

Normal Training — At What Colleges — University of Montana.

Under Section 8 of Chapter 114, Session Laws of 1917, normal training may be given at any of the colleges of the University of Montana as well as at the Normal College.

June 26, 1919.

Miss May Trumper,
Superintendent of Public Instruction,
Helena, Montana.

Dear Miss Trumper:

You have requested my construction of Section 8 of Chapter 114 of the 1917 Session Laws as to whether the twelve weeks of normal training required therein is met by educational work at the College of Science and Literature at Missoula, the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts at Boeman, or the School of Mines at Butte, as well as the Normal School at Dillon.

I am unable to see in this provision any intended discrimination as to the various colleges constituting the State University. The Act requires twelve weeks of normal training, and is a subdivision of an act to provide normal training and junior college courses in high schools. Normal School is defined by the Century Dictionary Encyclopedia as: "A school in which teachers are instructed in the principles of their profession and trained in the practice of it. A training college for teachers." And in the article on normal schools in the International Encyclopedia as: "In general, any institution for the professional training of teachers; a school for the training of elementary school teachers, carried on usually by the state, sometimes by private enterprise, which receives students who have had more or less high school training, and gives them academic and professional courses."

In our state there is a rapidly increasing demand for trained teachers to meet the requirements of our common schools. The legislature has attempted to meet this demand by various provisions, some of which are teachers' institute, or the summer school courses in lieu thereof, the provisions of Chapter 114 above referred to, and the last legislature attempted to greatly increase the number of normal schools in the state.

It is therefore unreasonable to suppose that the legislature intended to limit the training of teachers to one school, and thereby greatly congest and overcrowd this institution. It is more reasonable to suppose that if such meaning was intended, it could very easily have said "twelve weeks of normal training at the, or a, normal school." It is my opinion that what was intended by this subdivision was merely to require a minimum of normal training. This training could manifestly be secured at any place where the course of study and training given is such as leading educators generally recognize as essential in training in the art of teaching. If such course of study and training are given at the University at Missoula or at that part of the University located at Bozeman, or Butte, or at any other school, it is my opinion that this constitutes normal training within the meaning of this provision. To hold otherwise would be to say that only that part of the teaching profession employed at normal schools is competent to give instruction in normal training.

Very respectfully,

S. C. FORD,

Attorney General.