

Acton Academy Amador County

FIND A CALLING, CHANGE THE WORLD.



21800 HWY 88 Suite E Pine Grove, CA 95665



Our Mission

Each person who enters our doors will find a calling that will change the world.

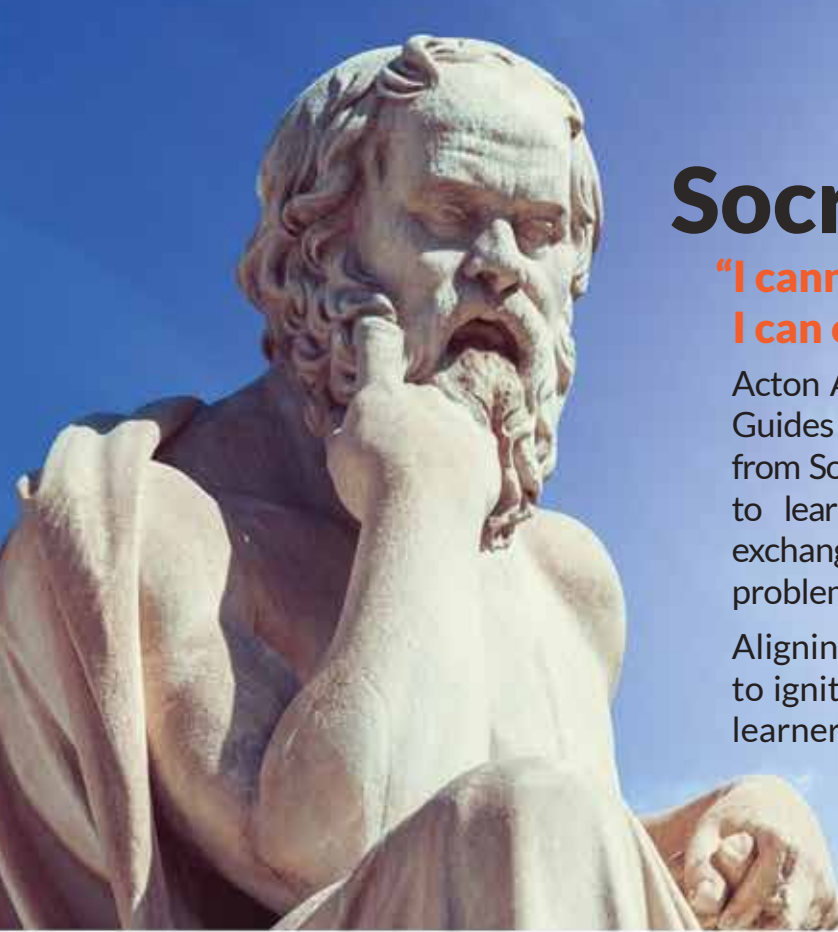
Our Promises

We promise, through Socratic guiding and experiential learning, you and your child will:

- Begin a Hero's Journey
- Learn to be curious, become an independent learner, and love lifelong learning
- Discover his or her most precious gifts and learn to use them to solve difficult problems.
- Cherish the arts, the wonders of the physical world, and the mystery of life
- Develop a deep respect for economic, political, and religious freedom

Our Core Beliefs

1. We believe each child has a gift that can change the world in a profound way.
2. We believe in a closely connected family of lifelong learners.
3. We believe in learning to learn, learning to do, and learning to be.
4. We believe in economic, political, and religious freedom.



Socratic Guiding

**“I cannot teach anybody anything.
I can only make them think.”**

Acton Academy has no teachers. Instead, we have Guides and use the Socratic Method, originated from Socrates, the Greek philosopher. He responded to learners' questions with new questions. This exchange honed students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Aligning to our Learning Philosophy, we question to ignite **Clear Thinking**. This questioning guides learners to act, develop habits, and character.

Acton Academy Turning Learning Upside Down

Traditional School



- Rows of desks and a teacher at the blackboard.
- Memorization and testing of rules and facts.
- Report cards measure your success.
- One teacher lectures to many students.
- Worksheets and homework.
- School like a factory with bells, shifts, and one-size-fits-all.

Acton Academy



- Collaborative work like at Google or Facebook.
- Acquisition and application of real skills in projects.
- Personalized goals are set, and progress is transparently tracked.
- Everyone's a teacher; everyone's a student.
- Professional tools for art, engineering, & storytelling; Cutting-edge adaptive tech for Core Skills.
- School like a journey, with big goals, mentors, tools, and a destination you care about.

