

May 1918

State Normal School

HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

Monday

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Dear Mr. Burruss,

I have thought over your note very carefully.

I was strongly opposed to this plan proposed in faculty meeting of putting this matter of "making up" on a definite basis, thus taking away the instructor's right to excuse safe students. This had been, ^{to me,} a valued right in the past. When it was proposed that every absence for illness be marked zero until "made up" in a way satisfactory to the teacher, when this zero should be removed, I opposed it with what voice I had. I said it would be very hard to meet them at the foot of the infirmary stairs "with their eyes weak from measles" with a definite ruling like this, which we should not then be able to get around without injuring their sense of justice as well as our own. I said if we made this rule it would require of us so much time and strength and back-bone to carry it out that it never could work satisfactorily. I even laid

aside civility enough to say that if made
it might easily be forgotten by some
and this would make it very hard for those
who should "abide by the constitution." I was
thinking about Mr. Johnston's comfortable
ways at the time. But I never dreamed
that it would work out like this. The
faculty voted for it — thus taking away
my right to excuse, as we have
always done in the past in case of sane
students. I felt very sorry, foreseeing ^{it was difficult}
^{I couldn't say how, I should have had time for my multitudes, too.}
The girls knew, not from me, but I suppose
from yr announcement in Chapel that work
missed had been put on a more definite
basis — not just left to be absorbed, as often before,
by the consent of the teacher. So right away
they began coming to me asking for definitely
assigned tasks to "make up" this or that
justifiable absence. I have exhausted my wits,
almost, finding forty-five minute tasks — trying
to make them fair & so the girls could see them
as fair. I have cut cruelly into my own precious
time again and again by giving oral work to
those who were just out of measles. I have had
dozens clamoring for assignments. I never heard one
hint of complaint until after Dallas Warren (who is a

She ought to be excused. But I'm not going to excuse her. Nothing less than the assembly society can do that. For they voted this thing. The girls know it. They will do's vote it in their minds. I will take some action, so as not to confine stirring with merely S.P.C.

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very safe English student) has come out of the infirmary. Then the Seniors began to look "put upon" somehow. I had no idea why. I ^{had} offered Dallas opportunity to take her entire ex'n orally. She preferred to take half of it written. Then she, when we were counting up all that back work, said that her other teachers, or some of her other teachers, required no making up. I then found Grace Fisher almost defiant in her attitude. She looked at me as my students have not usually done and said, "Mr. Burruss didn't require us to do anything to make this up." I said, "I haven't a thing to do with that. I don't need to know how he counts it up in his class. I don't have to see after Mr. Burruss. In some things it is his province to see after me. And he asked me to see after you in this, and I am doing it. One still

Even a quiz assigned her because
grammar was the point she needs
most to strengthen will count
for two days." And I gave it to
her this morning, of course; and
she finished the two days
work in the forty-five min-
utes.

I have been and am so troubled
about the hardship that this ruling
is asking to work these girls
just out of measles that I
tried to see you Saturday evening
to ask you to call a very brief
faculty meeting and let us record
this action in favor of the weak-eye
convalescents. But you were sur-
rounded by girls and the conver-
sation seemed interesting, so I wouldn't
break in. Of course I never dreamed
that I could be the topic. I waited
around, but they hurried then I thought
you ought to go to supper. We ought to do

This, I feel sure, by special action of the faculty right away. Either these
recent measles patients must come back or be offered release definitely.

They take their own time. Dallas Warren