

# Mary C.C. Bradford's Contribution to the Colorado Curriculum: 1913-1918

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## Abstract

Mary C.C. Bradford became Colorado's 6<sup>th</sup> female State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1913. She revamped the previous curriculum and published its predecessor in 1918. Entitled "A War-Modified Course of Study for the Public Schools of Colorado," this curriculum was influenced by the current economic and political situation affecting America at this time as a result of the countries participation in the First World War. This article will discuss this new curriculum.

Mary C.C. Bradford, elected as Colorado's State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1913, was the sixth female in a row to occupy this role (Burlbaw et al 2006). She continued programs currently in place, the consolidation of rural schools and began new initiatives, the plan to standardize all of Colorado's schools. This article explores Bradford's tenure as State Superintendent and the initiatives she continued and began, concluding with the new curriculum that was researched, developed, and published under her supervision.

In her first term as State Superintendent (1913-1914), Bradford continued the rural school consolidation plan begun under her predecessor resulting in more consolidated schools and improved school conditions for the majority of Colorado children. Now that the quality of buildings and instruction were improving, Bradford had to make sure that children throughout the state were getting the same quality education. She initiated a plan to standardize instruction across the state.

On June 18, 1914, she officially sent out the first Standardization Proclamation and laid out her plan of "scoring the schools of Colorado" to the county superintendents. During the next meeting of the State Association of County Superintendents, the plan was formally adopted and Bradford officially called her plan, "Colorado Plan of Standardization" (*Colorado School Journal* 1920, 6). She acknowledged in 1915 that this undertaking would require a great amount of clerical and administrative work in her first term as State Superintendent. According to the *Colorado School Journal* in 1920, "This plan has been called by various school authorities throughout the nation the sanest and most practical plan of standardization yet adopted in the country" (1920, 6).

A state committee, with the help of the State Superintendent, developed a plan which included grading or re-grading school systems so the quality of education could be compared across the schools in the state. Once graded, the schools were given a ranking of standard, moderate, or excellent. Colorado celebrated this process and initiated festive activities in nearly 5,000 school buildings across the state (Bradford 1915). This initial assessment required educators across Colorado to spend time making sure their schools buildings were adequate and that every child had the same advantages no matter if they lived in the city or rural communities. Once this was accomplished they concentrated on making sure the academics were the same across the state and that all children had a fair opportunity to learn the same material. This plan was successful and imitated by other states (Kelly, Saint-Germain and Horn 2002).

In Bradford's daily correspondence, she often mentioned the benefits of the standardization plan. One positive benefit to citizens that she reported on May 28, 1920, was an increase in land value near a standard school (Bradford, pers. letters, 13). She encouraged her school administrators to promote and celebrate this plan within their schools and communities by writing in a letter on September 22, 1922, to one of her school leaders, "May I suggest that a little ceremony incidental to the placing of the tablets often stimulates community interest in the progress of the school" (Bradford, pers. letters, 260). The placing of the tablets was a formal ceremony in which the school would display its current grade or status in a prominent place. This is a practice still used today as schools post their ratings in front of the school or on a sign for all to see. In a letter to teachers of her state in the *Colorado School Journal*, she explained the requirements of acquiring a first grade rating,

The first grade will be issued to those schools complying with the largest number of the following requirements: The possession of a professionally trained or highly certified teacher, convenient, sanitary, and beautiful buildings, grounds and equipment, a scientifically organized school, full length of term, fair salary paid to the teacher, and, above all, to the school which best succeeds in keeping the largest number of school children in school throughout the year, and most affects the community life" (*Colorado School Journal* 1920, 6).

To promote competition among the counties to have the best rated schools, Bradford said that the county with the greatest number of first graded schools, "would be ranked the most efficiently standardized county in the state" with two other

counties being labeled second and third (Bradford 1915, 30).

During Bradford's second term as state superintendent (1915-1916), school growth continued. Schools continued to consolidate and standardize. In her *Twenty-First Biennial Report* of 1916, Bradford reported over one hundred and twenty-one consolidated schools and three hundred thirty-seven standard schools. Bradford categorized the different schools by saying, "eighteen are of the 'superior class,' one hundred and forty 'approved,' and one hundred and seventy-nine 'probationary' (Bradford 1916a, 7). This categorization of schools is different than the above mentioned rankings of standard, moderate or excellent. Research did not give a reason for this change. Under Bradford's new plan of standardization, each school was designated with a "tablet of different color" containing the words, "State of Colorado, Standard School, and the Class of the school underneath" (7).