The Hero's Journey

Every human yearns for powerful stories.

The Hero's Journey is a classic story structure that is shared by stories worldwide — Star Wars, Harry Potter, Disney movies and many myths.

A hero goes on an adventure, enter into a special world, facing challenges and trials. He overcomes them and then returns home transformed.

The Hero's Journey is the founding narrative of Acton Academy — the "why" behind all the passion.



Each of us is just an ordinary person; But if we're willing to say Yes to New experiences and keep moving forward, even when it's hard, it hurts, and it includes failure, then we are—all of us—heroes on a journey.

Laura Sandefer, co-founder of Acton Academy



acton language

We have turned learning upside-down!

HERO'S JOURNEY

We believe each young person will find a passion – something they love and have a gift to do – finding and pursuing this gift we call the Hero's Journey.

SOCRATIC LEARNING

Daily Launches are Socratic discussions, designed to help learners defend their ideas, open their minds, and draw conclusions as a group.

STUDENT-LED

Acton Academy is Student-Led, which means that our learners are involved in every step of decision making processes from studio rules, scheduling, school systems, and even disciplinary actions. Age appropriate freedoms, within reason, are given to learners at the greatest extent. Learners are responsible to set their own goals, track their progress, navigate relationships, and reflect on their experiences.

GUIDE

Acton employs Guides, rather than teachers. A Guide's role is not to be an expert but to help lead the learner to their own conclusions.

STUDIO

We refer to our classrooms as studios to encourage the idea of an environment of creation and personal expression.

QUEST

All learners engage in experiential learning expeditions we call Quests. Participating in a Quest allows learners to explore a topic in-depth using a variety of hands-on experiences



Acton Academy is “student led.”

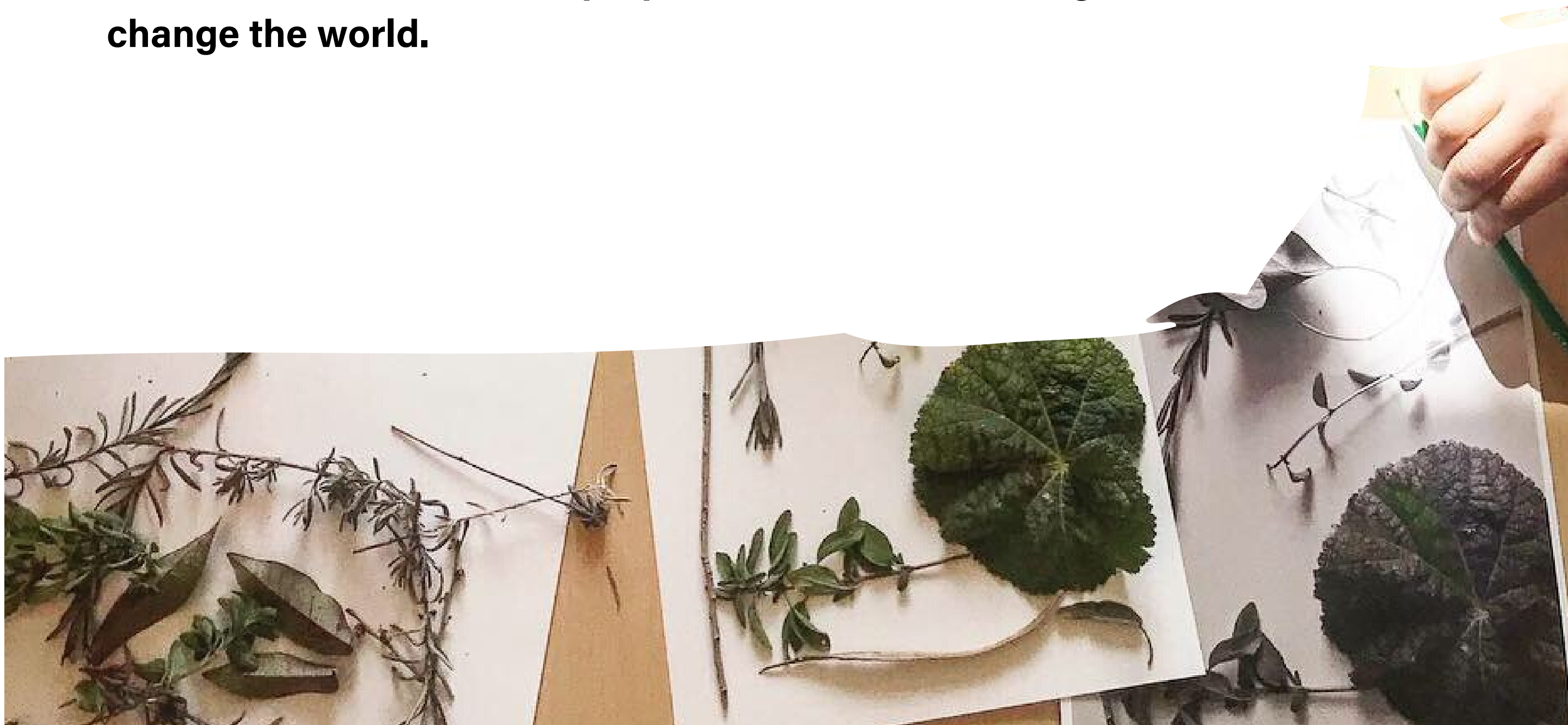
Acton Academy is “student led.” This means young people take ownership of their education and peer relationships.

