

Dec. 23, 1924.

Mr. Harris Hart,

Richmond, Va.

My dear Mr. Hart:

Our county school board and representatives of six of our high schools desire to appear before the State Board of Education at its regular January meeting in reference to the effect the new high school regulations will have on our system of high schools in this county. I feel that this is a matter of so fundamental importance to our whole school system in the county that the delegation should have a careful hearing.

It is my wish to have a preliminary discussion of the problem with you and I wish to know if you could see me at your office on the 29th, 30th, or 31st of December, preferably in the afternoon at 2 o'clock or later.

Trusting that you may have a full share of the season's joys, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Division Superintendent

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND

December 26, 1924

Eng.

file
Superintendent O. L. Emerick
Purcellville, Virginia

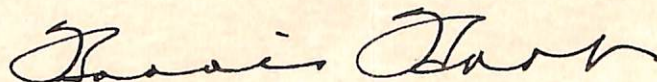
My dear Mr. Emerick:

I shall be very glad to see you on
Monday the twenty-ninth. I hope you can arrange
to be at the Department promptly by two o'clock.

After our conversation, we can arrange
for the appearance of your delegation before the
State Board at its next meeting.

With best wishes, I am

Yours very truly



Harris Hart
Superintendent of Public Instruction

HH:P

file

December 30, 1924.

Mr. M. L. Combs,
Richmond, Va.

My dear Mr. Combs:

I had hoped to see you yesterday during my brief visit at the office in Richmond. I had gone there to make arrangements with Mr. Hart to have a delegation of about twenty-five people from Loudoun heard by the State Board on the high school situation.

It has been necessary for me to defend you on a number of occasions since your reports came back to our schools. One gentleman stated he was going to write an article in the papers with you as the subject. I persuaded him by considerable effort that such a course would be quite unreasonable and he dropped the idea.

A delegation has been organized in the county as follows: Each of six schools has elected three representative citizens and the whole county schools board, the superintendent of schools, and commonwealth's attorney have been added thereto. This delegation has in it our state senator, a former delegate, four members of the board of supervisors, two bank presidents, a number of bank directors, etc. It was proposed that the State Board be asked to modify its ruling as to the attendance requirement so that in the case of schools already accredited there would be some discretion left in the matter of accrediting schools with less than the minimum set up.

Mr. Hart suggested to me that this seemed reasonable, that he would confer with you and Mr. Sanger and endeavor, if you three could agree, to work out a resolution to place before the State Board at its next meeting that would meet the situation and further to get advance sanction of the resolution by a sufficient number of members of the board beforehand so that the necessity for the appearance of our delegation would be removed. I agreed to this.

After having had plenty of time to observe the reaction of our people to the effect of the new attendance requirement is having, and undoubtedly would have in the future on our high schools I reach the unalterable conclusion that so far as this county is concerned our schools as a whole will be seriously injured and the people will not have the proper confidence in their educational

Page 2

Mr. M. L. C.

leaders if the present requirement stands and is enforced.

For years we have been leading the people in Louisa toward the organization of standard high schools. The leadership and initiative came from outside the communities of the schools effected. Having led them thus far for a number of years we propose to tell them it is all wrong. It is not human nature to accede to the reasonableness of this. Any measure that would destroy at one fell stroke the confidence of one-half or more of the people of a county certainly must need careful re-consideration.

I trust that you will think favorably of what Mr. Hart will suggest in this matter.

I do not want you to think I was ignoring the ~~re~~ pre-rogatives of your position in this matter. My visit to Mr. Hart was to make arrangements for the visit of our delegation. As I see it and have repeatedly stated you could only follow the regulations of the State Board now in effect and ~~any~~ ought not to be asked to depart from them in accrediting schools.

With best wishes, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

Division Superintendent.

OLF-RMV

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND

December 31, 1924.

Supt. O. L. Emerick
Purcellville, Virginia

Dear Mr. Emerick:

Let me thank you for your letter of the 30th instant.

I am very sorry indeed that I did not see you during your visit to the Department.

I have not had an opportunity to confer with Mr. Hart with reference to the high school situation in Loudoun County, but I should be inclined to recommend to the State Board that we accredit the Waterford School in Loudoun for this session, because at present a small section of the road between Waterford and Leesburg is unimproved. Of course, this would be upon condition that certain minor deficiencies, such as unsatisfactory sanitary conditions, be improved. The enrollment at Unison-Bloomfield is so very low that I should hesitate to recommend that it be accredited after this year. I am willing, however, to accredit this school for this session, even with its low enrollment, if the other conditions outlined in my previous letter to the principal are met. I can see no excuse for the existence of the Lucketts High School as a separate unit, since it is only six miles from Leesburg and on a splendid highway, but if some plan of consolidation between Lucketts and Leesburg can be effected by another year, I am willing to accredit Lucketts School this session.

