



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Site Evaluation Report:
Amplus Academy Durango
Evaluation Date: 4/5/2022
Report Date: 5/2/2022

State Public Charter School Authority
775-687-9174
1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706
2080 East Flamingo Road, Suite 230
Las Vegas, NV 89119

Contents

Introduction and School Background	3
Academic Performance	4
Focus Group Summaries	8
Classroom Observation Totals	14
Organizational Performance.....	18
Site Evaluation Findings	22

Appendices

A: Nevada State Performance Framework

<http://www.doe.nv.gov/Accountability/NSPF/>

B: SPCSA Academic Framework

<http://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/News/2019/190628-Academic-Performance-Framework-Guidance-Document.pdf>

C: SPCSA Organizational Framework

<http://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/News/2019/190628-OPF-Att-1-Ratings-Scorecard.pdf>

INTRODUCTION AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND



INTRODUCTION

This Site Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school evaluation that took place on April 5, 2022, at Amplus Academy Durango. The State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all charters within the portfolio during the first, third, and fifth year of operation. This comprehensive analysis addresses the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization. During the 2021-2022 school year, the SPCSA began to differentiate levels of oversight. The schools identified as having a rating of a two-star or below, and those schools with a Notice of Concern, Notice of Breach, or Notice of Termination, will have a differentiated procedure for their site evaluation. Amplus Academy Elementary School meets this criterion and has been scheduled for a full site evaluation. The purpose of the site evaluation in this instance is to provide follow-up and documented progress toward improvement.

An analysis of the school's academic and operational success is undertaken by reviewing the most current versions of the Nevada State Performance Framework (Appendix A) and the State Public Charter School Authority Academic Framework (Appendix B) as well as the Organizational Framework (Appendix C). In addition, the Site Evaluation Team conducts classroom observations within the areas of classroom environment and instruction. The purpose of these observations is to collect evidence using a rubric which has been normed by our team. All classroom rating outcomes will be displayed within this report so that school leaders have an overall idea of what is happening in general, at any time, in any classroom. The overall numbers will provide information about the school outcomes on this one day.

SPCSA staff will track "best practices", using a checklist and a summary of best practices observed, and will be contained within the report. Using information from focus groups of students, parents, staff, school leaders and the school's board, the SPCSA team will conduct focus groups and summarize results for schools within the report. The operational portion of the evaluation will be observed and take-aways recorded using a checklist and observing all aspects of the school's operational components as outlined in the SPCSA Organizational Framework.

This evaluation has been designed to focus on teaching and learning (e.g., curriculum, instruction, assessment, and services for at-risk students) as well as leadership, organizational capacity, and board oversight. The SPCSA uses the established criteria on a regular basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Amplus Academy Durango is located in Las Vegas, Nevada in a facility at 8377 W. Patrick Ln. The school serves 1,476 students (as of the most recent Validation Day) in kindergarten through 12th grade. The mission of name of school is: "Amplus Academy operates as a free public charter school that welcomes and honors all. Our intent is that our students acquire knowledge and skills to become esteemed, distinguished, and productive citizens who preserve the pillars of a free and just society."

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

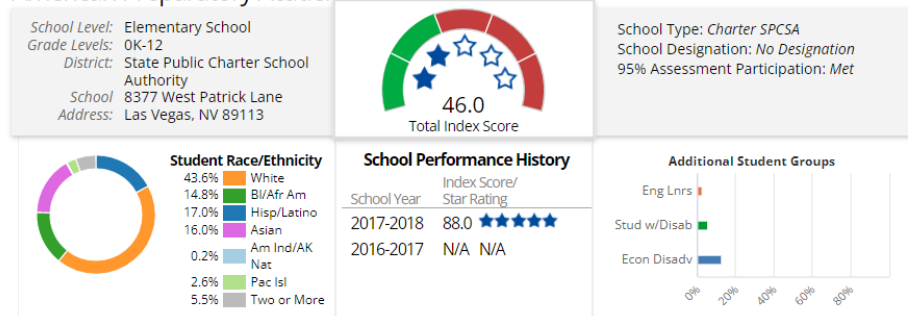
Nevada School Performance Framework 2019

Amplus Academy Durango serves 1,476 students in grades 4 – 12.

Elementary School

American Preparatory Academy LV

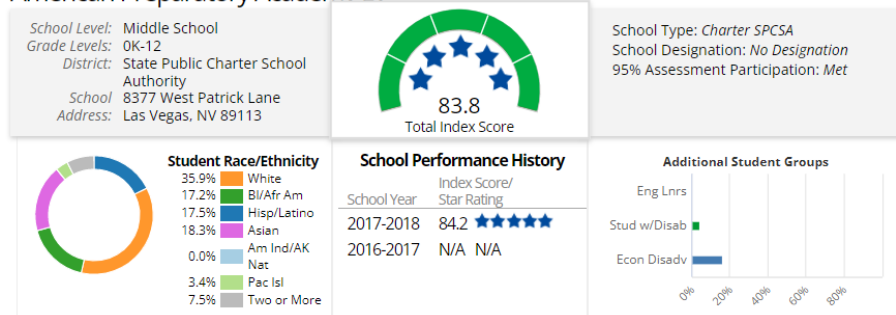
School Year 2018-2019 Nevada School Rating



Middle School

American Preparatory Academy LV

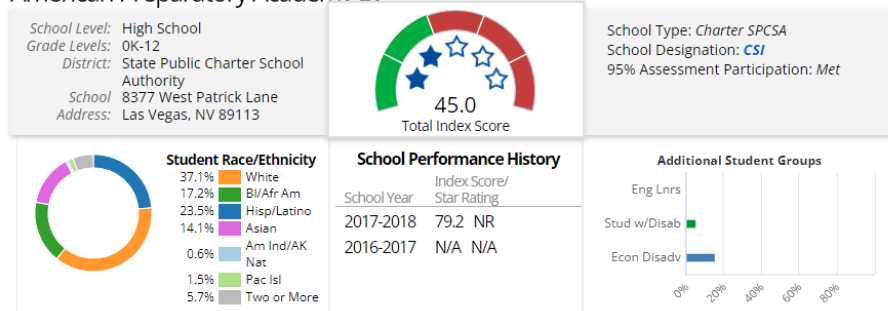
School Year 2018-2019 Nevada School Rating



High School

American Preparatory Academy LV

School Year 2018-2019 Nevada School Rating



Amplus Academy Durango Math and ELA Results Nevada School Performance Framework 2019

