



Brief History

The proposal for Academia Cuauhtli came about in a community meeting on September 20, 2013, at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Culture Center. The event was sponsored by the Texas Center for Education Policy with the goal to create space for the community to discuss literacy issues, curriculum, and systematic exclusion of culturally relevant textbooks for and within the Latina/o community. The event brought together community members and leaders, scholars, AISD public school teachers, students, and parents—45 total. After listening to the moving presentations on the clear lack of Latinx children's books the community members discussed the urgency for preparing a culturally responsive and sustaining curriculum. Additionally, at the meeting, everyone agreed that we need to solve this problem locally in Austin, Texas. As a result, a few months later the Latinx Austin community created and established Academia Cuauhtli and Nuestro Grupo (<https://academiacuauhtli.com/about/>).

Vision Statement:

A future where children live with a thinking heart and the courage to pursue their aspirations within liberating and sacred learning spaces.

Mission Statement

Academia Cuauhtli's mission is the following: "honor our communities cultural heritage, foster social justice consciousness and reclaim our collective identities in pursuit of educational freedom." Since its inception in 2014 Academia Cuauhtli has: enrolled over 500 students; trained and retained 60 teachers, hosted 200 professional development workshops, initiated Cuauhtli's Grow Your Own bilingual leadership development program for AISD teachers of color, and successfully implemented a research partnership between AISD and UT Austin's College of Education researchers (research publications link: <https://academiacuauhtli.com/publications/>)

Academia Cuauhtli Organizational Structure

1. Academia Cuauhtli Fall-Spring Saturday classes: Our Saturday classes are completely free and taught in Spanish. Taught by AISD master dual language teachers and in the context of a 12-to-1 student-teacher ratio, we envision this curriculum as not only providing the academic support that the children need in preparation for their STAAR exams and academic performance, generally, but also providing enrichment for students that we anticipate will have enduring impacts for them. More intentionally, Academia Cuauhtli offers instruction in Mexican American Studies, Tejano Studies, Bilingual/Dual Language courses, Environmental Studies, Curanderismo, and Danza Mexica.
2. STEM Summer Program: Aztech Kids Code (AKC) in collaboration with Academia Cuauhtli (AC), created a summer coding-danza camp in Austin Texas for ELL students. AKC & AC Summer Camp is a project-based, culturally sustaining STEM program for second to sixth grade Austin Independent School District students attending Academia Cuauhtli. Through this program, students will learn the following: coding, video game design, digital monetization, and Danza Mexica in both Spanish and English. Additionally, we will be preparing preservice Latinx teachers via professional development courses on how to implement culturally relevant and sustaining STEM pedagogies.



3. La Colaborativa: In collaboration with faculty at the Benito Juarez Autonomous University of Oaxaca, we prepare Austin ISD Indigenous, Latinx, bilingual teachers ancestral pedagogies. La Colaborativa is a dual language, transnational teacher preparation program in Texas and Oaxaca that runs from December to June.
4. Cuauhtli Maestro/a curriculum workshops: AISD teacher professional development for critically conscious teachers on culturally sustaining pedagogies and project based learning that is aligned with TEKS. June-August.
5. Research: Cuauhtli research team composed of qualitative, quantitative scholars. 6) Nuestro Grupo: Meets regularly on Wednesdays at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Culture Center to organize the activities throughout the school year.

Fall 2022-Spring 2023 AISD schools served

1. Ann Richards School for Young Women and Leaders
2. Harris Elementary School
3. Hart Elementary School
4. Houston Elementary School
5. Lively Middle School
6. O'Henry Middle School
7. Paredes Middle School
8. Perez Elementary School
9. Travis Heights Elementary School

Fall 2022 - Spring 2023 Academia Cuauhtli Program: AISD student demographic data

TOTAL STUDENTS	IDENTITY			LANGUAGE	
Total student enrollment	Latinx/LatinoHispanic identifying	White	Other	Emergent Bilingual	Multilingual
90 per semester	90%	9%	1%	97%	3%

AKC Summer 2023 Accomplishments

In our third iteration of our annual Aztech Kidz Code Aztech Kidz Code enrolled a total of 150 students in the bilingual summer coding program. Aztech Kidz Code summer camp is a project-based, culturally sustaining, Indigenous STEM program for second- to fourth-grade students attending AISD schools. This summer coding instructors successfully broadened the curriculum, expanding from designing a single video game to encompassing topics such as blockchain, 3D pyramid creation, and hackathon-style problem-solving. Moreover, the cultural arts curriculum saw growth with the inclusion of various indigenous traditional dance forms, such as Danza de los Viejitos, and education about the Mexican calendar called Tonalpohualli.



