



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Amplus Academy Durango

Site Evaluation Report: October 1, 2024

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## **Links to Resources:**

- [Nevada School Performance Framework \(NSPF\)](#)
- [SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Results](#)
- [SPCSA Organizational Performance Framework Results](#)
- [SPCSA Financial Performance Framework Results](#)
- [Best Practices](#)

# Executive Summary

This Site Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school evaluation. Pursuant to [NRS 388A.223](#), 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 years of operation. This comprehensive analysis addresses the school's academic and organizational effectiveness.

An analysis of the school's academic and operational success is undertaken by reviewing the most current versions of the Nevada State Performance Framework (NSPF), the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework, and the SPCSA Organizational Performance Framework.

In addition, the Site Evaluation Team conducts classroom observations to assess both the classroom environment and the instructional techniques on the day of the evaluation. The purpose of these observations is to collect evidence using a rubric based on the [Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching](#). All classroom rating outcomes are displayed within this report. The overall numbers provide information about the general nature of instruction at a given school during the day of the site evaluation.

SPCSA staff conducts focus group interviews by speaking with school leaders, governing board members, family members, those employed as staff, and most importantly, students enrolled at the school. The information gained during these focus groups is summarized and included in this report.

The site evaluation is 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 to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations during each year of their charter. Final Site Evaluation Reports are published to the SPCSA website and used in conjunction with other performance information to determine renewal decisions.

# Site Evaluation Findings: Strengths

A summary of strengths as observed through academic achievement indicators, classroom observations, focus group feedback, and portions of the Organizational Performance Framework.

- A major strength at the Amplus Durango campus is the high school's 5-star rating! According to the Nevada School Performance Rating, an index score of 86.5 for the 2022-2023 school year has been officially posted. The high school is recognized as a superior school, exceeding expectations for all students and subgroups on every indicator with little or no exception. The Academic Achievement Indicator measures are outstanding, with a math Proficiency rate of 40.1% compared to a district rate of 24.1%, an English Language Arts Proficiency rate of 77.1% compared to the district rate of 55.7%, and a science Proficiency rate of 30.3% compared to the district rate of 23.6%. The graduation rate of nearly 100%, as compared to the district rate of 83.8%, is to be celebrated and recognized. Finally, the College and Career Readiness Indicators for the Advanced Diploma are 64.3% as compared to the district rate of 54.3%.
- Another strength for Amplus, both the Durango and Rainbow campuses, is the Governing Board's decision to prioritize and improve the procedure for evaluating the Executive Director and the Principal who oversee both campuses. Board members at the focus group said they want to give these leaders higher levels of feedback and detailed information. Amplus Board members outlined changes to provide greater specificity about feedback and goal setting to improve the evaluation procedure significantly. This refinement is a strength.
- Amplus has been proactive in infusing data to support student achievement, which is a strength. The board members, school leaders, and families spoke about an improved communication method taking place at both the Durango and Rainbow campuses. Amplus leaders have developed a weekly newsletter with a school link to My Education Data <sup>1</sup>for each family's children. This change has resulted in a 400% increase in parents checking their child's current academic data, as measured by the number of times a person clicks on the link.
- The high levels of academic outcomes and achievements across all three levels (elementary, middle, and high) at the Durango campus is a strength. The elementary school maintained a 4-star status. Although the middle school maintained a 3-star status, a strength is found within the rise in index score, which increased from 64.5 posted in the fall of 2023 to 69.5 posted in the fall of 2024. A 70 to 79.9 index rating indicates a 4-star school, putting the middle school on the brink of a 4-star status. The high school maintained a 5-star status for the previous two school years. The star ratings at all levels within the Durango campus are a strength.

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<sup>1</sup> My Education Data is a provides parents, students, and staff easy and understandable access to student information.

- Although both Amplus campuses have been recognized in previous site evaluation reports for strong levels of proactive methods for student behavior, Amplus has taken measures to strengthen these initiatives further. Amplus has strengthened its commitment to student Social Emotional Learning (SEL) platforms and practices schoolwide. At the Durango and Rainbow campuses, Archers in the Making (AIM) continues to improve. This department oversees resources to enrich students' lives through core value development. The Ingenium program is for students in grades 6-12. Students take part in a curriculum that guides them through weekly values for clarification exercises to learn and practice relevant skills designed to support them throughout the next phases of their lives. Monthly themes are followed throughout the school year, beginning in August with "Focus and Intellectuality" and concluding in May with "Hard Work and Diligence." Additionally, Amplus has adopted the Leader in Me program during this 2024-2025 school year. The initiative, based on Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, is designed to equip students with essential leadership skills that will serve them both on campus, at home, and in the future.

