

# It's a quarterback conundrum!

DETAILS, 1B



## WEATHER

55/33

Much cooler with rain possible and winds from the north up to 35 mph.

DETAILS, 12B



# The Pueblo Chieftain

COLORADO'S OLDEST DAILY NEWSPAPER/149TH YEAR

WWW.CHIEFTAIN.COM

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## EDUCATION

# 'We demand to be respected and valued'

## D60 teachers speak out about possible strike

BY ANTHONY A. MESTAS  
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Derek Flowers worked his first summer job at Fun Putter Park on Pueblo's South Side as the head "party coach."

In his early years of employment, at the ripe age of 15, he said he knew one thing for sure.

"I was destined to be a teacher," Flowers said Saturday.

"Over the years I experienced

many ups and downs that come along with being an educator like self-doubt, not feeling like I have made connections with the kids and not trusting my professional instincts," Flowers said.

But Flowers, a kindergarten teacher, said now he and many other teachers in Pueblo City Schools (D60) are facing a much larger challenge.

They may go on strike, protesting problems of low pay and what they are saying is the underappreciation of educators and staff.

Flowers and two other teachers, who asked to remain anonymous for fear of repercussions, said they are willing to fight for their cause even if it means sacrificing.

Flowers said he has been a loyal employee of the district for 12 years and has found this profession to be not only invigorating, but also

*The uncertainty of a possible strike looms in the hearts of several employees, but some told The Pueblo Chieftain under the condition of anonymity that although they are living in fear, they feel it is right to protest denied pay increases.*

SEE D60, 2A



AP PHOTO/FILE

Teachers from across Kentucky gather inside the state Capitol in Frankfort, Ky., during a Friday rally for increased education funding. Half of Americans say they'd support paying higher taxes to give educators a raise, according to a recent Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll.

## NATION

# Americans support teacher raises

## Half polled say they'd support higher taxes to give educators more pay

BY CAROLE FELDMAN  
AND EMILY SWANSON  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Americans overwhelmingly believe teachers don't make enough money, and half say they'd support paying higher taxes to give educators a raise.

The findings of the new poll from The Associated

Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research come amid recent teacher strikes and other protests over low pay, tough classroom conditions and the amount of money allocated to public schools in several Republican-led states.

Tens of thousands of Arizona teachers voted last week to strike after rejecting

an offer of a 20-percent raise, because it didn't include a vow from state lawmakers not to further cut taxes before providing more money for the state's schools.

"To educate children and barely get a living is obnoxious," said Elaine Penman, a company manager in Tucson, Ariz., who added she and others went outside to cheer

on protesting teachers who were marching by.

She's among the 50 percent of Americans who say they'd pay a higher tax bill if it meant more money for teachers. "I'm a parent and I benefit directly from what teachers do," said Penman, who has two children in

SEE NATION, 6A

## EFFORT TO OUTLAW SCHOOL STRIKES

Two El Paso County state lawmakers want to block public school teachers from being able to strike — and would jail any teachers who do.

Senate Bill 264 outlaws any public school teacher or teacher organization from "directly or indirectly" from participating in, causing, encouraging or condoning a strike. The measure would let school boards get an injunction against any threatened strike in district court and that teachers who ignored the injunction would be fired, jailed and fined for contempt of court.

Also, if a teacher organization or union is held in contempt, any contract it negotiated with the school district would be dissolved.

The bill was introduced Friday by state Sen. Bob Gardner and state Rep. Paul Lundeen, both Republicans. It was assigned for a first hearing to the Senate State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee.

— Peter Roper

# Teacher absences close 3 more D60 schools

## PEA disavows knowledge of mass call-offs

BY JON POMPIA  
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Classes at two Pueblo City Schools (D60) — Heritage Elementary School and East High School — were canceled Monday due to a high number of teacher absences.

And today, classes at South High School were canceled for the same reason.

District officials confirmed the cancellations with Superintendent Charlotte Macaluso releasing a statement addressing them (see adjacent fact box)

The following message was sent late Sunday evening to parents with children in the two affected schools with a similar message sent Monday evening to parents of South students.

## More on the web

CHIEFTAIN.COM/  
NEWS/EDUCATION

"It is necessary to cancel classes at East High School and Heritage Elementary School on Monday. This decision is necessary due to excessively high number of teacher call-offs reported in the system.

"We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience this may cause your family. We are disappointed with the fact that we have to move forward with canceling classes; however, the safety of our students is of top priority. "We anticipate that school will resume our normal schedule on Tuesday. If this sta-

SEE ABSENCES, 2A

## 'CONCERTED WORK STOPPAGE'

In light of the recent school closures, D60 Superintendent Charlotte Macaluso sent the following message to school staff Monday evening:

"Recently, our district has had to make the decision to cancel classes at several schools due to excessive teacher absences.

We consider this an organized and concerted work stoppage that directly and negatively impacts our ability to provide educational services to our students. This action, referred to as a 'rolling sick out,' targets one or more schools with an excessively high number of teachers calling off for the day. It is truly unfortunate and disheartening that the notice of these absences has been withheld until the last minute and submitted almost simultaneously in most cases.

This unprofessional tactic prevents us from timely notification to our commu-

nity, burdens our families unnecessarily, and denies students a day of learning. All evidence points to this being an organized event, which is a direct violation, and contradictory to, the rule of law under the Department of Labor.

Under these circumstances, we must consider evaluating these absences as probable misuse of excused leave.

Other school districts across the state and nation have focused their energies, their frustration and their action on state legislatures, and rightfully, so, as they are ultimately responsible for funding our schools. Schools in Colorado have been underfunded for almost a decade, resulting in a loss of billions of dollars to K-12 education.

Our students should always come first. We urge our staff to model the professionalism that is expected of their position."

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Daily 75¢ - Sundays \$1.75  
May vary outside Pueblo

