ON BEHALF OF ACADEMIA CUAUHTLI

My name is Dr. Angela Valenzuela, Education Professor at the University of Texas at Austin. I come before you as the major convener of the Austin ISD-sponsored Academia Cuauhtli/Cuauhtli Academy, the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center's (ESB-MACC) partner in education and community engagement during the last eight years. I am joined by other members of Academia Cuauhtli and its affiliate organization, Nuestro Grupo, to ask that the Advisory Board endorse two propositions, noted as follows:

- Advocate for a full-time position--Program Director of Academia Cuauhtli--before the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission and the Austin City Council; and
- Funding for a graduate researcher and ESB-MACC authorization to prepare a history of the ESB-MACC with the use of existing and new oral narratives, and including acquisition of print and media archives to be housed at the ESB-MACC and at the Austin History Center (pursuant to mutual sharing agreements)
- We respectfully request that the Resolution below, supporting these positions be presented to the ESB-MACC board for consideration and approval and that referral be made to the Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission and to the Austin City Council.

Dr. Emilio Zamora, and Martha Cotera members of Academia Cuauhtli and Nuestro Grupo, will now address special considerations in support of our proposal that the Board can transmit to both the Hispanic Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission and the Austin City Council.

(DRAFT FOR THE ESB-MACC BOARD CONSIDERATION)

RESOLUTION FROM THE EMMA S. BARRIENTOS MEXICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER ADVISORY BOARD IN SUPPORT OF ACADEMIA CUAUHTLI

April 7, 2021

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 ESB-MACC'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 $140,0000 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.

ATTACHMENT 1:

Academia Cuauhtli: Program Manager. 1 FTE position at approximately $100,000 annual salary, including benefits

Minimum Qualifications: Graduation with Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in a field related to the job, plus five (3) years of experience in a field related to the job, including two (2) years of experience which were in a lead, supervisory, project, or program management capacity. Experience may substitute for one (1) year of the required education up to a maximum of four (4) years. Graduation with a Master's degree from an accredited college or university in a related field may substitute for non-lead/supervisory experience up to a maximum of two (2) years.

Duties and Responsibilities: Authorizing the program on the basis of its mission and vision; maintain budget and secure additional funding; coordinate cross-program and strategic issues, including the preparation of curriculum, hosting of training workshops for teachers, and overseeing planning sessions for instruction, with such stakeholders as parents, teachers and conveners; regular reporting to Nuestro Grupo the program's progress against the organizational strategy and objectives; and "leading by example" the transformational change brought about by the program.

Graduate Researcher: 15 hours/week, for six months at $25 per hour = $9,000

Minimum Qualifications: Graduation with a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in History, Education or related fields, to include six (6) semester hours involving or related to oral history or archival research and one (1) year of experience in a research field.

Duties and Responsibilities: Assist historians Emilio Zamora and Martha Cotera in reviewing approximately 20 existing oral narratives at the ESB-MACC and in conducting between 3 and 6 additional interviews; prepare a timeline of the history of the ESB-MACC before and after its founding in 2005; report to Zamora and Cotera on research activities, as well as on writing assignments; and assist in the preparation of three products: a manuscript of between 100 and 200 pages in length with graphics, references, and lesson plans; a shorter, summary history that the ESB-MACC can print, post to its website, and hand out to visitors; and 2 or 3 scholarly essays that Zamora, Cotera, and the Graduate Research can present at professional meetings.

ATTACHMENT 2

Academia Cuauhtli Vision Statement: "Honor our community's cultural heritage, foster a social justice consciousness, and reclaim our collective identities in pursuit of educational freedom."