# Site Evaluation Findings: Challenges

A summary of challenges as observed through academic achievement indicators, classroom observations, focus group feedback, and portions of the Organizational Performance Framework.

- Chronic absenteeism at all levels—elementary, middle, and high—continues to be a challenge at Amplus Durango. Staff reported ways they are addressing chronic absenteeism, including phone calls home to families and incentives for coming to school on a regular basis.
- As self-reported, a gap exists between the scores Amplus students attain on the (MAP) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests and the grades students earn per teacher grade books. The grades are not consistent. Amplus leadership is currently addressing this.
- As Amplus is dedicated to improving instructional methods and moving student achievement outcomes even higher, a challenge exists with consistency in the highest levels of instructional best practices, and there is room for improvement. There is ample opportunity for the Amplus Durango campus to increase learning outcomes and for teachers to move from "Proficient," as noted on pages 16-18 of this report, to "Distinguished."

# Site Evaluation Findings: Recommendations

Recommended items are provided so charter schools may increase their school-wide performance and overall success. The Site Evaluation Team will follow up on these recommendations in preparation for the subsequent site evaluation.

- According to the Classroom Observational Data on pages 16-21 of this report, it is recommended that the Amplus campus focus efforts on improving instructional levels from proficient to distinguished. Focus may include ensuring all students can explain the purpose of a lesson and are aware of the learning goals during each learning activity. In addition, students may be more intellectually stimulated by engaging in more high-level questions daily. To this end, the leadership team members may consider increasing the number and frequency of walkthroughs, especially in middle school.
- It is recommended that Amplus refine the plan to lower chronic absenteeism at each level of the Amplus Durango campus. Currently, the elementary school has 14.9%, the middle has 10.3%, and the high school has 17.7%. Improved outcomes will bolster the overall star rating and index scores and student learning at all levels at the Durango campus.
- SPCSA staff recommends that the Amplus Durango Leadership Team create an action plan to improve the Adequate Growth Percentiles (AGPs) of English Language Learners, specifically in middle school. The AGP of 16.0% is below the district rate of 27.2%. Increasing the AGPs of English Language Learners will support students' progress toward becoming proficient in English.
- The SPCSA staff recommends the Amplus Durango Leadership Team ensure participation penalties are not administered in the 2024-25 Nevada School Rating, specifically in the two or more races sub-category in the elementary school Academic Achievement Indicator. The 92.5% rates in English Language Arts and Math did not meet the minimal requirement of 95%, which resulted in the flag. In the first year of flags, a school will receive a "participation warning" but will have no points deducted. A second consecutive year of flags will result in a school receiving a "participation penalty," and points will be deducted from the Academic Achievement Indicator.

# Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations

Strong recommendations identified during this site evaluation are listed here, if applicable.

There were no strong recommendations issued for Amplus Durango during this site evaluation.



# Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies

Deficiencies identified during this site evaluation are listed here, if applicable.

There were no Deficiencies issued for Amplus Durango during this site evaluation.

# Focus Group Participation Data

Focus groups are conducted on the day of the site evaluation and last for 45 minutes. During an abbreviated site evaluation, focus groups are not conducted.

Name of Focus Group	Number of Participants
Governing Board <sup>2</sup>	3
Family Members, Parents, and Guardians	8
Faculty and Staff	14
School Leadership	10
Students	12

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<sup>2</sup> Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

# Focus Group Summary: Governing Board

Three Amplus Academy Governing Board members met to discuss the Durango and Rainbow campuses. Board members were asked to discuss some of the highlights at each campus. One of the board members said, "I am impressed by the scores at both campuses and the amazing oversight at both campuses. A second board member added, "The Durango campus is kindergarten through twelfth grade and offers a dual enrollment for students to attend and earn college credit while attending high school." Board members were proud of the Gifted and Talented Programs at each of the campuses and the strong levels of communication between the school and families. One board member explained a recent improvement and described a process where family members receive the school newsletter with an attached link at the bottom. The link takes family members to specific data about their child through a company called My Education Data.

Board members discussed goals. One board member commented, "We are going to build a stadium and add several extracurricular activities. We have a retention issue at the high school, and we are working to change that. Our staff retention rate is high, and we know our families and students develop strong relationships with each other.