There were approximately 50 student participants in each session, primarily from low-income working-class families residing in Austin's eastern crescent. Based on our survey data, about 74 percent of students indicated that it was their first time participating in a coding program, and about 91 percent of students expressed interest in returning to the program next year. This success allowed Aztech Kidz Code to extend its reach to new families and integrate them into the greater Academia Cuauhtli community.

Districts and Schools Served:

- District 1: Kealing Middle School
- District 2: Houston Elementary, Perez Elementary, Palm Elementary, Bedichek Middle School
- District 3: Sanchez Elementary, Govalle Elementary
- District 4: Hart Elementary, Harris Elementary, Dobie College Prep Academy
- District 9: Travis Heights Elementary

All schools served were Title I schools within the Austin Independent School District.

Program Operations

The total program cost was \$170K, covering staff pay, 45 laptops, dance and art materials, coding materials, and various field trips.

Academia Cuauhtli - Saturday School 2023 Updates

Academia Cuauhtli launched its bilingual Saturday school program with a Family Welcome Event on September 9th. Currently, we have approximately 60 enrolled participants, including students, parents, and volunteers, with families joining from Sanchez, Perez, Houston, Travis Heights, Harris, and Hart Elementary schools. Classes take place every Saturday from 9am to 12pm at Sanchez Elementary until March 9th.



Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025 Budget Proposal

We have outlined our budget for the next fiscal year into two tiers. The first tier of funding ensures essential needs are met, such as operational costs and staffing, to sustain current programs. In contrast, the second tier allocation is directed towards expanding programs, investing in innovation, and enhancing outreach efforts to broaden impact and reach new community members.

Minimum Operational Costs Needed (150K)

Saturday Academy (22K): A bilingual and cultural revitalization program offers instruction in Mexican American Studies and STEM curriculum for third to fifth grade students attending AISD. We focus on creating alternative learning spaces with focuses on social emotional learning and restorative practices.

Program Costs: (22K)

- Staff (12K)
 - (10K) - 4 interns for Saturday school
 - \$2,464 per intern - \$22p/hr, 7 hours per week , ~16 weeks
 - ~\$9,856 total per school year
 - (2K) - 2 additional instructors (non-AISD teachers)
 - \$1,000 - \$25 p/hr, 10 hrs per week, ~4 weeks
- Food (5K)
- Materials: (1K) - art supplies, danza supplies, graduation items
- Field Trips: (1K) - 6 total
- Custodian (3K)

Aztech Kidz Code (84K): A culturally sustaining STEM program for second to sixth grade Austin Independent School District students attending Academia Cuauhtli. Through this program, students learn coding, video game design, digital monetization, and Danza Mexico in both Spanish and English. During the summer, we provide three two-week sessions with an expectation of 50 participants in each session. Based on our survey data, about 74 percent of latinx/indigenous students indicated that it was their first time participating in a coding program, and about 91 percent of students expressed interest in returning to the program next year. Through culturally relevant STEM programming, we are addressing inequities concerning student exposure to career and workforce opportunities in early education for Indigenous, Latinx, bilingual students.

Program Costs: (84K)

- Staff (64K):
 - Program Instructors (6) - Instructors are compensated for their specialization in bilingual education, culturally relevant STEM curriculum, SEL experience/pedagogy, and ethnic studies/cultural studies.
 - \$31 p/hr, 40 hrs per week, 8 weeks
 - \$9,920 per teacher / \$59,530 ~ \$64K with FICA/Medicare Tax
- Field trips (2K): 6 total - City pools, Bullock Museum, Blanton Museum, Aquarena Springs



- Materials (7K):
 - Art materials (2K)
 - Danza materials (5K)
- Custodial Staff (6K)
- Food (5K): Meals for field trips and graduations; snacks

Nepohualtzintzin - Mayan Abacus (8K): The Nepohualtzintzin is a mathematical device used in Mayan indigenous cultures to teach mathematics at an early age in a completely organic way. Program would be designed as a week-long camp with about 25 participants.