According to Bradford's *1916 Biennial Report*, Colorado's plan made a positive impression on other states, with seven other states adopting similar standardization plans. Colorado had in place a State Committee on Standardization which included six County Superintendents, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. They had a method of grading each school in place which included a score card which, "when the requirements are met, means, even the lowest class of standard school, a moderately efficient school, and in the higher class, an excellent institution" (1916a, 7).

One method of promoting and encouraging this standardization plan was to create a celebration each year called the "Annual Standardization Day." The day was issued by proclamation from the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction to all the second and third class districts in the state. On

this day, a grading or re-grading of the school took place. The fourth Friday in each February was designated as this special day with the very first one being held on February 25, 1916. Bradford reports that the first Standardization Day was a huge success with over five thousand schools across the state taking part in the celebration (1916a). The second Standardization Day was set for February 23, 1917, and Bradford's wish was that more schools were added to the roll of honor from the year before.

Bradford's wish came true. Two years after the previous report was published, the number of one room school houses had grown from an original number of approximately three hundred and the number of buildings was reduced to just over a hundred consolidated school buildings. Consolidated schools had grown from twenty-one to sixty-six in two years. Standard schools had increased from three hundred and thirty-seven to five hundred and six – forty of those belonging to the superior class (Bradford 1919, 8). Bradford wrote a personal letter on May 11, 1920, to Mrs. W.C. Pracht of Arriba County, in 1920 explaining a few reasons why consolidation was beneficial, "Consolidating or rather centralizing, one school is better than two to save on coal, lighting, etc." (Bradford, pers. letter, 1920, 438).

Another issue that Bradford wrote about in her personal daily correspondence on August 12, 1920 was the problem of children living in remote areas or high altitudes – a situation common in the Rocky Mountains. She suggested that children living at less than eight thousand feet in elevation should be given a school term of not less than six months and any children living above eight thousand feet in elevation should have a term not less than four months per year (144). Altitude would have been an issue in Colorado because schools located in higher

altitudes would have been surrounded in snow longer than schools in lower altitudes. Snow would prevent children from reaching school so schools in higher altitudes were open fewer days.

Improvements continued throughout Colorado. The Reading Circle participation throughout the state had doubled since the last report and Normal School attendance was steadily increasing. Bradford wrote, "The necessity for the training of the teacher in service has been recognized, and the extension work of all the state educational institutions is reaching a proportion of the teaching force in Colorado hitherto undreamed of" (1916a, 6).

Along with these improvements, Bradford published a new curriculum. In 1914, she re-published "A Course of Study for the Public Schools of Colorado" that was very similar to the 1912 version released by State Superintendent Helen M. Wixson. She then revised the 1914 issue and republished it for a second time in 1916. She said about the revised version, "This book is practically a different volume from that issued in 1914, although no radical reorganization of the school curriculum is here attempted." She said, "The Department is now making an exhaustive study of modern methods and needs in public school education. As a result, not later than the beginning of the school year 1917-1918, the schools of Colorado will be provided with a Course of Study based on the research now in progress" (Bradford 1916b, 1). The national crisis of war would have an impact on the next curriculum.

During Bradford's tenure as State Superintendent, the United States was dealing with its own challenges involving World War I, which began in 1914 and ended in 1918. Colorado schools under Bradford's leadership used this national crisis to ready their students for service and national aid. When determining how

the schools of Colorado should handle the subject of the war with students, the *Colorado School Journal* reports that rather than ignore the situation or prohibit talking about the war in schools, like some other schools in the a nation had decided to do, Colorado used the war as a valuable lesson. Through curriculum changes, such as an emphasis on Geography and Citizenship, the schools used the war to teach their student population. The article in the *Colorado School Journal* stated that some teachers of geography “were almost jubilant when the term opened with the European war on; there was current, live geography ready to serve.” Along with geography and history lessons, Colorado schools could use this war to teach peace, “The opportunity afforded by the war to illustrate and enforce the arguments of peace is too favorable to be neglected” (1913, 30, 19). Urban and Wagoner discussed the role of schools and the war, “The schools themselves became quite active in support of the war. Groups such as the Student Army Training Corps brought military training to college campuses and spinoffs began appearing in high schools” (2004, 233).