The board confirmed they evaluate the Executive Director and the building principal on a yearly basis. The board is currently working on a change to the evaluation to make it more detailed. One board member explained, "We have high expectations. Each of us (board members) gets a copy of the evaluation and rates the leader. Then, we come up with the final score. We need to get more granular in how we grade her. It's our responsibility to put that in writing. By being more specific, we will be able to identify themes in performance and ways to find new goals for growth. We also need to offer constructive criticism. Another board member commented, "I've asked Human Resources to find out what other charter schools are doing when they evaluate. A true job description and pay scale will be included in the changes. This is part of our strategic plan."

When asked to contrast the two Amplus campuses, board members said there are several similarities but some differences. A board member commented, "I've come to the Durango campus and walked around, and I was impressed with how the students and staff treat each other. It is very structured and disciplined." Another board member explained, "The staff is very dedicated to the process of learning at both campuses, and everyone I meet impresses me with their knowledge." A different board member said, "We have been told we can come and sit in on classes, and it is interesting to do so. The Amplus Rainbow campus was built for little kids. They have created the school for smaller bodies and younger students. But there is great mentorship between the teachers on both campuses and the resources at both schools are equal."

# Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians

Eight family members participated in the focus group on the day of the site evaluation. Several parents spoke about the positive aspects of the Amplus Durango campus. One parent said she appreciated the emphasis on college visits on campus and college entrance exams, notably the ACT and SAT preparation. Another parent said she liked the College partnership and getting access to devices. "I like the option of my child being able to graduate with a high school diploma and an AA degree." Another parent said her child likes to come to school and likes the uniform, "My child feels like he looks handsome." Parents said they like the curriculum and feel their children receive a quality education. Family members appreciate the continuous flow of information and communication from the school. "If my child or I need help on my child's work, I can receive help at the school. I am happy with that."

When asked about suggestions to improve the school, family members spoke about extracurricular activities, the school website, and up-to-date grade posting. One family member said, "I would like the number and type of extracurricular activities to increase; for example, a debate club would be optimal." In addition, families said they feel the school has not been as communicative regarding after-school activities and extracurriculars as they have been in the past. Many parents said they would volunteer after school if they knew of the opportunities. Another parent asked to have the school website updated. A few parents would like some improvements regarding the posting of grades from some teachers at the school. "One of my children's teachers puts grades in consistently; my other child's teacher has one grade for several weeks. I am trying to make my child accountable, but when the adult isn't accountable, how can I communicate and make the school accountable?" Several parents agreed and said the consistency ranges up to two weeks before grades are put into the system. Parents commented that they would like to see more literature coming home and more writing assignments.

Family members said the school leaders are approachable. One parent commented, "I feel I can approach and speak with the school leaders, but closure is not always met." Another parent added, "Solutions are inconsistent, and we are not always told if a resolution is met or what the final decision is." A third parent said, "This can be frustrating at times." Parents appreciate attending school events such as Archer Fest, fundraisers, and sporting events. One family member said, "The school has gotten a little better at trying to do more and bring in school-wide events for family and student participation." Family members unanimously said they feel welcome at the school and are invited to any classroom. Families are grateful for those who volunteer at the school and appreciate the front office staff for trying to remember everyone's names.

# Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff

Fourteen staff members attended the focus group. Teachers spoke about how students know what they are supposed to be learning and how the teachers have the students measure their understanding of content. One teacher said she places success criteria or ways a student will know they have mastered the content on the board before every lesson, and the students review it before each lesson. A second teacher said she reviews the success criteria, uses a checklist, and asks students to check in and let her know if they met the learning targets throughout the lesson. A third teacher said she asks students to hold up one, two, three, four, or five fingers to indicate how well they understand the lesson. A fourth teacher said she uses exit tickets to check students' understanding of the materials that day. One teacher said she assesses students throughout the lesson by asking students to email her during the lesson if they do not understand- this way, she can identify and support those students who may be too shy to speak up during the lesson.

The faculty was asked how Amplus Durango provides consistent expectations for student behavior across the campus. One teacher said they use an acronym for expected behaviors (AMPLUS) throughout the day, including lunch, recess, and common areas. This provides a common language for all adults, and the expectations for students are clear. In addition, students in grades seven through twelve use the Ingenium program, which debuted at the start of the 2021-2022 school year. The purpose of the Ingenium curriculum is to guide students through weekly values clarification exercises and teach relevant skills they can take with them throughout the next phases of their lives. The sixth-grade students use Ingenium Light, which is an introduction to the Ingenium model. The kindergarten through fifth-grade students implemented the Leader in Me curriculum, an evidence-based model that guides students and staff to create high-trust cultures and accelerate academic achievement.