- Guest Instructor (2.5K)
- Teachers (4K): \$25 p/hr, 40 hours, 4 teachers
- Materials (\$500): wooden abacus, notebooks, etc.
- Food (1K): providing breakfast and lunch - 5 days

Parent Support Program (16K): Our parent support program will provide us an opportunity to connect with the families of our students, as they attend our Saturday academy. Family conversations are crucial for fostering positive outcomes in students' motivation, engagement, behavior, and academic and social development. Platicas objective is to create collaborative efforts to create shared goals, share information, and enhance opportunities for the community with cariño. Additionally, parents will be receiving in-house community resources through guest speakers from our Austin Public Libraries, Mexican Consulate, El Buen Samaritano, Austin Public Health, and many more.

- Part-time Parent Specialist (13.5K): Facilitating meetings every Saturday for 20 weeks while also tracking program impact, creating and maintaining relationships with community organizations, and supporting program coordinator for Saturday academy.
 - \$27 p/hr, 25 hours, 20 weeks
- Guest Speakers (2K)
- Materials (\$500)

Educational Community Summit (10K): In collaboration with the ESB-MACC and Austin ISD, our educational community summit will bring together educators, students, parents, school board members, and community members to display the impact of collaborative partnership to create transformative educational spaces. Panels will focus on educational policy impacting students, community resources for parents, and curriculum examples for teachers. Additionally, there will be interactive art activities for children and families, performances, and food trucks.

- Performers + Panelists (5K):
- Food (4K): meals for staff and participants
- Decorations + Marketing (1K): banners, flyers, brochures, event decor

On-site researcher (10K): A dedicated researcher will help comb through AISD quantitative student data to determine student impact in test scores, attendance rates, and overall academic performance. Additionally, they will support the Program Coordinator in creating assessment procedures including



surveys, interviews, and focus groups to track long-term program impact. Our findings will be used to support our annual reports, grant writing, and Cuauhtli's strategic planning.

- \$10,000 per school year
 - \$25 p/hr, 25 hrs per week, ~20 weeks

Vision for Expansion

This tier reflects our vision for expansion of Academia Cuauhtli services. We are already moving into some of these projects and we would like to continue receiving support and capacity to build them out to serve more teachers, families, and community members.

Teacher Professional Development (1.5K): Preparation and mentorship for teachers by creating support networks, hosting professional teacher development workshops and conferences, and including via *La Colaborativa Cuauhtli* that sends teachers to Mexico annually (e.g., [Expanding the Horizons of Bilingual Elementary Education: La Colaborativa Cuauhtli](#)) By further specializing our teachers, we can expand our summer programs, Aztech Kidz Code and Nephualtzinzin, with additional sessions and student participants.

- Facilitator (1K): 31 p/hr, 16 hours = \$496
 - 4-5 teachers per facilitator
 - Minimum of 2 trainings per year
- Materials (\$500)

Curriculum Library (7.6K): We would like to make our specialized curriculum accessible to more schools within Austin ISD that are interested in providing culturally relevant pedagogy, social emotional learning integration, that will increase overall positive learning outcomes for students. Currently, two additional Title 1 schools have expressed interest in bringing in our services to their bilingual teachers. Additionally, we would like to create an online database available to educators with our curriculum focused on cultural and ethnic studies.

- Curriculum Instructors (5K): 25 p/hr, 10 hrs, 5 weeks
 - Teachers: 3-4 per school = estimated cost per school: \$3,750 - \$5,000
- Archival Intern (2.6K): 22 p/hr, 10 hrs, 12 weeks = \$2,640

Recreational Centers (6K): Academia Cuauhtli would like to expand their curriculum and pedagogy to various neighborhoods and communities across Austin. We are exploring partnership opportunities with recreational centers to increase access to arts and culture out-of-school programming for all children.

- Curriculum Instructors (5K): 25 p/hr, 10 hrs, 5 weeks
 - Teachers: 3-4 per recreational center = estimated cost: \$3,750 - \$5,000
- Materials: (1K)