Some schools were given financial support by the state government in the war efforts. The government used the schools to teach students skills that would be useful to the war efforts. One example is a school in Denver. Bradford reports, “Denver’s Opportunity School has become famous the country over. Originated and supported for years by District No 1, City and County of Denver, it has now been recognized by the United States Government and receives federal aid for teachers in the following subjects: Radio-buzzer service, auto-mechanics, related mechanical drawing and home economics. It can readily be seen that wonderful war service, industrially speaking, be performed by this school” (1919, 7). Bradford admitted that even

with the Opportunity School’s great achievements, “its highest function has been its power to develop citizenship” (7). She recognized that in other larger towns, such as, Pueblo and Colorado Springs, other schools have been of service by creating school gardens, which add to the “nation’s needed store of wealth” and “in the child a love for nature and an illuminating appreciation of a practical scientific study” (7).

Both schools and teachers were accommodating the war efforts. Bradford mentioned this fact, “The teachers of this commonwealth have proved themselves the ‘second line of defense’ in the prosecution of the Great War to End Wars. Every war effort asked of the schools has been responded to most nobly by teachers and pupils alike and this co-operative effort has made a record for Colorado schools that is recognized by the nation” (1919, 9). She shared the news that at least ninety-five percent of all school children and sixty percent of schools in the state had invested in Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps, and almost one hundred percent of all school children and teachers had practiced food conservation, built war and school gardens and worked with the Red Cross in the war efforts (9). The schools, including students, teachers, and administrators, all were part of the war efforts. This was a collaborative effort across the nation, issued from the government to the school administrators. The schools were used for a greater purpose, not just educating children on basic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics, but also ensuring their knowledge of useful skills that would benefit them as American citizens, patriotism, citizenship and government. Bradford, as state superintendent met with government officials and travelled to national meetings where educators from across the country were gathered to learn about and then disseminate this national agenda. This

information was found in the state superintendent reports and publications from the meetings of the National Education Association. Her actions had an influence on the new curriculum.

In her ongoing efforts to help with the current conditions of her country, on April 19, 1918, Bradford wrote a letter to the children and teachers of allied countries, from the school children and teachers of the United States in response to the world conflict of the War. She wrote,

The love of the school children of America is sent to warm and bless you. The protection of the teachers of America is extended to you through deeds of tenderness... We love you. Believe it. Call on us. Use us. Let us serve you. The soul of your country is also the soul of our land. We offer our Mother America to help be a mother to you, that childhood may be united in an all-everlasting love (Bradford, pers. letters, Box 50125, p. 293, Colorado State Archives).

Bradford, as president of the National Education Association, sent this message to other countries to show support during this time of distress. She did not take this honor lightly, just as she did not take the fact that she was one of the few female state superintendents in the country for granted. In a letter to Annie Webb Blanton on February 7, 1919, she wrote in regards to a meeting of state superintendents that she hosted a few years before,

It was my pleasure some few years ago; to call a conference of women state superintendents and we had a most enjoyable meeting in my office.... At the time there were only four women in the United States. Add Chicago we shall have doubled our forces. Surely this is a

wonderful mark of progress in relation to the filling of positions of administrative power and trust, by women capable of performing such functions (Bradford, pers. letters, Box 50125, p. 462, Colorado State Archives).

This letter showed that she believed that women held these positions and were very successful, growing in number over the years. Bradford recognized the progress women had made in filling these important positions and the capability they had proved in doing so.

As State Superintendent, Bradford published the promised new course of study for the State of Colorado in 1918, during this time of national focus. This new version, rewritten after a thorough investigation of what was lacking in the current curriculum and after much research with the contribution of many educational experts was influenced by the war efforts of the country. The new curriculum entitled, "A War-Modified Course of Study for the Public Schools of Colorado," was an effort to rewrite and improve the previous curriculum, which was written under the direction of the previous State Superintendent, Helen M. Wixson (1911-1913) then republished with slight changes by Bradford in 1918. This new curriculum was more complete and included the aid of many school professionals in its creation. It focused on new subjects, created as result of the war, such as Flag Ritual and Patriotism. Some subjects were deleted as noted by Urban and Wagoner, "As might be expected, America's war effort has substantial effects on its schools. Whereas the German language had been taught together with English in many cities with sizeable German populations, the coming of World War I put an end to the study of the German language in most public and private schools" (2004, 232). Bradford explained why

and how Colorado's curriculum was rewritten at the beginning of the document,

The War-Modified Course of Study, here presented for the use of the Public Schools of Colorado, has been prepared with the assistance of the best pedagogical talent in the commonwealth. The co-operating educators have performed a labor of love for the children of the Centennial State, and the Department of Public Instruction offers this service as a contribution toward and enlightened and patriotic citizenship.