Proficiency Rates

Elementary School

Math Proficient

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	42.4	54.5	48.5	54.3	52.8	45.8
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	45.8	34.3	-	44.9	30.9
Asian	66.2	75.6	68.8	69.0	75.2	67.2
Black/African American	33.7	31.3	32.3	41.0	30.6	28.8
Hispanic/Latino	27.2	44.6	39.6	37.0	40.2	36.5
Pacific Islander	38.4	48.7	48.3	53.3	48.3	45.6
Two or More Races	46.4	58.2	55.3	64.8	59.0	52.9
White/Caucasian	41.7	62.3	59.3	58.2	61.1	57.2
Special Education	25.9	27.4	28.6	23.5	29.2	24.8
English Learners Current + Former	22.2	42.3	35.8	58.1	37.4	32.4
English Learners Current	15.3	32.4	-	13.3	25.5	-
Economically Disadvantaged	32.4	39.8	39	-	33.1	35.7

ELA Proficient

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	55.7	60.1	57	64.2	58.6	54.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	62.5	42.5	-	58.3	39.5
Asian	69.7	78.5	75.4	74.6	76.3	74.1
Black/African American	42.5	40.9	42.6	53.6	40.5	39.6
Hispanic/Latino	53.4	51.1	48.2	50.0	48.0	45.5
Pacific Islander	38.4	51.8	57.9	60.0	52.6	55.7
Two or More Races	46.4	63.8	64.4	73.0	67.1	62.6
White/Caucasian	58.2	66.8	67.4	68.5	65.0	65.7
Special Education	25.9	26.7	30	29.4	29.3	26.3
English Learners Current + Former	38.8	42.2	41.4	62.1	38.9	38.4
English Learners Current	23.0	29.4	-	6.6	22.8	-
Economically Disadvantaged	54.5	45.4	46.8	-	40.4	44

Middle School

Math Proficient

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	53.8	42.6	36.5	48.6	36.8	33.2
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	22.7	28.4	-	26.5	24.6
Asian	73.6	66.2	58.6	79.1	64.1	56.4
Black/African American	34.8	24.2	23.5	23.4	17.7	19.5
Hispanic/Latino	35.8	31.9	29.3	29.8	26.1	25.5
Pacific Islander	28.7	44.9	36.9	36.3	34.9	33.6
Two or More Races	39.4	47.3	40.6	62.5	41.5	37.5
White/Caucasian	67.5	51.3	47.1	57.1	44.4	44.4
Special Education	30.0	12.1	18.6	30.0	11.5	14.3
English Learners Current + Former	38.7	26.9	20.2	49.3	22.2	16
English Learners Current	-	12.6	-	-	8.5	-
Economically Disadvantaged	40.7	29.0	29.2	-	21.7	25.5

ELA Proficient

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	66.1	59.6	54.1	63.4	56.1	51.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	61.3	43.4	-	57.1	40.5
Asian	82.1	78.4	75.9	87.5	77.3	74.6
Black/African American	43.8	40.1	37.8	37.5	38.4	34.5
Hispanic/Latino	57.6	50.3	45.1	61.4	46.3	42.2
Pacific Islander	43.0	61.1	53.2	36.3	53.2	50.7
Two or More Races	55.2	66.7	61.3	58.3	61.0	59.2
White/Caucasian	77.5	67.8	66.3	72.2	63.5	64.6
Special Education	35.0	19.9	21.9	45.0	20.7	17.8
English Learners Current + Former	52.6	42.7	24.3	63.0	34.8	20.3
English Learners Current	-	22.0	-	-	15.8	-
Economically Disadvantaged	51.8	46.4	44.4	-	41.5	41.4

Amplus Academy Durango
Math and ELA Results
Nevada School Performance Framework
2019

Proficiency Rates

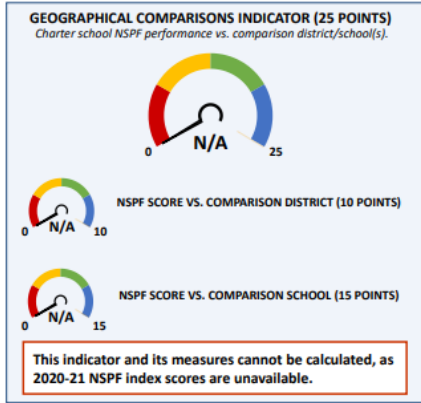
High School

Math Proficient			Math Proficient Points Earned: 10/10			
Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	46.9	25.8	32.83	29.1	23.8	29.29
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	23.12	-	16.6	19.07
Asian	63.6	50.0	50.27	-	54.7	47.65
Black/African American	-	7.5	18.42	-	6.2	14.12
Hispanic/Latino	26.6	18.5	22.93	29.4	17.5	18.87
Pacific Islander	-	16.0	29.26	-	6.2	25.54
Two or More Races	-	26.0	36.96	-	26.1	33.64
White/Caucasian	57.1	32.0	44.25	25.0	28.4	41.31
Special Education	-	6.1	12.38	-	2.2	7.77
English Learners Current + Former	-	5.0	14.52	36.3	10.9	10.02
English Learners Current	-	0.0	-	-	2.4	6.96
Economically Disadvantaged	-	14.6	24	-	13.3	20.01

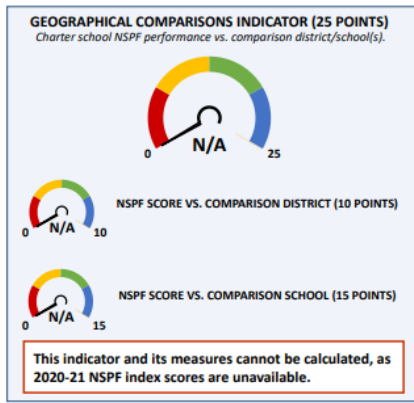
ELA Proficient			ELA Proficient Points Earned: 10/10			
Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	66.6	53.9	48.54	60.4	44.5	45.83
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	36.76	-	36.3	33.43
Asian	63.6	71.0	65.11	-	68.4	63.27
Black/African American	-	32.8	31.39	-	21.6	27.78
Hispanic/Latino	40.0	47.3	36.5	64.7	39.5	33.15
Pacific Islander	-	52.0	48.75	-	37.5	46.05
Two or More Races	-	62.5	58.07	-	46.9	55.86
White/Caucasian	93.9	59.7	62.25	58.3	50.0	60.26
Special Education	-	18.8	15.71	-	9.0	11.27
English Learners Current + Former	-	18.1	17.52	54.5	21.8	13.18
English Learners Current	-	10.6	-	-	9.7	6.9
Economically Disadvantaged	-	41.9	37.66	-	31.2	34.37

SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Geographic Comparison Report

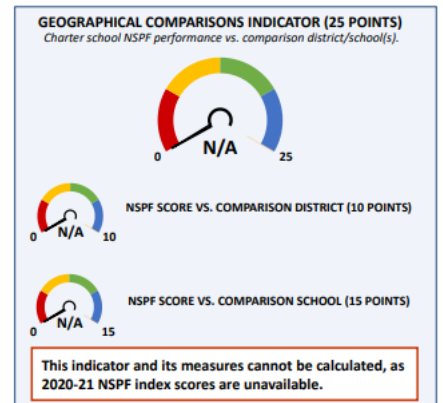
Elementary School



Middle School

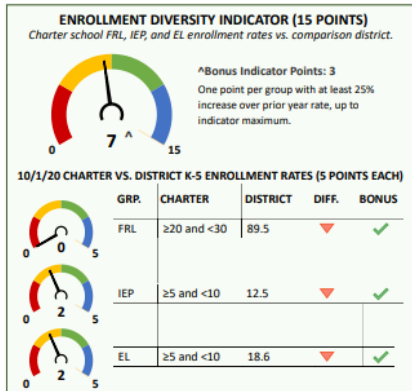


High School

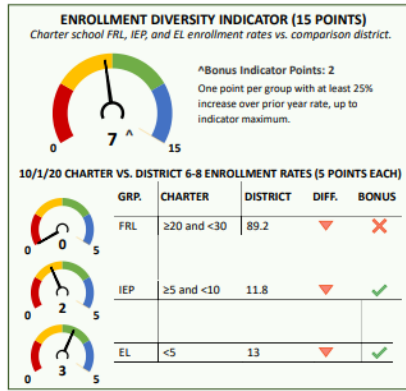


SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Diversity Comparison Results

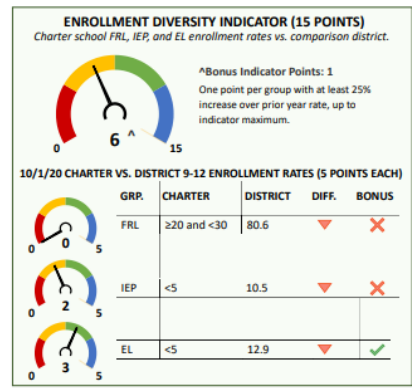
Elementary School



Middle School



High School



FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Group	Number of Participants	Duration of Focus Group
Governing Board	2	30 minutes
Parents/Families	7	30 minutes
Students	14	30 minutes
School Leadership	11	45 minutes
Staff	12	30 minutes

Governing Board¹:

1. The governing board reports they meet monthly. Written academic and behavior reports are provided to the board members ahead of the meeting. School leadership attends the board meetings, providing verbal reports and answering any clarifying questions from the board. The governing board consists of five members. The board stated they would like to expand its membership from five to seven to better serve the needs of the Amplus network. Special sub-committees include a finance committee and a compliance committee. A new committee has been formed specifically to recruit board members. The recruitment committee will offer the governing board a repository for future board members. Current areas of specialty representation on the board include a corporate attorney, a certified public accountant, businesspersons, and a former educator with a background in healthcare administration. One board member said they would like to see more finance representation on the board with the recent campus that opened.
2. Board members stated an outside contractor was hired to assist the board in creating set policies and procedures for a yearly evaluation of the Executive Director (ED). The ED in-turn reviews and evaluates the principal yearly. The outside contractor assisted the board in creating a master evaluation document and board members edit it yearly to align with the specifics of that academic year. The master evaluation document contains both Likert scale type questions as well as open-ended questions for the board to select from to evaluate the ED. The ED is given the selected questions from the board, completes them, and returns the completed form to the board for review. The board reviews the responses and then meets with the ED for an official question and answer session at one of the board meetings.
3. Board members discussed plans to increase student enrollment of diverse student groups who receive free and reduced lunch (FRL), are English learners (EL), and/or learners with individualized education plans (IEP). Participants in the governing board focus group report gross numbers of diverse student groups at Amplus have increased this past year. Outreach and marketing beyond the five-mile geographic radius of the school has resulted in greater student diversity. The school has attended some charter school fairs and other educational fairs to advertise Amplus' presence. Board members said they have discussed ways in which to provide more opportunities for diverse student groups that have been historically underserved including implementing a weighted lottery. Board member focus group participants expressed they believe a weighted lottery would not mirror a true lottery. When a student completes an application for enrollment in a weighted lottery, they are

¹ Two members of the five member board participated. Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

given priority based on special needs, language acquisition, and free and reduced lunch status.

4. Board members said the full board has not initiated specific efforts to address families and students directly. The board members stated school leadership manages communication with families, outreach to the community, and efforts to increase enrollment. School leadership provides written reports to the board and attends board meetings to verbally report on campus efforts. School leadership answers clarifying questions from the board at board meetings. The board monitors the school's success in communication with families, outreach to the community, and efforts to increase enrollment. Board members said Amplus campuses have adopted and model an inclusion policy as well as a restorative justice plan. The board shared their structure is such that problems and challenges are managed at the school site level, but there are mechanisms in place for the board to be brought in if a situation escalates. Focus group participants said rarely does that happen as the school is very good at managing problems.

Parents/Families:

1. Parents agreed that their children are happy to be back to in-person learning. During COVID, one parent stated her high school child liked the online day mid-week that allowed students to revisit concepts and slow down and digest the material. Amplus at the time was offering two days in-person then one day on-line and then two days back in-person. For older and self-motivated students, the one-day hybrid was appreciated according to parents and families. One parent stated for the 2022-2023 academic year, the school day will begin at 7:45 a.m. end at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Parents are concerned this is two hours less learning time each week. A parent shared a questionnaire was sent to parents asking if parents wanted a later start time or earlier release time. Parents did not think this would be a loss of learning time overall. Another parent shared the current Amplus schedule works well for elementary level. The school did create a video to announce the change in schedule next year. However, a stronger communication plan could have captured questions that came up according to focus group participants, such as: "How will content requirements be met? How does Amplus measure up to relative charters with similar seat time?"
2. Parents were asked to describe the school team's ability to provide high quality instruction and feedback from instructors. Several parents said they appreciated Amplus' approach to educating holistically. Parents provided many examples and personal anecdotes of teaching etiquette, manners, social skills, and "appropriate responses to emotion as well as the academics." A parent shared she is in contact with her child's teachers, and they are receptive to her feedback and curricular ideas. One math teacher changed his study guide based on the parent's input and commentary. Another parent said, "I know my child is receiving high quality instruction when my elementary aged student can use the academic vocabulary to explain a concept to me at home." Several middle school parents shared the current math curriculum does not revisit previous concepts learned in mathematics. The prior curriculum scaffolded previous concepts, but the current math program does not as shared during the focus group. Parents stated they would like to see a focus on repetition for concept reinforcement as well as practice problems that scaffold prior concepts.

