

Back to basics trend weighed by Dover school board

By KAY WILLIAMS

Possible trends towards a "return to the basics" in mathematics and increased emphasis on reading and writing skills were discussed by the Dover board of education Monday night.

Donna Moore, elementary coordinator, reported on a "Right to Read" workshop she attended recently and Park Elementary Principal Don Marshall was authorized to order a mathematics textbook series for elementary students which focuses on basic computational skills. The new textbooks will mark a change from the "new math" approach of recent years.

MISS MOORE noted that the current emphasis on reading was actually a revival of a program started in 1969 by the state board of education. After a few years, however, as funding diminished, the interest and emphasis also lagged.

The objective, she said, is to make reading a top priority in the education system, by spending more time on all

grade levels in teaching reading skills and encouraging independent reading.

Statistics, she reported, show that only 15 per cent of the adult population in the U.S. reads more than two books per year. She noted that students should be encouraged to do more reading on their own, especially if they are members of families which do not read much at home.

The program, which was endorsed by the board, includes the development of materials to be used by all classroom teachers to include reading improvement in each subject on all levels. "We need to work on this on the junior high and high school levels, and not just in the elementary schools," Miss Moore said.

THE RECOMMENDED math textbooks, Marshall said, will present a basic computational program, using a "back to the basics" approach to sound math skill development.

"The feeling of the textbook com-

mittee," he said, "is that it is important to teach each step slowly and make sure that the students know that step well before going on to something else."

The series, published by the MacMillan Co. and costing an estimated \$6743 for Kindergarten through 6th grade, also includes parent-child activity sheets designed to keep parents informed of the program.

The series, he said, "uses the advantages of traditional mathematics and the benefits of new mathematics."

BOARD MEMBERS also discussed English writing skills. "I wonder," Ed West commented, "whether our students really are prepared for college in things like sentence structure, spelling and punctuation."

Paul Koval, curriculum director, stated that in this area, too, the trend seemed to be going back to "standard English."

"For a while, there was a strong emphasis across the country on ideas and concepts. Now the shift is more towards standards."

"The time may come," Supt. Bill Kinneer noted, "when we may go back to a straight four-year high school English program, instead of the wide variety of courses offered now."

On recommendation of high school Principal Robert Schrock, the board approved a change in the wording of the Dover High diplomas, inserting the words "as approved by the State of Ohio." Previously, the diplomas only stated that the student had completed the requirements as prescribed by the local board of education.

Purchase of two new buses were approved. The Carpenter bodies, at \$6030 each, will be purchased from Myers Equipment Corp. of Canfield, which submitted the lowest bid. Only one bid for the GMC chassis was received, for \$10,150 each from Austin GMC Corp. of Dover.

In compliance with federal requirements, the board adopted a Title IX grievance procedure, to resolve any complaints which may be received from students or employees about discrimination because of sex. Kinneer was designated as the compliance officer, to investigate complaints.

Don Peters, administrative assistant, reported that procedures against sexual discrimination would be incorporated, as policy, with other procedures protecting civil rights.

MRS. NORMA HARDWIDGE, clerk-treasurer, informed the board that the recently completed state audit of the Dover books, covering a 3½ year period, resulted in a favorable report. The official notification will not be available for several weeks, but the clerk said conversations with the state examiner indicated there were no major errors or violations cited.

Peters reviewed the Title IV-ESEA program, noting that federal ESEA

funds to the Dover school district have been reduced in recent years, while the "buying power" of the money has been further diminished by inflation.

Money from Title IV, amounting to \$2765, will be used for a microfilm project, to provide films of magazine articles, some of them dating back to 1929, for use by high school English and social studies classes. Eventually, he said, the project could include microfilms of local newspapers.

IN OTHER business, the board:

— GRANTED maternity leaves to two teachers, Jane Hatcher and Beverly Kirkbride.

— APPROVED home instruction for two elementary students because of injuries and one high school girl because of pregnancy.

— HIRED a new teacher aide at East Elementary and named six persons to the substitute teacher list.

— ADOPTED the state-required policy for handling activity funds, with Kinneer to approve the purpose and budgets of each activity account.