The form of this State Course of study is different from any that has preceded it. Its issuance in a series of volumes affords convenience and ensures 'up-to-dateness.' The subject matter, of course, is correlated closely with war conditions, and standardization and the examination grades will be connected with the use of the material in these study helps, making an intellectual foundation for community, state and national service" (Bradford 1918, 1, 2).

Although published as one book (Bradford, 1918), the work is organized by volumes, each addressing a specific group of courses and skills. Volume One of this course of study included the Social Subjects: Citizenship, Civics, Flag Ritual, History, Patriotism, Prehistoric Colorado, and the Story of Colorado. The second volume included the "Tools of Education." (Democracy, Reading, Spelling, Penmanship, Language & Grammar, Autocracy vs. Democracy, and Arithmetic). Bradford explained, "As Volume One interpreted the Social Subjects of History, Civics, Patriotism, etc., in the light of the recent world events, so the present volume endeavors to link subject matter to live experience at a great crisis in the history of the world" (Bradford 1918, 2, 3). Again, with this

statement, Bradford explained the reason for this new curriculum.

Despite the fact that World War I ended as these volumes were being written, Bradford continued to keep the same name, "War-Modified Course of Study," on each volume, she explained,

Since the first volume appeared the Great War to End Wars has come to a triumphant conclusion. Peace has been won from under the shadow of victorious swords, and civilization has vindicated its right to a permanent existence. Nevertheless, the title, "War-Modified Course of Study" belongs of right to each volume of this series, the changes that have been wrought in the living and thinking of the people by the great struggle, 'carrying on' into the near and even remote future. Therefore, the plan adopted when the issuance of this new Course of Study was undertaken, will be followed throughout" (1918, 2, 3).

The third volume, called, "The World of Nature and of Man," contained the subjects "that are essentially interpretive of matters in relation to nature and society, including, Geography, Nature Study and Science, Agriculture, School Gardens, Home Economics, Manual Training and Vocational Education, Good Roads, School Architecture, and the Junior Red Cross as a Permanent Educative Agency.

The fourth volume, entitled, "Special Subjects," included the subjects of Drawing, Humane Education, Hygiene and Sanitation, Music, Physical Education, Manual of Physical Training, Scientific Temperance, and Fire Prevention. The fifth and final volume was dedicated to the "latest and most advanced educational suggestions in High School work" (Bradford 1918, 5, 3). It included a reprint of the

previously published outline for the Four Year High School by the Department of Public Instruction, currently in use in Pueblo, Colorado, and included new information being used in other parts of Colorado and other states. The curriculum was divided into Junior High School, Senior High School, Four-Year High School Course and contained the following miscellaneous subjects, An Outline in Americanization, Military Training, Teachers' Reading Circle, School Libraries, and the Boys' and Girls' Clubs (1918, 5, 4). The new curriculum was more comprehensive than the previous one published by Wixson and reflected the current events of the country, as Bradford mentioned in her forward comments.

One attribute of Bradford that is seen throughout her tenure as State Superintendent was her ability to show her concern for her administrators, teachers and students. When granting teaching certificates, Bradford personally sent a letter to each recipient. In her 1916 biennial report, she stated that five hundred and fifty-two certificates were recommended and issued. The report mentioned that she traveled thirty thousand miles in the performance of her duties "centralizing, consolidating, and standardizing schools and visiting educational meetings" (1916a, 8). Her number of miles traveled almost doubled over the previous biennium. In her travels to these schools, she visited with teachers, administrators and the community. Colorado is a large state with a diverse and harsh terrain and weather pattern. Despite these challenges, visiting the schools was a priority for Bradford. She traveled more miles, visited more schools and attended more meetings than in her last term and still she was not recognized with an increase in pay or adequate funding to accomplish all that she needed to during her tenure. Bradford was appointed as a member of a new committee

formed by the superintendent's association of the NEA. Her committee worked to improve the lives of children through the improvement of home conditions (*Rocky Mountain News*, February 2, 1916, 3).