Staff spoke appreciatively about the school's onboarding/mentorship program. An Amplus playbook is referred to so that specific information will be provided. A staff member commented, "The program is well received because staff meet with peers, and we get honest feedback. We are not intimidated, and the one-on-one relationship is truly helpful." Another staff member added, "Mentors are tasked with being the cheerleader for the mentee, and the positivity encourages the mentee and supports a strong school culture."

Staff members shared several examples of student successes. One staff member said, "We had a student who was not doing well in reading. By the time he got to fourth grade, he had improved his ability, and his teachers rallied around him. He was excited and now likes to read as a fifth grader." A high school teacher shared an anecdote about a credit-deficient student who worked to complete summer school to erase those deficiencies. He thought he was caught up. He was one credit short. He was devastated. The teacher wrote him an encouraging note. The student worked to eradicate the deficiency, graduated, and, at graduation, told the teacher he had kept her note, which meant a great deal to him. The teacher was touched and shared that the young man's tenaciousness changed his future trajectory.

# Focus Group Summary: School Leadership

Ten Amplus leadership staff members met to discuss the Durango and Rainbow campuses. The school principal was asked if she continues to meet with each staff member on a yearly basis to determine if staff will remain at the campus from one school year to the next. She said, “I do. I meet with staff beginning in January, including all paraprofessionals and office staff. It’s been a boost in retention, and it helps refocus goals. I can remind staff of the tuition reimbursement program during these sessions. In addition, there are times when I have had hard conversations as people realize this profession may not be for them.” The school leader explained that the school had an 88.1% teacher retention rate from last year. She said this is the fourth school year that tuition reimbursement is offered. The school principal stated, “We currently have ten out of sixteen full-time teachers who have gone through licensure programs and who were former paraprofessionals. Six are completing the program. 72.8% of our teachers are fully licensed. In addition, I mentor four people enrolled in higher education school administrator licensure programs.”

School leaders discussed previous SPCSA recommendations. A leader at the school said they are excited to have a lunch program and proper lunchroom and want to make sure they are implementing such a program correctly. Leaders stated that they expect to have a rollout of a school lunch program in the 2026-2027 school year. Leaders provided an update on moving teacher instructional levels from proficient to distinguished. One school leader said, “We have instructional coaches at each campus at the elementary level and two at each campus at the secondary level. We are being strategic with the coaches, team leads, and assistant principals to drive home the idea that students need to be speaking and presenting. In addition, we are making it clear that Chromebooks are not to be used as a one-to-one driver for engagement. Students need to be speaking and presenting.”

Leadership team members were asked to comment on arriving at consistency between teacher gradebooks versus the interim testing achievement scores, as this was a goal written into the School Performance Plan. One leader commented, “Just last week, we held a professional development session on this. We had all the secondary staff in the room, gave them a gradebook, and asked them to grade a common assignment. We had about 50 different scores. We asked teachers to rationalize their scores. Then we had a basic conversation about measures and how important it is to have consistency and how confusing this might be from the perspective of a student or family member.” The leadership team said that data chats with parents have been successful in helping to show family members the importance of standards-based tests, which will indicate how a child is doing compared to their grade level. Leaders said the students themselves are responding to having the data chats and conversations with teachers. One leader commented, “The teachers are putting comments in the gradebook now and being more intentional about their notations and their metrics.”

# Focus Group Summary: Students

Twelve students in grades three through 12 participated in the focus group. Students were asked how comfortable they felt bringing a topic of concern to an adult on the campus. One student said they are comfortable talking to one of their teachers and counselors. Two other students echoed that, with a third student adding that other adults, such as administration team members and school coaches, are trustworthy and approachable.

Several students commented about the rules at school. One student shared, “The rules are reasonable boundaries.” Another student added, “There is no violence here. The rules work.” The students said they didn’t like the insistence on the name tags. One student said, “They are a bit excessive.” Another student pointed out the example that he had his name tag on, but his cardigan was covering it, and no adult pointed it out. Still, his parents received a notification, and he received a notification. Students went on to explain notifications. A student said, “If you receive five notifications, you get a detention or in-school suspension.” A student, new to the school, remarked that he didn’t know he was given a notification and didn’t know he could go to clear it up. He wished the adults would check in with the students first to see if the students were complying or could correct it before receiving a notification.

Students volunteered information about the carline and carpool. They said it is “stressful and inefficient. We wait in the sun; it gets hot, sticky, sweaty, smelly. We don’t have time to talk to our teachers after school because our parents have such a quick time to pick us up. If we are doing something inside, our parents are sent back to the end of the line.”