3. Parents reported their students are excited for school, and they cannot wait to get up and come to school. Parents went on to say they are happy when they come home and are very excited to share what they learn that day. The students come home with positive attitudes. "When I send an email to a teacher, sometimes I receive a response in 20 minutes; it is never over 24 hours." Parents said at home, their child will begin sentences by saying, "my teacher said" and that's how I know my child respects their teacher, and they love what they are learning.
4. When asked if parents felt their child was challenged sufficiently, parents of accelerated students reported they never feel their child is sufficiently challenged. Parents of accelerated students reported their students are self-motivated and sponge up knowledge and go look for opportunities to learn. Several parents of the focus group said they felt teachers know their students well and can set personal goals for the students. Teachers challenge the students sufficiently.

Students:

1. When students were asked what they liked about attending Amplus, many students said they feel safe at school, and they know they can rely on the staff because they do their best for the interests of the students, and they do their best to keep students safe emotionally and physically. A student said, "I like how teachers tackle problems with classroom behavior. If there is a problem, the teachers help solve that problem in class right away." Other students shared they appreciated the counselors for their helpfulness and availability. Several students explained many of the Amplus students have grown up together because they entered school together in kindergarten. A student said, "We have good support. We all know each other and it's nice having that support system." A few other students mentioned student council is receptive to student input. Student council also helps create and coordinate school events. A student said, "The school doesn't discriminate - we all come together as a family. What makes Amplus different is we can make friends easily, and we can all come together and get along and talk."
2. Students appreciate the math curricular changes that have occurred at Amplus. A student said, "It was really difficult at first for me to manage homework with math. Now, I have time for extra-curriculars and have time for homework. I don't have a lot of homework, but I can manage my homework now with the curriculum change from APA math. Before it was quantity (lots of problems to solve), now the math problems are fewer, but challenging and manageable." Numerous students agreed with this comment and shared very similar personal experiences. Another student shared, "Education now seems to be more tailored to our individual learning needs. The quality of the homework is greater. I don't have 30 problems a night, but maybe seven. And when we come back to class, we spend time working through the problems and make sure everyone in class understands how to work through the problems. Another student said, "During class, teachers will take the concepts one by one and step by step, so we understand. If teachers don't know something, they will tell us they don't know. According to students, the education now seems to be more tailored to their individual learning needs. Another student agreed with this sentiment, saying, "We get to work in groups. There are teacher led activities, but then we get to work in groups. There is also individual attention, when the teachers will come and spend time with a student 1:1 until I understand. I don't feel rushed. There is a hybrid between working independently and working in groups. There are table groups, and we are allowed to help each other understand the concept."
3. When asked if there were times students provided feedback to teachers or the school, several students reported teachers send out feedback forms at the end of a unit or a term in which students can voluntarily provide suggestions for improvement. Another technique used by teachers is sticky notes handed out to students. Students are asked to write down two things they would like to see the teacher do to improve their teaching. A third example of student feedback mentioned included teachers asking students to respond in Google on a scale of one to four. Students described it this way, saying "one being I don't understand and four being I understand and can

teach this.” Other students said teachers are good at reading the classes and can tell if one or more students need help. A few students shared that had not been their experience. One student said, “Amplus could work on requesting feedback a little bit more.” Another said, “I am not asked for feedback, I have to email the teacher or the school if I want to suggest something or if I need information.”

Leadership:

1. Leadership was asked to share their plan for increasing enrollment of diverse student groups, including students who receive free and reduced lunch (FRL), are English learners (EL), and/or learners with individualized education plans (IEP). Leadership stated Amplus does not market or advertise for student applications. “Amplus has always worked on word-of-mouth because seats are limited every year. Most students enter in kindergarten and remain enrolled at Amplus through 12th grade.” Families with siblings enroll their children as they become ready for kindergarten. The only real space for adding students is in kindergarten. Leadership stated, “We do not currently reach out for community partnerships. We would like to see state funding to assist in this endeavor.” Leadership shared they are applying for the 21st century grant for before and after school programs. “There is a need for this in our community. The reality is we have a desire to partner, but space and funding are issues.” Amplus reports they currently spend \$800,000 over the funds Nevada state provides for special services. Leadership reports the Rainbow campus is currently 40% FRL and the Durango campus is 30% FRL. “We are planning on offering the free and reduced lunch program in the future. We do know many families do not want to complete the form. There is reticence to complete the application for free and reduced lunch. We work with our student support office to educate families on completing the form, letting them know what services are available.” Leadership reports the student support office efforts have proven beneficial for family outreach. Leadership also pointed to their growth over time data regarding FRL, EL and IEP populations. “We have improved our system for identifying special populations, we have grown into it.”
2. Amplus Durango had a curricular reset during the pandemic: a new English language arts (ELA) curriculum and a new math curriculum was introduced for elementary for the 2021-2022 year. Leadership emphasized the school is still based on the trivium theoretical framework rooted in grammar, logic and rhetoric. “The goal of Amplus is for students to enter their formative education in kindergarten and remain with Amplus through senior high school.” In-service trainings regarding the classical curricula approach occur at the beginning of each year as new teachers are brought on-board. Amplus is implementing MTSS strategies and the MTSS offerings have been adapted to the trivium alignment of the school. It is very important to leadership that students understand and practice a growth mindset with meaningful communication between peers and adults, as well as meaningful and productive conversations regarding their learning. Human resources, finance, branding, and marketing are all in-house services. “We do have some outside contractors: adaptive physical education, audiologists, an occupational therapist, school psychologist. Contractors are sought when the need arises.” There have been lots of individual conversations to re-train teachers, students, and families on the transition from American Preparatory Academy (APA) to the current Amplus standard and new curricula, according to school leadership, and there are numerous micro-conversations occurring daily facilitating the transitional understanding of the new mindset of Amplus.