In 1917, she was named president of the NEA. Her tenure as leader of this organization enabled Bradford to make a national impact on education. The same year she wrote a speech for the NEA on the subject of the schools and their role in this national time of need, entitled, "The Public School and the Nation in 1917." Her words were a bit more dramatic and alluded to her feelings on the role of schools in America. The nation was still at war and her speech relayed the importance of public schools to the war effort and to the nation. She said,

The title of the subject under discussion this morning reflects the most vital reality in the life of present-day America. To the inflexible test of results it summons the one public institution in which Americans profess the most profound faith, and which non-Americans have considered the supremely distinctive feature of the national development. A crucial time is this. How is American to meet the testing process? Will the mighty mother of over a hundred million people – America – find her children 'arise and calling her Blessed?' Will she prove to the world of nineteen hundred and seventeen that America spells adequacy, as in earlier years the magic letters of that name were interchangeable with opportunity? Does she stand as the incarnate will to righteousness of all humanity and the incarnate will to sacrifice for all mankind? Does the fluttering of her flags on blood stained soil of France mean the beating of pulses in over a hundred million American

bodies – that beating attuned to the victorious music of mankind arising from the sepulcher of dead traditions and moldering governmental and social forms into the sunlight of a rehabilitated world?

If so, it will be because the American public school has, in some degree at least, fulfilled the august task confided to it by the commands of democratic government. And if, after this great war to end wars shall be over, America functions as the supreme idealistic force in the reorganization of the world, it will be because the public schools of nineteen seventeen have given to the people of the nation a higher vision than the world has ever before seen (Bradford 1917, 233).

Bradford then outlined the tasks that the schools should make in this effort, “The great task of the public school of nineteen seventeen is the mighty effort which must be made by the school people of today” (1917, 234). She first suggested that schools should continue to, “Demonstrate the sacredness of the intellectual integrity of the nation.” This point meant that the country needed to continue to show the world that it is intelligent and full of honor, qualities that it has always portrayed. This could be done by exemplifying quality education and providing a good model for the rest of the world. Her suggestion was for the schools to keep this in mind as they were teaching the children, making this the end goal, by providing innovative curriculum, quality school facilities, and graduating the majority of students.

Next, she said that schools need, “to hold aloft the standard of straight thinking.” This point suggested that schools should continue to keep high standards of thought in the curriculum, not swaying from this purpose and keeping a strong work ethic as she next suggested that schools

continue, “Incessant and consecrated work.” She also pointed out that schools need to teach the present curriculum and focus on national goals of Americanization and citizenship and she recognized the importance of having the support of the government by telling school administrators to “Point out the necessity of the incorporation of mighty loving in the legislation,” which would ensure legislative and financial support (1917, 234).

She said a new vision was needed including a “vision that reveals to itself as the molder of the soul of the nation in the likeness of the ideal humanity, so to fit the framework of educational activities that the translation of the ideal republic into the terms of practical democratic living may speedily and beautifully be made more effective” (Bradford 1917, 234). She then challenged the representatives of the school people attending this meeting of the NEA to offer themselves “to the nation as one unit in the great army of those who stand ready to give all to the nation’s summons” and “as the body of people to whom is confided the guarding of the grail of future citizenship let us urge the President of the republic to use in some unified, direct way in the present national crisis” (234).

Finally in this speech, Bradford called the public school of 1917 the “Casket of the Grail” and she called the school people its “bodyguard.” Challenging everyone, “Let us examine ourselves searchingly and fit ourselves reverently for the high enterprise of keeping safe and stainless the cup containing the draught commingled of thought and work and love, the immortal draught without which the national ideals must perish” (1917, 234). Her interpretation of the schools as the “casket” or keeper of the grail is an interesting analogy, one which provokes a rich response upon hearing the words. The statement also reflected her religious beliefs by including words

that pertained to religion. Her family history included several religious officials, as noted in Chapter II, and her upbringing and marriage prove she was a religious person, which could be seen in her references to religious figures and objects in her writing. She gave the speech to educators across the country and her passion for education and the role that it holds in society is evident in her words.

Bradford's outstanding reputation in education and with the war effort was recognized through different roles outside of her office. During the war she was a member of "Captain of Hoover's Legion of Life for the State of Colorado" and a member of the National Thrift Committee and vice-chairman of Thrift activities in Colorado. President Wilson called her to Washington in January of 1918 to attend the first conference for inaugurating the Junior Red Cross. She went to Washington D.C. nine times to attend educational conferences and she served as a member of the National Education Commission on the Emergency in Education (*Colorado School Journal*, 1920, 6). In 1921, the government put forth a bill, The Smith-Towner Bill, which would for the first time create a Federal Department of Education with a secretary serving in the Presidential Cabinet. Bradford was mentioned in the press as a possible candidate for this cabinet position. When asked her opinion on whether there should be a demand for a woman secretary of education, she said,

Whether a man or woman fills this important position is of small moment. It has been said one reason women have lent their adherence to the creation of the department of education is that they intend to urge the appointment of a woman as the first secretary of education. Personally, I do not believe this is so.