Students overwhelmingly said they are comfortable talking to their teachers if they don’t understand a concept. Students said they would ask for help and believed the teachers helped. One student said she could ask her current teacher or go to a teacher she had the previous school year and get assistance. Another student said, “My teacher will walk students through a problem step-by-step, then ask the students to complete a problem on their own, and then she will check it.”

Students spoke about the quality of learning. One student said she was proud that she learned how to do absolute value equations. She commented, “Once I figured it out, it was much easier than I originally thought.” Another student said he was new to Amplus Durango this year, and he was learning to adapt to a new environment. He said he was nervous about an upcoming dance test. He commented, “My teacher was new last year and let me know. She was kind, and she made me feel at ease. Now I feel confident that I will do well here.”

Students commented positively on Amplus Durango. One student said, “Leadership is emphasized; it is engaging and safe. It is strict; you will learn many things that will prepare you for life and college.” Another student said he has been here for six years. “I have learned many things and recently read something I wrote at the beginning of the year. Just reading that helped me realize I have learned so much since the beginning of the year.”

# Classroom Environment and Instruction

## Observation Rubric

A total of 22 elementary, 20 middle, and 18 high school classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

<b>Classroom Environment</b>					
	<b>Distinguished</b>	<b>Highly Proficient</b>	<b>Approaching Proficient</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
<b>Classroom Learning Environment is Conducive to Learning</b>	<p>The teacher demonstrates knowledge and caring about individual students' lives beyond the class and school.</p> <p>When necessary, students respectfully correct one another.</p> <p>Students participate without fear of put-downs or ridicule from either the teacher or other students.</p> <p>The teacher respects and encourages students' efforts.</p>	<p>Talk between the teacher and students and among students is uniformly respectful.</p> <p>The teacher successfully responds to disrespectful behavior among students.</p> <p>Students participate willingly but may be somewhat hesitant to offer their ideas in front of classmates.</p> <p>The teacher makes general connections with individual students.</p>	<p>The quality of interactions between teachers and students, or among students, is uneven, with occasional disrespect or insensitivity.</p> <p>The teacher attempts to respond to disrespectful behavior among students with uneven results.</p> <p>The teacher attempts to make connections with individual students, but student reactions indicate that these attempts are not entirely successful.</p>	<p>The teacher is disrespectful toward or insensitive to students' ages, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels.</p> <p>Students' body language indicates feelings of hurt, discomfort, or insecurity.</p> <p>The teacher displays no familiarity with, or care about, individual students.</p>	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	<b>TOTAL: 4</b>	<b>TOTAL: 43</b>	<b>TOTAL: 12</b>	<b>TOTAL: 1</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	<p>The teacher communicates passion for the subject.</p> <p>Students indicate through their questions and comments a desire to understand content.</p> <p>Students assist their classmates in understanding the content.</p>	<p>The teacher communicates the importance of the content and the conviction that with hard work all students can master the material.</p> <p>The teacher conveys an expectation of high levels of student effort.</p> <p>Students expend good effort to complete work of high quality.</p>	<p>The teachers' energy for the work is neutral.</p> <p>The teacher conveys high expectations for only some students.</p> <p>Students exhibit a limited commitment to completing the work on their own.</p> <p>The teacher's primary concern appears to be to complete the task at hand.</p>	<p>The teacher conveys that there is little or no purpose for the work, or that the reasons for doing it are due to external factors.</p> <p>The teacher conveys to at least some students that the work is too challenging for them.</p> <p>Students exhibit little or no pride in their work.</p>	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	<b>TOTAL: 3</b>	<b>TOTAL: 40</b>	<b>TOTAL: 16</b>	<b>TOTAL: 1</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>



# Classroom Environment and Instruction

## Observation Rubric

A total of 22 elementary, 20 middle, and 18 high school classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

