

## EDITORIALS

# More school innovations ahead

**T**HE PUEBLO City Schools (D60) is working frantically to avoid the state taking action against the school district — maybe taking it over — due to low student test scores.

It was encouraging to learn in a weekend Chieftain story that the Colorado Department of Education approved the district's plans to proceed with its plan to expand its Innovation Zone program.

The schools to be added are Irving, Benjamin Franklin and Minnequa elementary schools. They will join Roncalli STEM Academy, Risley International School of Innovation and Pueblo Academy of Arts.

So far, the new curriculum and sharing of practices that work have had positive results. Interim Superintendent Charlotte Macaluso, who made the Innovation Zone presentation to state education officials in Denver, said: "Roncalli has made improvements in all content areas in the last year; Pueblo Academy of Arts has more than tripled in enrollment over the last three years; and Risley International Academy of Innovation was recently recognized as an International Baccalaureate World School."

Macaluso said the three elementary

schools will join the existing Innovation Zone schools in more strategic planning and, most importantly, sharing ideas that work to help students improve.

"Districtwide, we are focused on moving our schools out of turn-around status, and we are committed to working to ensure continuous improvement is made."

That all sounds good, but how does it work?

Cary Palumbo, principal of Benjamin Franklin Elementary, said, for example, that the program uses "Blended Learning, giving students more access to technology, as well as extended learning opportunities, where they can explore some of their interests through classes not normally offered in elementary schools."

The Colorado Department of Education voted 7-0 to approve the expansion of the program, which is encouraging given the district's turn-around status.

It's clear to us that good things are happening in many classrooms in the district. Will these efforts be enough to turn the schools around, to dramatically improve student test scores?

Time will tell. Nonetheless, we are encouraged by the effort.