

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL
HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

April 21, 1917.

The Honorable, The Virginia Normal School Board:

Gentlemen:

In the annual report of the Harrisonburg school dated June 30, 1916, the request was made that this institution be given authority to offer after the present year the third year of a four-year course of professional training for high school teaching. The favorable reception given to this recommendation at the annual meeting prompts the bringing of this matter to your attention again with the further request that final action be taken on it at this meeting in order that the forthcoming annual catalog, which is soon to go to press, may contain the proper announcements for the coming academic year.

It will be recalled that at the spring meeting last year the State Normal School at Farmville was authorized to offer a four-year course of professional training leading to the B. S. degree. It is now requested that this privilege be extended to the school at Harrisonburg, and for the following reasons:

First. The chief reason for having four normal schools in Virginia is geographical. Obviously each school must seek to serve its own particular territory primarily, meeting such demands as this territory may make upon it. These demands fall under two heads, namely, those arising from its patronage and those arising from the schools which it is to supply with teachers. That there is such a demand on the part of patrons is attested by the fact that so large a number have asked to be prepared to teach in high schools. That there is such a demand on the part of the schools for high school teachers is shown by the calls coming into the school, a large number of which are not met.

In the territory necessarily served by this school are located 32% of the high schools of Virginia. A large number of graduates coming to us from these high schools demand preparation for high school teaching, often with a view to returning for work in their home high schools; and this large number of high schools is demanding teachers prepared to do their work. They cannot secure college graduates. They have a right to look to their own normal school to supply them.

Students choosing to attend this particular school do so for a reason. In many cases they would attend no normal school did they not come here. In most cases to force them to go elsewhere, to another section of the state, would work a hardship on them not only as to expense but as to more personal considerations. The environment of this school is different from others. It serves a different type of people, their racial characteristics are different. Our people are acclimated to this section. The consequence of these facts is that in many cases students who come to this school would refuse to go to other sections. To deny the opportunity for adequate preparation here would be to lessen the efficiency of the teachers in the high schools of this section of the state as compared to other more fortunate sections, and it would also discriminate to the disadvantage of young women living in the Valley and Piedmont sections of the State.

Second. We now have at this school ~~thirty-nine~~ ^{forty} students pursuing the two-year course leading to high school teaching, ~~four~~ ^{five} of whom are in their last year of the present two-year course. Unless the course is extended these students will be barred from further preparation for their life work as high school teachers.

They are not able to attend a private institution. Their idea of loyalty to this normal school is such that they could hardly be induced to go for the two advanced years of the course to another normal school. If they are given no further opportunity here they will go into their work half made up and the high schools of this section of the state will suffer accordingly.

The number taking the course will probably be greatly increased when it is definitely announced that the course here will be the equivalent of that at any other Virginia normal school.

Third. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is conducting a study of teacher training courses, and as far as they have gone, basing their proposed curricula particularly on a study of the Missouri state normal schools, they have recommended four-year courses for the preparation of high school teachers.

Moreover, even a layman can readily appreciate the fact that a teacher of high school branches should have herself studied at least four years in advance of the subject-matter she is teaching.

Fourth. One-third of the students at this school are taking the special course in Household Arts. To properly prepare them for this extremely technical line of work it is necessary to include so many different branches that it is practically impossible to do the work in two years. In the search for a remedy we have extended this special course downward into our Sophomore, or fourth-year high school class; but it should be extended upward instead, and made to cover four years.

Fifth. A pre-requisite to the administration of such a course is a capable and sufficiently large faculty to do the work properly, together with the necessary equipment, such as library and laboratory facilities. It is respectfully submitted that the faculty at this school is not inferior in any respect whatever to the faculty at any of the other three normal schools. It is also large enough to handle the extended course without any increase in the number of instructors. Our equipment in library and other facilities is also as adequate as that of other institutions.

Sixth. To extend the course as indicated would involve no increased cost at this school. A larger maintenance fund is needed for other reasons, but this addition to the work offered would not increase the amount now needed.

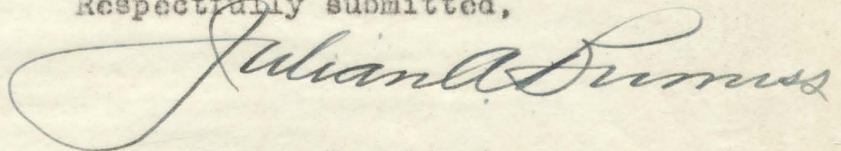
Seventh. This school at present gives two years of high school work and two years of professional work. The school at Farmville gives four years of high school work and four years of professional work. The schools at Fredericksburg and Radford give four years of high school work and two years of professional work. It is requested that Harrisonburg be permitted to increase its four years to six years by adding two years at the top rather than at the bottom. Even then it would be giving only six years as against Farmville's eight years. It does not seem desirable to take here a backward step by adding the first two years of the high school course, which were eliminated six years ago. On the other hand it would seem logical that, inasmuch as this school has taken this advanced stand it should be encouraged by

being permitted to advance to the same extent as any other school in the Virginia Normal School system.

Eighth. Attention may be called to the fact that the report of the Committee on Courses adopted during the first year of the administration of the Board, declared it to be the policy of the Board to develop the four schools on a co-ordinate basis, the understanding being that each school would be permitted to add to its two-year course the other two years as the needs became manifest.

For the reasons cited, it is requested that this school be now authorized to announce in its catalog, which is about to be printed, the extension of its courses to cover four years, and that the third-year work be offered for the session of 1917-18 and the fourth year work in 1918-19. It is further respectfully urged that this matter be definitely determined at this meeting of the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Julian A. Sumner". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

President