Academia Cuauhtli (Eagle Academy) is a language and culture revitalization project for 4th-grade students from Metz, Perez, Sanchez, Zavala and Houston Elementary Schools from the Austin Independent School District (AISD). It offers instruction in Mexican American Studies and Tejano Studies curriculum. 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. Academia Cuauhtli is a collaboration of Nuestro Grupo (a community-based group organized by the Texas Center for Education Policy and the Tejano Monument Curriculum Initiative, both at the University of Texas at Austin and the National Latino Education Research and Policy Project [NLERAP], its fiscal agent and national nonprofit organization), the Austin Independent School District, the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department and within it, the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center. Academy Cuauhtli is a product of love, effort, and passion from our talented group of collaborators.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS-Scholarship pertaining to Academia Cuauhtli--for reference

1. Valenzuela, A., Zamora, E., Rubio, B. (2015). "Academia Cuauhtli and the Eagle: Danza Mexica and the Epistemology of the Circle," *Voices in Urban Education,* No. 41 (Annenberg Institute for School Reform), https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1074841.pdf
2. Valenzuela, A. (2017). "Grow Your Own Educator Programs: A Review of the Literature with an Emphasis on Equity-based Approaches." *Instructional Development Research Association EAC-South, 1–17*. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED582731
3. Angela Valenzuela (2017). "Academia Cuauhtli: (Re)Locating the Spiritual, if Crooked, Path to Social Justice, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 30:10, 906-911, DOI: 10.1080/09518398.2017.1312610
4. Rubio, B. (2018) "Academia Cuauhtli Teachers: Additive Teaching in Subtractive Contexts, https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/68733
5. Valenzuela, A. (2019). "The Liberating Potential of Third-Space Pedagogies in Third Space," https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=85mFDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA3&dq=academia+cuauhtli&ots=BbRHL_AbOE&sig=AEti7gCzekU2JaEhDCbdz85KIoc#v=onepage&q=academia%20cuauhtli&f=false
6. Valenzuela, A. (2017)."Grow Your Own Educator Programs--Special Edition-A Roadmap to a Community-Based, Partnership Approach," https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Angela_Valenzuela/publication/327510637_Grow_Your_Own_Educator_Programs_A_Roadmap_to_a_Community-Based_Partnership_Approach_Special_Edition/links/5b92950d4585153a5301c433/Grow

-Your-Own-Educator-Programs-A-Roadmap-to-a-Community-Based-Partnership-Approach-Special-Edition.pdf

7. Lopez, R. (2015). Enriching English Learner Education Through School and Community Partnerships, https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1074862

Works in progress:

1. *Platicas* form Latinx critical educators: Implementing culturally relevant education virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic by Maria Del Carmen Unda, Lauren Shook, and Liz Lizarraga-Duenas
2. Academia Cuauhtli and the sustainability of teachers of color - by Maria Del Carmen Unda, Lauren Shook, and Liz Lizarraga-Duenas
3. Dissertation- Academia Cuauhtli—Bilingual Teacher Expertise in a Cultural and Linguistic Revitalization Project by Randy Bell at the University of Texas at Austin College of Education
4. Dissertation - Elementary language learners, academic achievement, and culturally relevant education pedagogy at Academia Cuauhtli- Anthony Martinez at the University of Texas at Austin College of Education

Since 2014, Academia Cuauhtli has:

1. enrolled more than 180 students from AISD;
2. directly involved more than 42 AISD-AAABE bilingual and dual language teachers;
3. prepared over 112 teachers in the curriculum so that they may offer it in the classrooms;
4. taught AISD students for more than 154 Saturdays;
5. been nominated for *Examples of Excelencia by Excelencia in Education!* In Washington D.C.
6. received noteworthy attention by the National Education Policy Center in a newsletter feature story titled, "A Saturday School Where Mexican American Children Learn About Their Heritage: A Q & A with NEPC Fellow Dr. Angela Valenzuela (https://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/newsletter-valenzuela-091719);
7. created a pathway into the University of Texas College of Education masters and doctoral programs for a total of **15 graduate student coordinators and volunteers** in large part as a result of Nuestro Grupo and Academia Cuauhtli as follows:
    a. Dr. Brenda Rubio, Professor at New Mexico State University Las Cruces, received her doctorate degree in Education Policy and Planning from the University of Texas at Austin. Academia Cuauhtli co-founder and previous program coordinator).
    b. Alonzo Mendoza, received his master's degree in Education Policy and Planning from the University of Texas at Austin. Academia Cuauhtli student volunteer.
    c. Alicia Guerrero, Data Manager at Mi MADRE and received her master's degree in Education Policy and Planning from the University of Texas at Austin. Academia Cuauhtli student volunteer.