I realize that it was rather a shock to the people of these three communities to have these schools removed from the accredited list, and they certainly would not have been dropped if it had not been for the fact that I found them so far below the minimum standards for accrediting that I could not conscientiously accredit them under the regulations of the State Board of Education.

I see no necessity for the appearance of your delegation, and I am glad that you prevented it. I assure you this Department desires to do whatever is reasonable and right with respect to your division.

However, I am not willing to ask the State Board of Education to change the standards for accrediting high schools in order to meet the conditions in one county. It would be far better, in my opinion, to make an exception in Loudoun than to change the State regulations.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours


Supervisor Secondary Education.

January 3, 1925.

Mr. M. L. Combs,
Richmond, Va.

My dear Mr. Combs:

I have your letter of December 31st and thank you for your prompt reply to my letter.

On the basis of what you write I could not suggest to our delegation that it is not necessary for them to appear before the State Board on January 20th as I am sure your proposal would not be satisfactory to them. The representatives of the six schools, Lucketts, Waterford, Aldie, Unison-Bloomfield, Lovettsville, and Hillsboro are thinking of the future as well as present status of their schools, and so is our county school board.

I should be glad if it could be made unnecessary from the view-point of the delegation to appear before the State Board and the suggestion made to me by Mr. Hart would make it unnecessary but I gained the impression from him that he would not wish to act except in accord with you in this matter.

Will you kindly write me just how you compute the per capita cost of instruction for the high school and elementary grades as provided by section 11 of the "Requirements for Accredited High Schools"? Is it correct to add together salaries of all high school teachers of a particular school, divide the total by the number of pupils enrolled in that school then add salaries of all elementary teachers white and colored in county and divide by the number of pupils enrolled in such schools and use these two quotients for comparison in determining whether thirty-five or fifty is the minimum number of pupils required in a particular school? Does the fifty mean enrollment or average attendance? Both expressions are used in section 11.

I am sure you think we are very troublesome. However, we have called into consultation some of our best minds and many of our "older heads". They all feel that an injury would be done under the present regulation and nobody yet can see any reason for doing such an injury to our schools.

I trust that you and Mr. Hart will talk over this whole matter and that one of you will write me after your conversation.

Very sincerely yours,

Division Superintendent.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND

January 5, 1924.

file

Supt. O. L. Emerick:
Purcellville, Virginia

My dear Mr. Emerick:

I have your letter of the 3rd instant, and am frank to say that I am at a loss to know just what the people of your county desire or expect.

You state in your letter that the representatives of these schools were thinking of the future status of their schools and that they expected to come before the State Board of Education to ask that the new regulations be changed so that these schools could be accredited in the future. I can hardly see why this delegation should be so much worried over the new regulations when, as a matter of fact, no one of the three schools dropped from the list met the old requirements for accrediting that had been in effect since 1919. For instance, the old regulations stated that an enrollment of not less than thirty-five pupils must be maintained in the high school department if a school was to be accredited. In this connection I wish to refer you to Paragraph 6, p. 6, of the old Manual and Courses of Study for the High Schools of Virginia. Now, the Unison-Bloomfield High School had an enrollment at the time I inspected it a few weeks ago of twenty-three, Lucketts High School had an enrollment of twenty-six, and the Waterford School an enrollment in the high school department of thirty. You must admit that all of these schools were falling below the minimum enrollment as provided in the old regulations.

In addition to insufficient enrollment they were also found to be below minimum requirements with reference to laboratory apparatus and equipment, teachers' certificates, and sanitary conditions, all of which would have kept the schools from being accredited under the old regulations that had been in effect for six years. Now, I hardly think it is fair or reasonable for a delegation from Loudoun to come before the State Board of Education and ask it to lower its standards, even those regulations that were in effect for six years, in order that schools in one county of the State may be accredited under such conditions. As I wrote you on December 31, I am perfectly willing to recommend to the State Board of Education that it make any reasonable exceptions to any community in Loudoun County that is inaccessible to another high school, but I am not willing to ask the State Board of Education to change its regulations so as to permit these schools to be accredited under all the unsatisfactory conditions that I found existing. There might be, for instance, a reasonable excuse for continuing schools on the accredited list, even though they fell below the minimum enrollment, if they were meeting the other regulations in a satisfactory manner, but there is no excuse for inadequate libraries, inadequate laboratory equipment, unsatisfactory laboratory work, insanitary conditions, teachers teaching subjects for which they do not hold certificates, and teachers in charge of as high as fifty-one pupils in three different grades. If it had been found that these three schools were meeting the old regulations in a satisfactory manner, they would have been continued on the accredited list.