<b>Classroom Instruction</b>					
	<b>Distinguished</b>	<b>Highly Proficient</b>	<b>Approaching Proficient</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
<b>Communicating with Students</b>	<p>If asked, students can explain what they are learning and where it fits into the larger curriculum context.</p> <p>The teacher explains content clearly and imaginatively.</p> <p>The teacher invites students to explain the content to their classmates.</p> <p>Students use academic language correctly.</p>	<p>The teacher states clearly, at some point during the lesson, what the students will be learning.</p> <p>The teacher's explanation of content is clear and invites student participation and thinking.</p> <p>The teacher makes no content errors.</p> <p>Students engage with the learning task, indicating that they understand what they are to do.</p>	<p>The teacher provides little elaboration or explanation about what students will be learning.</p> <p>The teacher's explanation of the content consists of a monologue, with minimal participation or intellectual engagement by students.</p> <p>The teacher may make minor content errors.</p> <p>The teacher must clarify the learning task.</p>	<p>At no time during the lesson does the teacher convey to students what they will be learning.</p> <p>Students indicate through body language or questions that they don't understand the content being presented.</p> <p>Students indicate through their questions that they are confused about the learning task.</p>	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	<b>TOTAL: 3</b>	<b>TOTAL: 38</b>	<b>TOTAL: 14</b>	<b>TOTAL: 2</b>	<b>TOTAL: 3</b>
<b>Using Questioning and Discussion Strategies</b>	<p>Students initiate higher-order questions.</p> <p>The teacher builds on and uses student responses to questions to deepen student understanding.</p> <p>Students extend the discussion, enriching it.</p> <p>Virtually all students are engaged.</p>	<p>The teacher uses open-ended questions, inviting students to think and/or offer multiple possible answers.</p> <p>Discussions enable students to talk to one another without ongoing mediation by the teacher.</p> <p>Many students actively engage in the discussion.</p>	<p>The teacher frames some questions designed to promote student thinking, but many have a single correct answer.</p> <p>The teacher invites students to respond directly to one another's ideas, but few students respond.</p> <p>The teacher calls on many students, but only a small number participate.</p>	<p>Questions are rapid-fire and convergent with a single correct answer.</p> <p>The teacher does not ask students to explain their thinking.</p> <p>Only a few students dominate the discussion.</p>	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	<b>TOTAL: 4</b>	<b>TOTAL: 26</b>	<b>TOTAL: 16</b>	<b>TOTAL: 3</b>	<b>TOTAL: 11</b>

# Classroom Environment and Instruction

## Observation Rubric

A total of 22 elementary, 20 middle, and 18 high school classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

Classroom Instruction					
	Distinguished	Highly Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	<p>Virtually all students are engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Lesson activities require high-level student thinking and explanations of their thinking.</p> <p>Students have an opportunity for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate their understanding.</p>	<p>Most students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Most learning tasks have multiple correct responses or approaches and/or encourage higher-order thinking.</p> <p>Students are invited to explain their thinking as part of completing tasks.</p> <p>The pacing of the lesson provides students with the time needed to be intellectually engaged.</p>	<p>Some students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Learning tasks are a mix of those requiring thinking and those requiring recall.</p> <p>Student engagement with the content is largely passive.</p> <p>The pacing of the lesson is uneven—suitable in parts but rushed or dragging in others.</p>	<p>Few students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Learning tasks, activities, and materials require only recall or have a single correct response.</p> <p>The lesson drags on or is rushed.</p>	<p>This criterion was not observed or rated.</p>
	<b>TOTAL: 8</b>	<b>TOTAL: 25</b>	<b>TOTAL: 21</b>	<b>TOTAL: 6</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>
<b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b>	<p>Students indicate they clearly understand the characteristics of high-quality work.</p> <p>The teacher uses multiple strategies to monitor student understanding.</p> <p>Students monitor their own understanding.</p> <p>Feedback comes from many sources.</p>	<p>The teacher makes the standards of high-quality work clear to students.</p> <p>The teacher elicits evidence of student understanding.</p> <p>Students are invited to assess their own work and make improvements.</p> <p>Feedback includes specific and timely guidance.</p>	<p>There is little evidence that the students understand how the work is evaluated.</p> <p>The teacher monitors understanding through a single method, without eliciting evidence of understanding from students.</p> <p>Feedback to students is vague.</p>	<p>The teacher does not indicate what quality work looks like.</p> <p>The teacher makes no effort to determine whether students understand the lesson.</p> <p>Students receive no feedback, or feedback is global or directed to one student.</p>	
	<b>TOTAL: 3</b>	<b>TOTAL: 28</b>	<b>TOTAL: 13</b>	<b>TOTAL: 3</b>	<b>TOTAL: 13</b>

# Classroom Observations and Additional Comments

Students worked in small groups in one elementary classroom. Many were off task, chatting with their neighbors. Several had their hands up looking for assistance and they were not noticed by the adults in the room. There were two adults, each working with their own small group.

In one high school class, the quality of interactions between teachers and students, or among students, was uneven. The teacher needed to provide continued reminders for students to focus and follow directions.

