

No financial help in sight, teachers are told

By GREG WULIGER

T-R Bureau Writer

COLUMBUS — Representatives of the state administration told teachers from Dover and New Philadelphia Wednesday that despite claims by Republicans, the Democratic administration of Gov. John J. Gilligan could forecast no budget surplus to help out the two financially distressed districts.

John B. Olsen of the Office of Budget and Management, an assistant and State Rep. William E. Hinig (D-New Philadelphia) met with representatives from the two districts here.

Donald R. Keller, president of the Dover Education Assn., described the session this way:

"Most of the time, in my opinion, was spent explaining why they couldn't foresee any way they could be of service to

us until we could convince the voting public of the need for more money to work with."

Keller presented a statement to Olsen and Hinig in which he said: "In our school districts, we find that the inflationary costs are far exceeding additional funds."

DAVID MYERS, president of the New Philadelphia Education Assn., said he "didn't receive any encouragement" from the meeting, "except they do seem to be aware of the over all problem."

Myers said the problem was, "no money... the cost of living, the cost of everything, is going up so fast."

New Philadelphia school officials say they will have to close in the fall of 1975 without more funds. Dover officials say they can remain open if there are cuts in their operating expenses.

Approximately 250 teachers from the two districts were in Columbus, but less than 25 met with Olsen and Hinig. The contingent included Supt. Bill Kinneer of Dover. The other 225 went to a briefing at the headquarters of the Ohio Education Assn. — the teachers' lobby.

As announced Tuesday, the teachers did introduce proposals for a reform of educational funding in the state, including a \$1000 minimum in state foundation support per student, geared to the cost of living. They also proposed that the federal government collect the state income tax. It was suggested this would save the state the cost of collection, which could then be passed on to the schools.

KELLER SAID he was angered that State Sen. Douglas Applegate (D-Steubenville) did not show up for the meeting. Applegate expressed great anger when told of Keller's irritation, and in

strong language said he had other things to do besides attending the meeting with the teachers.

The text of Keller's proposal to improve school financing follows:

"Most of our proposals are designed to prevent the yearly scramble for funds that face our school district and many other districts in Ohio. They are also designed to allow for a more equitable distribution of funds to the school districts, and a more equitable and far cheaper method of collecting these funds. As an educator, I would much rather see money spent on education than on tax collection."

"First, in regard to immediate needs of the Dover district. While it is true the district is receiving \$354,000 in additional state funding due to the state income tax, we still show a minimum projected deficit of \$203,000 by the end of 1975.

Since the passage of the state income tax, we have not passed a local levy. We have suffered three successive defeats.

"The people of Dover remind us that first they passed an income tax to 'solve the school funding problem.' They have directed us to get the necessary funds from the state and that is one reason we are here.

"The schools are virtually the only public systems that must return year after year to the ballot box to obtain funding. We have become a symbol of what the public feels is excessive taxation and the object of the taxpayers' revolt.

"The additional 25 per cent per pupil state funding we propose is the minimum required to allow our districts to continue to operate through 1975 without substantial cutbacks in staff, supplies, and most importantly, services to the pupils.

"IN OUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS, we find that the inflationary costs are far exceeding additional funds. Where our school districts used to benefit yearly from local growth in the total tax evaluation of the district, the current foundation of the district, the current foundation program calls for a reduction in foundation monies almost equal to the gain in local tax revenue.

"The proposed personal property tax reduction, while it does have a two-year hold-fast clause, would again prohibit a school district from realizing any increased funds from increase in values. Since the guarantee must come from state funds, this would reduce money available for increased funding of education.

"It would also seem that communities such as ours, which are currently eco-

From A-1 . . .

No surplus, teachers are told

nomically stable, would be gambling greatly that the economic growth stimulated by the personal property tax reduction would equal the eight-year declining personal property tax figures. I might also point out that to remain in a hold-fast financial state, for a school district, is really to fall behind as costs continue to escalate.

“In order to prevent the constant recurrence of the funding problems in our schools, we have proposed ideas for your consideration in future programs. Whatever program is adopted, we feel that it must meet some basic criteria as follows:

“(1) — Funding should be based on a minimum per pupil guarantee with remaining funds distributed to the school districts in proportion to funds generated in that district.

“(2) — Districts should have a two-year guarantee period.

“(3) — There should be provisions for building and maintenance capital.

“(4) — There must be an automatic cost of living adjustment.

“(5) — Tax collection should be on an equitable basis, in the most economic way possible.”