Furthermore, Mr. Emerick, I do not think it wise or to the best interest of these schools that are being represented for this delegation to appear before

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND

the State Board of Education. You frankly admit that there are three other schools that are not meet requirements with reference to enrollment and possibly other particulars. Now, if this delegation appears, it is natural to assume that all of the defects of the high schools of the county will be unearthed, and it will be necessary for a representative of this Department to return to Loudoun and make a thorough inspection of all the high schools. I tell you frankly that I gave up the idea of visiting any other high schools in Loudoun after I found the conditions in the three that I inspected, because I was afraid that it would be necessary for me to remove others from the accredited list. I am not trying to block any effort on the part of the school authorities to bring their case to the State Board of Education, but if the case comes before the State Board of Education I shall have to be very frank in regard to some of the conditions that I found in some of these high schools. It might be well, therefore, for you to suggest to your school board and to these representatives that they be a little cautious in their efforts to change the State regulations.

You are probably aware of the fact that all states in the Union have a standard with reference to a minimum enrollment in the high school department, and many of these states require an enrollment of seventy-five and some of them as high as one hundred or more. The Virginia requirement in this respect is very reasonable.

I conferred with Mr. Hart with reference to the situation in Loudoun, and showed him a copy of the letter which I wrote you on December 31st. He stated that nothing could be more reasonable than my attitude towards these schools. I do not know what Mr. Hart indicated to you, but he certainly gave me the impression that the State Board of Education would not be asked to change its regulation with reference to enrollment in the high schools of the State, but if all other conditions were met in the schools of Loudoun county, an exception might be made with reference to enrollment in the one or two schools that are isolated because of impassable roads. Mr. Hart is away from the office at the present time, but will return by Friday or Saturday.

You are doubtless aware of the fact, Mr. Emerick, that standards are absolutely necessary and that the low ranking of Virginia educationally in the past has been partly due to the fact that our standards have not been high enough, and that schools have not always been held up to the standards that happened to be in existence. As I have assured you before, this Department does not want to be unreasonable, and we wish to do whatever is right with reference to your situation, but while some people in Loudoun County are clamoring for standards to be lowered, I think I can safely say that the majority of the people in the State are in favor of the new regulations and desire them to be enforced. No law or regulation can be passed that does not seem to work a hardship in some individual cases. We have no desire to embarrass you or your school board, and the only thing that the Department of Education desires is to improve the high schools of the State generally.

If you expect to be in Richmond any time soon, I suggest that you make an engagement to have a conference with Mr. Hart and me with reference to your high school situation. I feel sure that we can come to some understanding that will be satisfactory to all concerned.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours


Supervisor Secondary Education

January 7, 1921.

Mr. M. L. Combs,
Richmond, Va.

My dear Mr. Combs:

Your letter has been received. I think that if you could find it possible to come to Loudoun and let me call the delegation including the school board together for a conference with you we might accomplish something. Our regular school board meeting date is on X January 13th and this would be the most suitable time for us, although we could arrange the matter on another date if more suitable to you. The conference should be held at least a few days before the next meeting of the State Board of Education.

I am making this suggestion because I do not feel inclined to assume responsibility for accepting an invitation as acceptable to our people without consulting them about the matter and I could not see that my return to Richmond could accomplish the desired purpose.

If you will care I shall do my best to see that you are extended the proper courtesy by our ~~representative~~ delegation.

Will you kindly give me the names of gentlemen my certain costs stand for in your last letter?
Please wire me if you can come.

Very sincerely yours,

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND

January 6, 1924.

file copies

Supt. O. L. Emerick
Purcellville, Virginia

My dear Mr. Emerick:

I find that I overlooked one paragraph of your letter on yesterday in which you asked how to compute the per capita cost of instruction in the high school and the elementary grades as provided by Section 11 for accrediting.

The procedure outlined in your letter is correct, if you mean that the salaries of the high school teachers only are to be considered and that the pupils enrolled in the high school department are to be considered. In other words, the salaries of the high school teachers, including the principal, should be added together and the total divided by the number of pupils enrolled in the high school department. Then the salaries of all of the elementary teachers of the county should be added together, and the total divided by the number of pupils enrolled in the elementary schools. These two quotients are to be used for comparison in determining whether or not a school meets the conditions outlined in Section 7. The minimum enrollment mentioned in these requirements means an average attendance.