The school uses MyEducationData² data in grades 7-12 during study hall. Leadership shared students log into the software program and can see their absences, tardiness, and grades. There

² MyEducationData is a tool parents can use to access student academic standing, academic growth, academic notes, testing scores, and information such as address, contacts, schedule, and transcripts.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

are badges students can earn in character development education during study hall. Students have access to their MyEducationData at all times, but they specifically log in during study hall, ensuring students see their individuated data once per week as reported by the Leadership team. There is also a social-emotional learning (SEL) day each month in which students experience lessons on individual social-emotional responses and personal responsibility to challenging circumstances. Leadership shared there is a concerted effort network wide that social-emotional stability is a day-to-day focus for student growth.

3. In addition to the ELA and math curricular changes, Amplus Durango is looking to expand its current Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings. Amplus offers four CTE programs, video broadcasting, business and marketing, theater technology, and computer science in partnership with Truckee Community College. Students can graduate with an associate degree (AA) in science and in the arts. Amplus is pursuing a grant to bring in a health sciences AA offering. “We are also looking to ensure we have representation in each of these programs. For example, computer science has numerous Asian male students, and we would like to recruit females and more diverse ethnicities.” Currently there are seven students enrolled in CTE offerings at Amplus. The goal for the 22-23 academic year is to have 100% increase in enrollment. We have confirmed there will be a minimum of 14 candidates in CTE programs for the 20223-2023 academic year.
4. Discipline issues have been challenging post COVID lockdown and a return to in-person learning. Leadership stated there has been an increase in undesired classroom behaviors and a need to relearn and re-direct civil conversations. “Families like the discipline system when their child has committed an infraction. Many families are not in agreement when another family’s child committed an infraction. When we hold students accountable for their actions, such as cheating, sometimes the parents want to push back. We go back to the Amplus standard and remind families on the integrity of the standard and the agreement families signed when enrolling at Amplus.” Leadership said there are ongoing conversations on how to educate families regarding restorative justice. Educating families on school policies and procedures is a work in progress. Amplus has a parent group, called the Parent Archer Community (PAC), that schedules time and meets with the principal. The website is updated with finances monthly. Once testing data arrives, the reports are also available on the website. There is a parent Facebook page and a newsletter that is emailed out as reported by the Leadership team. The school also uses archer cards that can be given out to students when faculty and staff see students following the rules.
5. Leadership said there is an active search for an English Learner (EL) coordinator. “We have a class for students who need specific interventions,” according to school leaders. The I-Excel software platform is used during professional development at the beginning of the year to offer instructional strategies for EL learners and interested faculty. Leadership shared, “Parental support from the EL population is tremendous. Families offer their translation services. We also contract with specific translators as needed.” MyEducationData assists administration in identifying students of EL needs. The Response to Intervention (RTI) facilitator trains at the school level and at grade level. Enrichment time is built into the day for students needing special services. “We also provide for homeless families and families impacted by COVID through the student services office.” Students with special needs are co-taught. Leadership reported some teachers co-teach well and others will take a back-seat and say: “Just let me know if you need me. More training for both the general education teacher as well as for special education teachers would be beneficial school wide.”

6. Leadership reports teachers have become more reflective of their practice with the math and ELA curricular changes. “Teachers ask to visit colleagues’ classes and observe teaching. Collaborate on ideas on how best to deliver an activity or lesson.” Administration ensures they will cover a class for those teachers who want to visit another classroom. While there is planned professional learning community (PLC) time weekly, Amplus is looking to be more intentional with their PLC. Last year, the network completed a book study. The principal completed training on formative assessment with West-ED. Leadership said, “We are looking forward to seeing the next step in formative assessments.”

Staff:

1. Staff reported they meet as a grade level or department to plan weekly for 50 minutes during common prep times. Staff shared their appreciation for having a data consultant but would like the staff to know how to interpret the data themselves. Teachers shared they would very much like professional development to show us how to interpret and utilize the data for instructional decision making. Several teachers said they want PD time specifically to meet by grade and content areas to curriculum map and align the curriculum vertically.
2. Staff discussed ways they differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of second language learners, low achieving students, and students with an IEP. Staff explained they now have a special education (SPED) department. Staff reported the SPED department provides push-and push-out services for students with an IEP. Staff shared it would be helpful if there were a clear RTI process and a clearly defined referral process for testing and getting students services. Staff members said, “If class sizes were smaller that would help. Currently our class size average is 33 students.” Staff members reported they utilizes peers to help translate. Given their diverse teaching staff, there is a lot of support with translating when needed according to focus group participants.
3. Staff shared their excitement about the change from APA to Amplus. Staff reported the APA curriculum was really old and didn’t teach the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS). Staff report the curriculum has changed every year for the last 3 years. One staff member said, “APA was very soldier like and now we can teach outside the box.” Staff reported they are now striving towards meeting the needs of each individual child. Another staff member said, “Previously with APA, there was constant battle between the staff not wanting to follow the timelines given to teach the lessons because our students were not ready to move on. Since the switch to Amplus, we can focus on teaching the standards and target specific students.” One staff member said, “I can take the good stuff from APA rather than having any bureaucratic restraints and teach it according to what my students need.” Staff said, “We had a toolbox, and we were not allowed to use anything outside of the toolbox at APA. Now at Amplus, we are able to bring our own tools.”

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOTALS

A total of 36 classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the evaluation. Amplus Durango Elementary School was identified as having a rating of a two-star in 2018-2019. Given the Notice of Concern, a majority of the classroom's observations were conducted at the elementary classroom level.