In a middle school social studies class, interactions between teachers and students, or among students, were uneven, with occasional disrespect or insensitivity. During a discussion, many students were talking when the teacher attempted to explain.

The students wrote the sum to addition problems on their whiteboards and showed it to the teacher. While all students were engaged, some students were looking at other students' whiteboards and not using their own strategies

In one secondary English language arts classroom, students completed an assignment by sitting at their desks and working on their computers. Students walked through a series of questions and selected answers from a drop-down selection of answers. There was one answer per each question. There was no discussion of the questions, no discussion of the rationale of how students selected their answers, or reasoning as to how the assignment segued into the next activity.

In one band class, students played their individual instruments as the conductor led the band through the musical piece. Students were learning to read music, follow the conductor's clues, and play their instruments simultaneously

In one high school classroom, students took notes, offered comments, personalized definitions, summarized the class reading, and made connections to personal experiences as the instructor lectured and summarized a lesson on Edgar Allen Poe. Students were engaged in the lesson by taking notes on their laptops. Students raised their hands and offered commentary to the whole class. The instructor called on students who had raised their hand, as well as those who did not volunteer. The instructor also utilized turn and talks throughout the class time. The instructor and the students employed academic vocabulary easily as they spoke.

In a middle school math class, students were learning math by watching the teacher do the problem. The teacher verbalized her steps as students followed along. Some students were staring off into space and not engaged, while about 80% of the students seemed to follow along. When the teacher said, "Does anyone have any questions?" One student remarked, "She does". The teacher said, "What is it you don't get?" The student seemed to be confused and nervous to explain her confusion. The teacher said, "Let me show you this another way", proceeded to do so, and asked the student, "Do you get it now?" The student nodded yes.

This middle school classroom was learning about dealing with anger. The teacher redirected expectations for students regarding participation and asked students to share healthy ways they deal with anger. The students were highly engaged.

The teacher clearly explained the content in a 4th-grade English Language Arts class and invited student participation and thinking. The students actively shared their thinking in a structured discourse opportunity with their table partners. Materials and resources supported the learning goals and required intellectual engagement.

Students talked during class time amongst each other. Several students were off task, and a few students had their heads down in one high school class. The teacher spoke from the front of the class and lectured using the whiteboard, making notes on the whiteboard, and encouraging students to take notes on the material. The teacher was kind in tone. The teacher did not invite students to answer any questions, explain their thinking, speak to a partner, guess, or engage in the lesson. There were several missed opportunities for student engagement. <sup>[OBJ]</sup>

In groups, students were asked to rate their mood on a scale from 1 to 5 and then add up their group total. Those were recorded as a class. Students then went outside to play football or another activity they wanted to do. After returning, they did the same activity and compared data to see that physical activity improves overall mood.

Students in one self-contained class were drawing large-scale pictures of animals and then their skeletons and stuffing the images to make them 3D.

In a high school classroom, there was one teacher and 35 students. The teacher provided instructions for an assignment. Students then worked in small groups to discuss the assignment. The assignment involved researching presidential candidates, finding topics of interest, and then using bipartisan resources to determine where each candidate falls on several issues. Students were highly engaged, using academic language, and connecting prior learning, such as "gas-lighting," to the conversations.

Students in one elementary classroom were working in partnerships to reread an informational text and identify transitional words. The language between students and the teacher was uniformly respectful. Students helped one another to find words and record them.

There were 30 students in this lower-grade classroom, one teacher, and one helper. The teacher used turn-and-talk, restating students' statements and asking students to repeat what other students said. The teacher called students by first name and asked students to see if they disagreed with another student and to explain why. She had a passion for the subject and her students.

Students responded with call-and-response to the instructor during the initiating activity in a high school math class, after which the teacher went over the homework equations on the whiteboard.

In one middle school science classroom, there were 16 students and one teacher. The teacher showed a video, then pointed to a list of questions on the screen and asked students to respond to each question to the class verbally. It was not an engaging class.

In one classroom, the teacher does call and respond but is only calling on one student at a time. There was a missed opportunity for more student engagement.

This middle school teacher was disrespectful to students, talking to them as if they were very young children. Although she used "please" and "thank you," she maintained an undertone of disrespect. Students spent the first ten minutes of class sitting while the teacher took attendance, collected homework, and focused on students having their name tags and shirts tucked in.

