

~~Good morning~~ ^{afternoon} Chairman Mortimer and members of the committee, I am Penni Cyr, President of the Idaho Education Association. I am here today to ask you to support HB 300.

Next week, nearly 500 educators who are members and leaders of the IEA will converge for two days in Boise to attend our yearly Delegate Assembly. During those two days, these dedicated professionals will develop the specific course of action they expect the IEA to focus on over the next year.

Several years ago, one of those members— Twin Falls middle school teacher Peggy Hoy—came to the annual meeting with a concern. As a middle school teacher, she was appreciative of the work that the Middle Level Task Force had done to ensure that junior high/middle school students were held accountable for their preparation as they matriculated into high school. She believed this was critically important work and that her students would benefit from these decisions.

However, her district is set up for middle school. Unlike districts using the junior high system, students in Twin Falls move to the middle school as 6th graders.

Peggy knew that the credit system implemented as a part of the middle level task force recommendations was going to require that something be put in place to help those 6th graders who were at risk of failure to get the necessary credits to move to the next grade.

She knew that her district's ability to offer more support would require additional funding and she asked the IEA to help address this concern at the legislative level.

As she will speak to, we believe HB 300 is the mechanism that will ensure that districts that configure their schools on the middle school system instead of the junior high system will have the ability to offer alternative measures to struggling 6th graders.

Peggy is here today to testify in favor of HB 300; she will be able to tell you in real terms why she believes this piece of legislation is so important to her and her students.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, on behalf of the members of the IEA, I am asking you to send HB 300 to the floor with a do pass recommendation.