While all the thinking women would be glad to see as first appointee a woman fitted by nature, training and experience, to discharge the functions of such an office, yet I do not believe that this hope has motivated the action of the hundreds of thousands of American women who have indorsed the bill.

It is my hope that the bill will be enacted into law and that the first secretary of education, whether man or woman, may be ideally fitted to serve the nation (*Denver Times*, February 23, 1920).

The Smith-Towner Bill was not passed in Congress during the next session but the recommendation of Bradford to this important position gave credence to her importance and value as an educator. Simply being considered for the position on the President of the United States' cabinet was recognition of her popularity and reputation.

In her role as State Superintendent and as president of the NEA, Bradford knew many important educators. On August 4, 1917, she wrote a letter to Texas State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Annie Webb Blanton, accepting an invitation to speak in Waco, Texas (Box 50125, p. 8). She also wrote letters requesting guest speakers for the upcoming 1918 convention of the NEA.

On August 22, 1917, she wrote a letter to Chicago Superintendent, Ella Flagg Young, former NEA president (the first woman to be elected to this position) and progressive educator, requesting her to speak at the convention (9). She also requested the presence of Dr. Granville Stanley Hall (12), esteemed Psychologist, William C. Bagley, known as one of the founding fathers of essentialism (27), Dr. M.L. Burton, President of the University of Minnesota, Dr. W.A. Jessup, President of the University of Iowa,

Dr. Parson Smith, Commissioner of Education of Boston, The Honorable J.H. Finley, Commissioner of Education of Albany, New York, and many other educational experts across the country. She called upon others to submit names of potential speakers and asked that they find speakers who represent the different views of major organizations within the country. For example she wanted, the Secretary of the Army to discuss “The role of the American Army in education,” the Secretary of Treasury to discuss, “The financial aspect of the War,” different senators to discuss, “How state governments view education,” and she also wanted the Speaker of the House, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Labor to discuss their office’s views on education (Bradford, pers. letters, 1917, Box 50125, Colorado State Archives).

On September 24, 1917, she received a response from the U.S. Speaker of the House, declining her invitation to attend the national convention, and her response to him was, “You know the saying that ‘when a woman will she will, and when she won’t she won’t, and I have just made up my mind that I won’t take no as an answer from you.” On December 19, 1917, Bradford received a letter that Ella Flagg Young would not speak but would attend. Bradford responded delightfully, “Wherever Ella Flagg Young sits at an educational conference; she will be at the head of the table! The very fact that you will be at the Pittsburgh gathering will tend to make the meeting a success” (Bradford, pers. letters, Box 50125, 131, Colorado State Archives). Flagg was considered was an influential educator, studied under John Dewey and dedicated her life to improving education in the United States, publishing on various educational topics including, literature, peace and ethics.

Her letters show other activities she was involved in during this time, including a response she wrote to Dr. J. L. McBrien, School Extension Agent for the Bureau of Education, and “Thank you for the suggestions in reference to the use of the one hundred million dollars of federal aid for the improvement of rural schools about which we are dreaming.... By the way, this is a dream we intend to make come true.” On February 5, 1918, she wrote a letter to the school superintendents advising them to have two lessons per week, lasting not less than ten minutes, on the “humane treatment to animals.” On February 9, 1918, she wrote a letter to Dr. R.W. Corwin, Chief Surgeon of the Minnequa Hospital in Pueblo, Colorado. She asks his opinion on textbooks including one called, “Elementary Hygiene.”

Bradford dedicated her life to improving the lives of Colorado’s children through their education. Her six terms as State Superintendent gave her the power to make major improvements in education. Consolidating rural schools and through her state plan of standardization, she insured that the children of Colorado would have equal school experiences and new opportunities. The 1918 curriculum published by Bradford demonstrated a thorough and intricate new learning program that reflected the state of the country at this time – dealing with the affects and consequences of World War I, and was a more expansive and progressive model than those published before. She spent countless hours traveling the state to personally see the conditions of the schools and she traveled across the country meeting with politicians and educators to advocate for education across the nation. In her 1917 speech mentioned above (1917, 234), she challenged the country to be the “bodyguard” of its schools – Bradford knew what this meant, as she used her position as Colorado’s State Superintendent of Public Instruction to be the

bodyguard of Colorado's children and their schools.

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