In one secondary classroom, several students were disengaged at the end of class. Some students were on their computers playing computer games. Some were watching shows. Others were sleeping. There was some guessing game going on among students. One adult was at the front of the classroom while another sat at the back of the class at a desk and could see students were disengaged but did not attempt to redirect the students. The class just ended, and students left. There was no closing activity, no summary of what was learned, and no synthesis or summary in students' own words as to what they learned or could take with them moving forward.

The teacher in one lower elementary classroom clarified the learning target to students by having them repeat it.

# Measures of Progress from Previous Site Evaluation

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 Site Evaluation Team during the school’s previous site evaluation.

<b>Prior Recommendation by Site Evaluation Team</b>	<b>School Assessment of Progress</b>	<b>SPCSA Staff Assessment of Progress</b>
<p>As noted in the challenges portion of this report, Amplus school leaders and governing board members are working collaboratively to implement a school lunch program at both the Durango and Rainbow campuses. The SPCSA recommends that this work continue, as this will help the school offer more services to students and families. Additionally, this would be an important step in eventually offering the National School Lunch Program, which can provide added benefits to students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch.</p>	<p>Institute a school lunch program (Durango and Rainbow) – Expected 2026-2027</p>	<p>School leaders have stated they are expecting a school lunch program in 2026-2027. The recommendation from the 2022-2023 previous site evaluation remains open. A National School Lunch Program can provide free breakfast and lunch to students qualifying.</p>
<p>It is recommended that the Amplus Durango campus school leaders and board continue their work to alleviate the frustration surrounding the pick-up and drop-off as well as parking communicated to members of the SPCSA evaluation team by both family and student participants within these focus groups. School leaders have taken several measures to improve this situation. SPCSA staff has ongoing and regular communication with the Clark County Office of Traffic Safety and would be happy to facilitate any future meetings so that collective action can be taken to help resolve these concerns.</p>	<p>Completed requirements and created a partnership with Clark County Metro Traffic and Safety for adult education.</p>	<p>The SPCSA team agrees with the leadership analysis of progress on this item and did not observe any carpool issues during this evaluation.</p>
<p>As was stated on the site evaluation report during the previous site evaluation dated 5-2-2022, there continues to be a gap between the number of students within the special populations of IEP (Individual Education Plan) and ELL (English Language Learners) served by Amplus and</p>	<p>The school leaders report they are making progress toward comparable enrollment data for special populations at both campuses. (Durango and Rainbow)</p>	<p>The Durango and Rainbow campus leaders continue to work toward increased enrollment for special populations.</p>

<p>the numbers of the school district and the SPCSA. There are many different strategies that Amplus may wish to consider continuing to reduce these gaps, including targeted marketing and outreach as well as creating a more positive school culture for these students.</p>		
<p>There is considerable room for the levels of classroom instruction to move from the proficient category to the distinguished category. Specifically, engagement and cognitive awareness of the learning objective, the quality, and purpose of both teacher and student questions, intellectual engagement in learning, and using formative assessment measures to check student understanding.</p>	<p>Improved pacing and differentiated instruction in classrooms to improve student engagement (Durango and Rainbow)</p> <p>School Performance Plan goals for Adult Learning Culture in 2023-2024 (Math) and 2024-2025 (ELA).</p>	<p>The increased star ratings over the previous school year note a considerable improvement in instruction at both campuses. There remains an opportunity for engagement, classroom objectives, checks for understanding, and teacher questioning to improve from highly proficient to distinguished.</p>
<p>There was some feedback regarding students with special needs not feeling welcome or accommodated in both the student and family focus groups. Family and student focus group members mentioned that they have observed families leave the school in the past due to feelings about a less-than-welcoming environment for their child. In addition, SPCSA site evaluators observed one classroom that was not warm and welcoming, and appeared to impact at least one student negatively. Because the Amplus governing board and school leaders have worked to re-brand the mission and vision of the school and because the school has taken important steps to include all students in learning, it is important that these be addressed. It is difficult to determine if such narratives are referring to a few people's perceptions of events or not.</p>	<p>Inclusive classrooms (Durango) Completed 2024 Family Survey with positive praise and feedback</p>	<p>The SPCSA evaluation team agrees that classrooms are inclusive and note the several points of positive praise and feedback from family members on the 2024 family survey.</p>

# Operational Compliance Checks

Fire Extinguisher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Nurse's Station	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Evacuation Plan in Classrooms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Food Permit	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Elevator Permit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A



# Appendix A

The school may choose to submit a response to the SPCSA Site Evaluation Team's findings. This response will be included with the report in the public domain. The final report is submitted to the school's leadership and governing board, the SPCSA board, and into the public record via the SPCSA's website.