



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center

Recommendation Number: 20210513-03a: Support of Academia Cuahutli

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli demonstrably continues the deep, intense, and intergenerational support for the ESB-MACC as a partner in fulfilling its mission, and by protecting and supporting our beloved community with the same deep commitment that enabled the construction of the ESB-MACC in the first place, helping to make it a true incubator for future artisans, artists, writers, and community activists for culture and the arts; and

WHEREAS, since its founding in 2013, Academia Cuauhtli (originated by Nuestro Grupo, community-based volunteers) was established at the ESB-MACC as a free Saturday culture and language revitalization academy for elementary school children and their parents, with curriculum focused on indigeneity, social justice, social history, traditional arts, and danza Mexica and since July 2014, Academia Cuauhtli has served as an official educational enterprise of the ESB-MACC; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli was instituted as an integral part of the ESB-MACC and promotes its mission further to instill in our children and their families a deep appreciation for the arts, social justice, and in action projects to preserve and develop our cultural resources, focusing on the ESB-MACC and other Latino cultural arts institutions; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli, administered through an Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Austin, Austin Independent School District (AISD), and Nuestro Grupo embraces and fulfills ESB-MACC's mission of collaborative engagement by involving personnel and students from all participating entities into a holistic team which advances the mission of the ESB-MACC and all engaged parties; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli fulfills its mission by serving as a means for the comprehensive advancement of the students and their parents, by providing a learning and supportive environment for education, social, and economic needs through the expansion of the parental involvement enterprise, including the extensive COVID-related assistance extended to Latino families in Austin; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli fulfills its mission and collaborates with the ESB-MACC, including continuing its scheduled program on a remote basis during the COVID-19, including participating in ESB-MACC events; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli fulfills its mission by responding to the social and economic needs of parents and secured over \$70,000 in direct financial support for them through the COVID-19 crisis when many parents suffered unemployment and illness; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli fulfills its mission by directly assisting students and parents with remote learning of regular AISD classes during the COVID-19 crisis with its own limited financial resources; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli fulfills its mission through an annually generated curriculum (18 curricular units created to date which fulfills state mandates) culturally competent for the Austin Latino community, including but not limited to Tejano history, migration, environmental studies, and indigeneity; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli fulfills its mission through teacher preparation and mentorship by creating teacher support networks, hosting professional training workshops and conferences and a diverse array of teachers and educators throughout Austin, nationally and internationally, with an average of 200 teachers served annually, all which raises the visibility of the ESBMACC's leadership role in education, indigeneity, and the arts; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli fulfills its mission through its parental education and involvement initiatives to ensure an integrated education program beneficial to the entire Latinx community; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli fulfills its mission by meeting the social and economic needs of parents with over \$4,500 in direct financial support for Christmas toys and food when city resources were not available; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli fulfills its mission by meeting the social and economic needs of parents with over \$7,627 in direct support for rent payments through February's Winter Storm crisis when many parents suffered devastating losses; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli seeks to further deepen and expand its curriculum (e.g., into STEM fields with the use of Nepohualtzitzin and the teaching of Mayan mathematics) and its relationship with the ESB-MACC to develop a teacher residency initiative, and an expanded scope of service to additional elementary schools—beyond the children from Sanchez-Metz, Zavala, Houston, and Perez Elementary Schools—building on long-term affiliations with the Austin ISD and the University of Texas at Austin; and,

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli has used most of its direct donations for financial support of participating families (most of whom are not eligible for government assistance) during the pandemic and climatic crises and we intend to expand services to include a summer STEM/coding program, summer family education, and additional teacher preparation at the ESB-MACC, the Board respectfully requests that the City of Austin fund the positions of Program Manager and Graduate Researcher for Academia Cuauhtli administered through the National Latino Education Research and Policy, Inc. (NLERAP), its fiscal agent since 2013; and

WHEREAS, Academia Cuauhtli has, since 2013, consciously sought and provided operating funds through direct costs contributions by AISD and UT, two of the MOU partners, and including community donation drives, all of which in 2019-2020 amounted to at least \$150,000, and another \$140,000 in documented in-kind professional volunteer hours annually (during 7 months of operations); given the expanded

numbers of students and families now served with a more holistic approach, plus the additional summer program, and

WHEREAS, the Advisory Board of the ESB-MACC is entrusted with protecting the best interests of the citizens of Austin with regard to the patrimony that our hard-fought institution represents for the most vulnerable of its citizens, namely, the Mexican American, and other Latino, communities,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE ESB-MACC ADVISORY BOARD, supports and presents this resolution to the Hispanic Quality of Life Advisory Commission for its recommendation and also to the City Council of the City of Austin, for their consideration to fund the positions of a Program Manager and Graduate Researcher as requested by Academia Cuauhtli.

Date of Approval: May 13, 2021

Record of the vote: Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 6.0 vote, Members Massey, Lopes, and Salas were not in attendance.

Attest:  _____

Michelle Rojas, Staff Liaison