d. Delina Zapata, Graduate Assistant at Project MALES and is currently a doctoral student in the Education Policy and Planning Program at the University of Texas at Austin. Academia Cuauhtli student volunteer.
e. Tori Vasquez master's student in the Education Policy and Planning Program at the University of Texas at Austin. Academia Cuauhtli student volunteer.
f. Teresa Hernandez, Professor at Universidad Autonoma de Aguascalientes, received her master's in Education Policy and Planning Program at the University of Texas at Austin. Previous Academia Cuauhtli program coordinator.
g. Anthony Martinez doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin in the Education Policy and Planning Program. Previously Academia Cuauhtli program coordinator and current student volunteer.
h. Randy Bell Ph.D. candidate in the Education Policy and Planning Program at the University of Texas at Austin. Previous Academia Cuauhtli program coordinator and current student volunteer.
i. Sandra Telles-Rojas, Project Manager at OnRamps, received her master's degree in Education Policy and Planning at the University of Texas at Austin. Previous Academia Cuauhtli program coordinator and is currently a student volunteer.
j. Maria del Carmen Unda, Fellow with the National Latina/o Education Research and Policy Project. She received her master's and is currently a doctoral student in Education Policy and Planning at the University of Texas at Austin. Academia Cuauhtli program coordinator.
k. Arinda Rodriguez, Health and Wellness Intern at Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP), received her master's degree in Education Policy and Planning from the University of Texas at Austin. Previous Academia Cuauhtli student volunteer.
l. Janet Rodriguez-Solis doctoral student in the Education Policy and Planning Program at the University of Texas at Austin. Current Academia Cuauhtli student volunteer.
m. Julia Hernandez, doctoral student in the Education Policy and Planning Program at the University of Texas at Austin. Academia Cuauhtli student volunteer.
n. Patricia Nunez Porras doctoral student in the Education Policy and Planning Program at the University of Texas at Austin. Academia Cuauhtli student volunteer.
o. Lizeth I. Lizarraga-Duenas graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin (looking to transfer to College of Education this year). Currently Academia Cuauhtli student volunteers.
p. Monica Villafuerte, undergraduate student at Texas State University & website developer for Academia Cuauhtli and NLERAPP .
q. Itzel Garcia, UT Austin graduate and Academia Cuauhtli program coordinator

A number of these students entered a master's or doctoral program after having attended other universities as undergraduates like Southwestern University, Huston-Tillotson, St. Edward's University, and Texas State University. **Nuestro Grupo and Academia Cuauhtli is thus growing its own College of Education masters and doctoral students!** Academia Cuauhtli served originally as an educational program for students enrolled in AISD and is a GYO teacher education program. However, it has manifested into a space where undergraduate, graduate students and Academia Cuauhtli teachers/professors collaborate in research; policy briefs and reports; community advocacy; research presentations throughout the country; and legislative lobbying on behalf of our students. Thus, clearly, Academia Cuauhtli has been a third space for student mentorship outside the typical grounds of settler colonial spaces within Academia which has allowed, influenced, and pushed students to create community based research projects.

8. Delivered over 21 academic presentations based on our work and research at Academia Cuauhtli, including, for example, two at the American Educational Research Association annual conference:
    - Dr. Angela Valenzuela delivered a Keynote Lecture titled, "Academia Cuauhtli: A Grassroots Approach to Parent, Child and Community Engagement and Empowerment," Classroom Management SIG Business Meeting, American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, April 16, 2015;
    - Dr. Chris Milk, Brenda Rubio, Randy Bell, and Anthony Martinez Promoting Bilingual/Bicultural Teacher Dispositions Through Community-Centered Cultural and Language Revitalization Programs. Bilingual Education Special Interest Group, American Educational Research Association, April 2017;
9. Nuestro Grupo organized NLERAPP's second national Summit, "Indigeneity in the K-12 Curriculum Summit," January 24-25, 2020.
10. and remained steadfastly committed to our mission: "To honor our community's cultural heritage, foster a social justice consciousness, and reclaim our collective identities, and reclaim our collective identities in pursuit of educational freedom."

###