Let me say again that this Department is ready to accredit any high schools in Loudoun County that meet the old requirements which have been in effect for many years.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours

M. C. Bonds
Supervisor Secondary Education.

MLC/D

January 7, 1925.

Supt. Harris Hart,
Richmond, Va.

My dear Mr. Hart:

I have had some correspondence with Mr. Combs about our high school troubles and have finally suggested that before the next meeting of the State Board he come to Loudoun to meet the delegation which is ready to appear before the State Board. I should be much pleased if you could come with him and it might possibly aid the situation some.

In the meantime will you kindly write me whether it will be acceptable that our county school board and accompanying delegation appear before the State Board on January 20th at about 3:00 P. M. provided it seems necessary from our viewpoint that we appear.

Very sincerely yours,

Division Superintendent.

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND

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January 9, 1925

Loudoun County

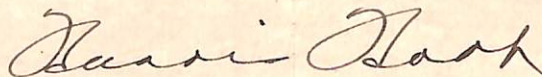
Superintendent O. L. Emerick
Purcellville, Virginia

My dear Mr. Emerick:

Soon after your visit when I saw the letter Mr. Combs had written you, it occurred to me that the policy outlined was just as satisfactory for Loudoun county as any action of the State Board could possibly be. I really thought that we would have more latitude using our discretion in accordance with this letter than we would likely have if the matter came up before the State Board for express action. If, however, you and members of your board feel that the conditions set up in this letter do not meet your needs and want to present the matter before the State Board, we shall be very glad indeed to have you appear at about three-thirty or four on January 20. The Board will probably not adjourn for lunch until late.

With best wishes, I am

Yours very truly



Harris Hart
Superintendent of Public Instruction

HH:P

January 10, 1925.

Mr. Harris Hart,
Richmond, Va.

My dear Mr. Hart:

Your letter of January 9th in which you state that our delegation can be heard at about 3:30 or 4 P. M. on January 20th has been received and I wish to thank you.

I think the entire delegation will be glad if it can still be made to seem unnecessary from our view-point for us to make the trip to Richmond on the 20th. We have been proceeding upon the basis of what we thought to be a settled fact that nothing could be done for our high schools which did not absolutely meet the requirements as to enrollment after this year except through action of the State Board. I gained this impression from my conversation with you also.

Mr. Combs letter which he stated he had showed you upset my line of thinking somewhat but this would be satisfactory except for the very uncertain status in which it leaves the whole high school situation next year and we are looking for ~~the~~ now to taking up our ^{summing the whole matter up in a few paragraphs} budget and other school needs for 1925-26. I think that those schools in Loudoun County which were accredited last

year, including Waterford, Lucketts, and Unison-Bloomfield should be continued as accredited high school. This is based upon what I consider to be true facts in the matter, the chief of which are: The schools are maintaining as high a level of efficiency as the average three-teacher accredited high schools of Virginia and will better serve in the promotion of educational advancement when our county is considered in the whole than if they were not continued as accredited schools.

I believe in setting up standards and have worked as well as I could toward having this county recognize and meet the standards set up. Having the standards and enforcing them has improved education. However, I do believe that new standards can not be based upon the ideal conditions/^{more} than upon what is the real condition of the schools to be affected. It seems to be an actual fact that none of our nine four-year high schools now meet the requirements set up in section 11 of the high school requirements, except Leesburg and Lincoln. It is moderately discouraging to undertake to carry on our work with such a regulation affecting us. Our high schools have been the hearts in our school life. Whenever one of them is eliminated there will be a corresponding diminution in the flow of the life's blood of our educational system.

I am looking for some further communication from Mr.

Combs in this matter and it does not seem necessary that you take the trouble to answer this letter.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND

January 13, 1925

Loudoun County

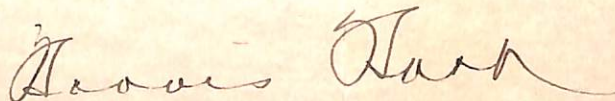
Superintendent O. L. Emerick
Purcellville, Virginia

My dear Mr. Emerick:

I have read with interest your letter of January 10. This letter I am asking Mr. Combs to read, and after conference with him, which owing to his absence must be delayed for a few days, I shall be very glad to write you.

With best wishes, I am

Yours very truly

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harris Hart".

Harris Hart
Superintendent of Public Instruction

HH:P