if anything.

AT STAKE ARE: a 4.8-mill additional levy in New Philadelphia; a 2.5-mill levy in Dover, and a 5.5-mill levy in Indian Valley.

In addition, Dover is asking for renewal of a 2-mill operating levy while Indian Valley has placed a 1.5-mill additional levy for permanent improvements on the ballot. The three Tuscarawas County districts will have plenty of company across the state. According to Supt. Bill Kinneer of Dover 122 school districts will have additional money issues on the ballot Tuesday and another 77 districts will go to the voters with similar requests in November.

"Most of them are asking for 6, 8 and 10 additional mills," Kinneer said.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS, threatened so frequently that the electorate simply passes them off as scare tactics, now appear imminent in New Philadelphia and possibly Dover.

With inflation hitting the taxpayer, as well as schools, where it hurts the most — the pocketbook — voters in some districts have been willing to gamble and see if school officials are bluffing.

Kinneer, while noting the decision rests with the board of education, said if Dover's issue fails and is placed on the November ballot there's a good chance it could be higher because of inflationary factors.

He pointed out that the last federal controls were taken off the economy only April 30 and it can't be determined at this time how much higher costs will go.

BY THE END OF November 1975 it is estimated New Philadelphia school district will face a \$325,000 deficit if its 4.8-mill levy is not approved. School officials said it will be back on the ballot in November if voters fail to support it Tuesday.

That's only part of the financial woes facing New Philadelphia. Defeat of a 3.75-mill additional levy by voters last Nov. 6 meant the district lost \$270,000 in needed operating money, according to Supt. Ron Eikenberry. The result has

been budget cuts of \$153,000, including \$100,000 for staff salaries and the closing of the Stone Creek building.

Even with the cuts, Eikenberry explained, the district is expected to end 1974 with a \$40,000. If the 4.8-mill levy passes, money may have to be borrowed on it to complete this school year, he added.

In April, the board reaffirmed its position to close the schools in the winter of 1975 rather than make drastic program and budget cuts the 4.8-mill levy is not approved Tuesday.

To equate a \$325,000 deficit to staff cuts, Eikenberry said, would mean getting rid of at least 30 persons. It would be difficult to operate with that big of a staff cut, he added.

Eikenberry also said that recovery from such cuts would not be quick, noting that the district is still rebuilding an art program which was cut in the 1960s.

"I feel all possible cuts have been made," Eikenberry explained.

DOVER SCHOOLS have pegged anticipated 1974 operating costs at \$3,040,000. With the present staff, if salaries are increased and supplies are purchased at present levels at costs expected to increase, it is anticipated the district will need \$3,200,000 in 1975.

Passage of both levies Tuesday will enable the district to meet that kind of a budget. If both levies fail, however, the district will have \$2,885,000 to operate schools in 1975 — about \$315,000 less than needed.

✓ "Trying to operate in 1975 with this much of a deficit would probably cause a school closing in late November of 1975 for the remainder of 1975 and we would open again in January 1976," Supt. Kinneer said. "This would create financial problems of even greater proportion in 1976," he added.

Kinneer explained that if the 2-mill renewal passes and the 2.5-mill additional is defeated the district will have about \$3,025,000, or \$175,000 less than needed to

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maintain the present educational program.

"By reducing staff and cutting back on purchase of supplies and materials, it is possible to operate the schools without the 2.5-mill additional," Kinneer observed.

He emphasized, "This will have a definite effect on the quality of the educational program."

A number of cuts are being considered, including staff reductions, purchase of fewer supplies and materials, including textbooks and educational material, and purchasing new school buses less often.

INDIAN VALLEY school officials haven't gone so far as to threaten the closing of schools. In their promotional material, they are saying only, "The district will be in deep financial trouble if the levy (5.5 mills) is defeated."

While explaining out that the district faces a projected deficit of \$59,579 at the end of 1974, school officials also point to the fact that 1968 was the last time an operating levy passed in the Indian Valley district.

They argue that inflation and the cost of living has increased at a terrific rate. Gasoline, for example, cost the district 21 cents a gallon last year, but is now 36.1 cents per gallon. Ditto paper was 91 cents last year and \$1.50 this year.

Supt. Dale Shriver added that economy measures are already being instituted.

Proceeds from the 1.5-mill additional levy, which is to run five years, will be used to repair existing facilities and purchase equipment.

Indian Valley's board decided in January to go with the 1.5-mill improvement levy in May if a bond issue to construct a new high school near Tuscarawas was defeated at a special election in March.

The building issue, which was making its seventh appearance on the ballot, was turned down.