I. Classroom Environment					
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Areas 1 & 2 Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport Establishing a Culture for Learning	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, and the teacher demonstrates a passionate commitment to the subject.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring and a genuine culture for learning.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict with a minimal culture for learning.	Classroom interactions between the teacher and students are negative and do not represent a culture for learning.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 8	Total: 26	Total: 2	Total: 0	Total: 0
	Students ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among classmates and assume much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning.	Interactions reflect cultural and developmental differences of students. Teacher and students are committed to the subject.	Interactions may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity and inconsistent expectations for student achievement.	Interactions are characterized by sarcasm, put-downs, and/or conflict. There is a low teacher commitment to the subject and few instances of students taking pride in their work.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 6	Total: 28	Total: 1	Total: 0	Total: 1
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Areas 3 & 4 Managing Classroom Procedures	Classroom routines and procedures appear seamless and student behavior is entirely appropriate.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and the teacher ensures smooth functioning with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 8	Total: 25	Total: 3	Total: 0	Total: 0
	There appears to be no misbehavior during the observation. The teacher monitoring of student behavior is subtle and/or preventative.	Teacher responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Teacher tries to establish standards of conduct for students and monitor behavior. These efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is unsuccessful in monitoring student behavior.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 6	Total: 26	Total: 4	Total: 0	Total: 0

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOTALS

II. Classroom Instruction					
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Area 5 Purpose and Explanation of Content, Lesson, Unit or Classroom Activity	The purpose of the lesson or unit is clear and connects with student's real-life experiences. The explanation of content is imaginative, and students contribute to the lesson by participating and or explaining concepts to their peers.	The purpose for the lesson or learning activity is clear. The teacher's explanation of content is appropriate, and connects with students.	The teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose, with limited success. The explanation of the content is uneven; some is done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.	The purpose for the lesson, learning activity is unclear. Teacher's explanation of the content is unclear, confusing or uses inappropriate language.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 4	Total: 28	Total: 1	Total: 0	Total: 3
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Area 6 A Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	Students formulate and ask high-level questions.	Teacher formulates and asks several high-level questions.	Teacher questioning and discussion techniques are uneven with some high-level questions.	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low level questions, limited student participation and little true discussion.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 0	Total: 20	Total: 6	Total: 5	Total: 5
B	Students assume responsibility for the participation of most students in the discussion.	Teachers assumes responsibility for the discussion which includes most students.	There is some attempt by the teacher to initiate student discussion and student participation.	There is little to no student discussion even though the opportunity is there.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 0	Total: 23	Total: 3	Total: 5	Total: 5

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOTALS

II. Classroom Instruction (continued)					
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Area 7 A Engaging Students in Learning	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson. The pacing and structure of the lesson allows high levels of student engagement.	Students appear to be intellectually engaged throughout most of the lesson. The pacing and structure of the lesson is suitable for this group of students.	Students are partially engaged throughout the lesson.	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 4	Total: 25	Total: 7	Total: 0	Total: 0
	Students make contributions to the representation of content.	There are appropriate activities, and instructive representations of content.	The representation of content or structure/pacing is uneven.	There are inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure/pacing.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
B	Total: 3	Total: 29	Total: 4	Total: 0	Total: 0
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Area 8 A	Students are aware of the learning goals/targets for themselves during this instructional timeframe.	Most of the students are aware of the learning goals/targets for themselves during this instructional timeframe.	Some of the students are aware of the learning goals/targets for themselves during this instructional timeframe.	Students are not aware of the learning goals/learning target during this instructional time frame.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 5	Total: 31	Total: 0	Total: 0	Total: 2
Using Formative Assessment in Instruction B	The teacher purposefully and consistently provides clear, descriptive feedback in regard to student's demonstration/understanding of the learning goal/target. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	Much of the time, the teacher, provides clear, descriptive feedback regarding student's understanding/ demonstration of learning goal/target. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	At times, the teacher provides clear, descriptive feedback but not in a consistent manner regarding learning goal/target. Observing where the work was meeting and where it was not. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	The teacher does not provide clear, descriptive feedback regarding learning goal/target and does not observing where the work is and where it is not meeting. The feedback is not timely and is not in a reasonable amount.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 3	Total: 28	Total: 0	Total: 0	Total: 5

Additional information about the classroom observations shared here when applicable

1. In one second grade classroom, students responded to the teacher's questions about the American revolution. Learning targets were projected on the white board and easily visible. As students responded, they were encouraged to state what they liked about their peers' efforts. For example, one student provided a fact. Another student said, "I appreciate how you used your text to validate your statement."
2. In one elementary classroom, students took turns reading a text. During the lesson, the teacher asked higher level questions and used visuals to deepen students understanding of the concepts.
3. In one middle school classroom, the teacher provided whole group instruction to teach geometry. After whole group instruction, the teacher facilitated small group activities.
4. In one elementary classroom, the teacher facilitated classroom discussions by asking text dependent questions.
5. In one elementary classroom, the teacher provided whole group instruction and used visuals to teach vocabulary.
6. In one elementary classroom, the teacher asked questions and the students responded by calling out collectively or raising their hands and waiting to be called upon. In one instance, a student called out a response and then another student responded aloud. The teacher sharply said "Do not call out. Raise your hand. When you call out it creates a waterfall effect and then others shout out. Fix it now."
7. In one elementary classroom, the teacher modeled appropriate social skills by making a mistake and displaying appropriate responses. The teacher asked students for feedback to see if she had an appropriate response. Students reflected on how they would respond appropriately in that situation.
8. In one elementary classroom, the teacher used attention grabbers to praise students for following the expectations and answering questions correctly.
9. In one elementary classroom, the teacher modeled written response answers on the board. Students took turns sharing their answers and the teacher modeled how to properly formulate sentences.
10. In one middle school classroom, students collectively worked on root words using hand gestures.
11. In one elementary grade classroom, the teacher reinforced positive behaviors and supportive peer comments. Each time a student spoke, peers raised their hands and would reinforce the student's efforts by stating such things as, "I like the way you projected your voice so the whole class could hear," or "I like the way you used your resources to verify your claim." Each time the students validated a peer, the teacher would high-five the student and say, "I like the way you supported your classmate."
12. In one middle school classroom, teachers asked students to define academic vocabulary in their own words. The teacher further explained each academic vocabulary word and provided real world examples and scenarios.
13. In one upper elementary classroom, the teacher provided whole group instruction on math concepts. During the lesson, the teacher selected students to come to the board to solve the given mathematical equations.
14. In 11 observed classrooms the teachers talked to the students, leading the lesson in a top-down way, unidirectional from the teacher to the students. Students were only asked to respond to low level or fill in the blank type questions. Teachers dominated the conversation rather than engaging the students in a discussion even though the opportunity was there for students to contribute to the content of the lesson.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The SPCSA uses the Organizational Performance Framework to collect evidence of performance and evaluate schools, at least annually, to monitor schools throughout their charter terms, to report to schools and the public annually, to intervene in schools that do not meet expectations and to make high-stakes decisions, including: renewal, non-renewal, possible revocation, expansion, or replication. Most of this work is done through routine submissions by the school to the SPCSA.

A limited number of measures within the organizational performance framework may be at least partially evaluated during the site evaluation process. Measures are partially evaluated based upon evidence from school focus groups, school observations, documents reviewed and information from the school presentation portion of the evaluation. SPCSA staff will note the evidence provided by the school and also outline any questions or potential concerns.

Measure	Description	Evidence Collected
1a	<p>The school implements material terms of the education program. Examples of evidence: The scope and sequence of curricular materials have been vetted to align with the Nevada Academic Content Standards and a plan has been mapped by date to ensure the completion of each standard within the grade or content area.</p> <p>The educational program offered by the school is consistent with the program proposed within the charter application. Ex: math science focus, extended day, arts integrated.</p>	<p>Amplus has included a link to the scope and sequence of curricular materials on the Site Evaluation Data collection form housed in SPCSA Epicenter. These materials appear to be in alignment with the NVACS. School leaders have explained that teachers spend time within the PLC (Professional Learning Community) to review standards-based planning and assessment.</p>
1b	<p>The school complies with applicable education requirements. Examples: Completing the submission of required items to epicenter in a complete and timely manner. (Licensing of staff, Special Education and ELL Handbook and all others) Assessments/Data requirements</p>	<p>Amplus campuses submit epicenter items in a timely manner. The Special Education and ELL handbooks are up to date and the school conducts all necessary testing per state requirements.</p>
1c	<p>The school protects the rights of students with disabilities. Examples: A narrative of processes in place to ensure decisions made by the IEP Team are communicated to all staff who work with the student.</p> <p>A narrative of how the school/campus documents the delivery of service and progress toward achieving the IEP goals.</p>	<p>Staff work to implement procedural requirements of IDEA and Section 504. Support Child Find and promote the inclusion of students with educational disabilities into the general education classroom.</p>

1d	<p>The school protects the rights of ELL students.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>A narrative explaining how content teachers are trained in specific methodologies to provide EL students with meaningful access to content.</p> <p>A description of how EL students are acquiring English language skills in all four domains (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, and writing)</p> <p>A description of how EL student progress within the four domains is monitored.</p>	<p>ELL Learners increasing at the school. From 24 in 19-20 school year to 186 in the 20-21 school year to current 21-22 school year of 209. Amplus has updated the ELL plan and conducts WIDA testing and screening routinely. Amplus provides professional development to teachers and reimbursement for TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) endorsements. An individual ELL plan is created for each qualifying student as well a Parent Engagement Plan for family members.</p>
----	--	---

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Measure	Description	Evidence Collected
3a	<p>The school complies with governance requirements.</p> <p>Examples: Board policies, including those related to oversight of an Education Service Provider, state open meeting law, code of ethics, conflicts of interest, board composition, routine meetings.</p>	<p>Teachers and administrators and support staff are evaluated on a regular basis. Staff are surveyed annually for quality assurances and to audit effectiveness within grade levels and departments. A recruiting video with all recruiting details and videos is provided.</p>
4a	<p>The school protects the rights of all students.</p> <p>Examples: Admissions, waiting lists, fair and open recruitment, enrollment, due process protections, conduct of discipline- (discipline hearings, suspension and expulsion policies and practices, protects student information.</p>	<p>The school offers culturally responsive practices including culturally relevant curriculum, inclusive practices, cooperative groups, and a focus on real-life applications. Staff are trained in multicultural and practices, and implicit bias trainings have taken place. A restorative justice practice with MTSS model is in place. A black student union club has started, and a multicultural night of celebration will be held on April 22, 2022.</p>
5b	<p>The school complies with health and safety requirements.</p> <p>Examples: Timely and accurate submission of epicenter documents: (Crisis/Emergency Response Plan Emergency Operation Plan Certificate of Occupancy) Appropriate nursing services and dispensing of pharmaceuticals, food service, and other health and safety services.</p>	<p>The school conducts routine safety drills. The EOP (Emergency Operations Plan) is updated yearly. Students have access to Safe Voice. The school employs a full-time licensed school psychologist on site at the Rainbow campus the two Amplus campuses share a social worker.</p>

Measures of Progress from Previous Site Evaluations

The extent to which the school has been successful in maintaining areas of strength, removing challenges, and acting upon the recommended items made by the SPCSA during the school's previous evaluation.

<p>School staff ability to address previous recommendations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement a research based formative assessment process to significantly improve student achievement and raise teacher quality 2. Improve current levels of student engagement, relevancy, and student voices in instructional settings. 3. Develop an instructional plan: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Current level assessment B. Identify learning targets C. Link standards to curriculum D. Sequence standards E. The 8 Mathematical practices F. Inclusion model G. RTI plan 4. Improve and implement CTE and Dual Credit Programs
<p>Evidence the school can provide to support the implementation of previous recommendations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing professional development regarding formative instructional strategies; reviewing PLC 2. Ongoing professional development is provided to staff 3. Ongoing professional development is provided to staff 4. Has improved and implemented CTE and dual credit programs
<p>The reasons school will require additional time to fully address the recommended items.</p>	<p>Recommendations from the Site Evaluation have been addressed. Currently, due to the pandemic, new challenges of student learning loss, some unwanted student behaviors and regressive social-emotional learning skills have emerged. The board, leadership team, and staff are working diligently to address the needs of students.</p>

SITE EVALUATION FINDINGS

STRENGTHS

A summary of strengths: Academic, Classroom, Focus Groups, and Organizational Performance Evidence.

1. High levels of safety are consistently implemented across the Amplus schools' network. To gain access to the office of the school, visitors must be granted access at the front entrance. Once school begins doors automatically lock. Office staff identify who is seeking admittance and their purpose for being on school grounds. Visitors gain access using this highly secure procedure. Prior to school, and during drop-off, adults are highly visible in-front of each of the Amplus schools. Adults are present to direct car-line traffic as well as escort students through crosswalks. Arrival and dismissal procedures were observed to be smooth and safe. Traffic does not impede major roadways. Student safety is a priority. Families know the procedures for traffic flow for the observed drop-off of students prior to the start of school. Families try to not to block entrances and exits to neighboring businesses or residences. Adults are visible, engage with families and students both during arrival and dismissal times as well as between classes and in common areas. The Amplus Durango campus was observed by the site evaluation team to have a strong sense of team collaboration during drop off and adult presence in the common areas.
2. The Amplus Network offers a wide range of supports, programs, and extracurricular activities to meet the needs of all students. The Amplus network plans to implement the GATE program for the upcoming school year. In addition to providing tiered level supports for low achieving students, Amplus schools provides supports and interventions for advanced students as well. SPCSA staff observed teachers using academic vocabulary and modelling academic vocabulary during lessons. Leadership reported they have been working on the growth of the CTE program for the Durango secondary students. Amplus has partnered with Truckee Community College and will be applying to expand the program offerings. Amplus Durango has increase their extracurricular offerings from zero clubs to 27 clubs in the 2021-2022 academic year.
3. SPCSA evaluation team observed Amplus Durango teachers using academic language consistently during teaching. Teachers did not reduce the vocabulary of the content. Teachers set appropriate and achievable academic goals. Students responded with modeled academic vocabulary. Overall teachers invested in continually improving student achievement. The teachers at the Durango campus offer high levels of student and teacher engagement. Students were observed to be comfortable within their learning environments. In many cases, the SPCSA evaluation team observed teachers providing clear and timely formative feedback during a lesson and motivating students to more in-depth learning for the upper elementary grades.

CHALLENGES

A summary of challenges as observed through academic achievement indicators, classroom observations, focus group feedback and portions of the Organizational Performance Framework Evidence are described within the body of the report and summarized here.

1. Leadership reported Amplus Durango has challenges with increasing the number of diverse students who receive free and reduced lunch (FRL), are English learners, and/or learners with special needs on IEPs. Amplus Durango is still working on ways to address this challenge. According to the SPCSA's student enrollment data for the 2021-2022 school year, FRL has increased at Amplus Durango from 23.1% to 31.7%. Although Amplus Durango has increased their FRL enrollment numbers, they are still below the SPCSA's average of 43.4%. The IEP percent change for Amplus Durango is below 5%. Although Amplus Durango has increased their IEP enrollment numbers, they are still below the zoned public schools and SPCSA's average of 9.8%. Amplus Durango has increased their EL enrollment numbers from 3.7% to 5.1%. Amplus Durango EL enrollment numbers are below the SPCSA's average of 8.8%.
2. Amplus is faced with staffing challenges. Amplus is addressing this challenge by utilizing teaching staffing platforms to recruit and hire teachers. Amplus recruits qualified candidates from job posting websites by the HR coordinator, who then forwards them to the hiring team conducting interviews. Additionally, sustaining personnel resources are a challenge. There are currently limited resources available for EL students, and while the school is meeting the obligations of EL students, the absence of a quality EL coordinator affects the quality of services provided. Leadership reports there is an active search for an EL coordinator and interviews are taking place as qualified applicants are screened.
3. Upon the return to school, some students at Amplus Durango displayed a need for social-emotional support. Amplus Durango faced many challenges regarding unwanted student behaviors and regressive social skills. Second grade is of specific concern as they did not have formal in-person education dur to COVID prior to the 2021-2022 academic year. Leadership is addressing this challenge through the implementation of the Amplus Standard and restorative practices. Leadership reported they have challenges with staff unity and collective buy-in to the Amplus Standard.
4. Leadership reported challenges with allotting time to collaborate with staff to analyze and discuss student growth data to address student achievement needs. Staff shared they would very much like professional development to explain how to interpret and utilize the data for instructional decision making. Several teachers said they want PD time specifically to meet by grade and content areas to curriculum map and align the curriculum vertically. Staff reported they appreciate the third-party consultant who analyzes data and provide reports for the school but would like to work on building capacity within the Amplus staff for data-based decision-making purposes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended items are provided so charters may increase their school-wide ratings as well as their overall success. Authorizing Team members will follow up on each listed recommendation.

1. The site evaluation team observed 36 classrooms, most were in the distinguished and proficient categories on the Classroom Observation Totals rubric (COT). The SPCSA evaluation team believes Amplus Durango would like to see a distinguished classroom experience for students schoolwide. Providing opportunities for students to contribute more to their own learning and represent classroom content using language specifically from the COT, 6A using questioning and discussion techniques and 7b Engaging students in learning on the COT will assist Amplus in framing advances in: a) improving the quality of classroom instruction and student learning, b) higher level questions and discussion techniques throughout lessons to foster learning for all students, c) implementing new ways of engaging students in the learning process, and d) providing all students with challenging and differentiated instruction.
2. The principal reported initial steps to achieve more classroom student responsibility by completing West Ed's Formative Assessment training during the 2021-2022 school year. SPCSA staff recommend Amplus Durango continue to collaborate and analyze data to inform curricular and instructional decisions. By continuing the West Ed formative assessment training for faculty and staff and implementing practices and strategies school-wide, greater opportunities may arise for students to contribute to the representation of classroom content.
3. SPCSA staff recommend Amplus pursue Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)³ opportunities through the SPCSA in efforts to implement MTSS with fidelity. Leadership reported they have challenges with staff unity and collective buy-in to the Amplus Standard. Members of the leadership team mentioned there were several student learning regression challenges as well as undesirable behaviors resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Training for staff and school wide SEL support through MTSS opportunities, have the potential to provide staff access to Tier 1, 2, and 3 training and resources to address these challenges. It is noted the school has employed MTSS strategies, social-emotional lessons, and restorative justice practices.
4. The SPCSA site evaluation team recommend Amplus Durango formalize a plan to increase enrollment of diverse student groups who receive free and reduced lunch (FRL), are English learners (EL), and/or learners with individualized education plans (IEP). Formalizing a plan may include board and leadership training on diversity efforts, successful recruitment of diverse and historically marginalized populations, and community outreach partnerships. Board members said they have discussed with leadership ways in which to provide more opportunities for diverse student groups that have been historically underserved including implementing a weighted lottery. Board members and leadership expressed they have been challenged in formalizing a plan to increase the diversity of student groups. They have examined utilizing a weighted lottery. The leadership and governing board focus group participants shared they believe a weighted lottery would not mirror a true lottery. When a student completes an application for enrollment in a weighted lottery, they are given priority based on special needs, language acquisition, and free and reduced lunch status. SPCSA staff can be available to collaborate about possible next steps regarding this recommendation.

³ According to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), a multi-tiered system of support is a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision making.

5. SPCSA staff recommend Amplus continue to work on efforts to address staffing challenges. Continue to use teaching staffing outlets to fill positions. Continue to recruit qualified candidates from job posted websites as reported. Additionally, continue to recruit student teachers to fill vacant positions. Please consider hiring an EL specialist or coordinator to provide EL support services to students. Specialists in math and ELA may support teachers in developing higher levels of differentiated teaching strategies

DEFICIENCIES

There were no deficiencies identified for Amplus Academy Durango during this site evaluation.