Acton students learn to think independently, take responsibility and embrace challenge.

They are being prepared to bring their own unique genius to the world. We believe in the power of apprenticeships. Beginning in middle school, our learners obtain summer internships in a field they are passionate about. What will your child choose?

We encourage our learners to develop personal virtues such as honesty, hard work, responsibility, kindness and empathy.

Armed with purpose and good character, we believe our learners will launch into adulthood prepared to find their calling and change the world.



How do we measure progress?

Joy + Rigor = Mastery

Deep learning brings a special sense of joy, but the mastery required for a Hero's Journey goes even further, requiring commitment, discipline and hard work towards a worthy goal.

Embracing rigor is part of saying 'yes' to a Hero's Journey.

Measuring Mastery

Laura, the wise co-founder of Acton Academy shared:

First of all, be assured of one thing: you are completely qualified to assess your child's intellectual and moral growth. No teacher certification or education degree necessary. You are smart. You are experienced. You know your child better than anyone in the universe.



We measure progress and feedback in a variety of ways:

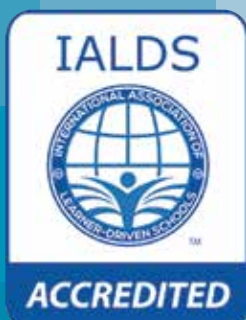
- Learning Badges
- Learning Exhibitions
- Online Dashboards from learning software programs
- S.M.A.R.T. Goals Tracking
- Peer Review & Apprenticeship References
- Student Portfolios
- Standardized Tests

There are also studio systems to measure effort, character, and excellence. Learners are empowered to prove their worth to the real world.

Accreditation & Qualifications

Acton Academy is accredited by the **International Association of Learner Driven Schools (IALDS)**.

Acton Launchpad graduates receive **an accredited US high school diploma**. They also researched their Next Great Adventure — a list of stepping-stone apprenticeships, desired college, or a real-world adventure like starting a business. They adapt and take the qualifications necessary to serve their journey and calling.





acton learners will:

- **Begin a Hero's Journey.**
- **Learn to be a curious, independent, lifelong learner.**
- **Develop a deep respect for economic, political and religious freedoms.**
- **Cherish the arts, wonders of the physical world and the mysteries of life on Earth.**
- **Discover his or her most precious gifts and learn to use them to solve difficult problems.**

the family experience

Attending Acton is not just a new path for learners, but for families as well. The Acton mindset is one of open-mindedness, fearlessness, and the ability to own failures and celebrate successes. Being part of the Acton community means a devotion to a growth mindset: one that cherishes mistakes as learning opportunities. We highly encourage you to explore our Facebook and Instagram Page, website, Acton Academy Parent blog and the book *Courage to Grow*. These will help you get a fuller picture of the Acton experience.

5 Unique Traits of an Acton Family

YOU TRUST YOUR CHILD

Once children are free from the worry of disappointing a parent, they are able to experiment through trial and error without fearing negative feedback.

CELEBRATE MISTAKES

Children learn to walk by failing, talk by making sounds, and ride a bike by crashing. At Acton Academy we encourage mistakes! In our Entrepreneurship Quest, we often say, "Fail early, cheaply, and often."

GROWTH MINDSET

At Acton Academy, none of us started out doing something brand new perfectly. We quickly gain understanding, practice and get better. We add the power of "Yet". "I am not able to build that yet!"

WARM HEARTED -TOUGH MINDED

Acton learners and parents often meet roadblocks on their journey. Being warm hearted enough to love through the trails gives support, while being tough-minded encourages courage to push through challenges and mistakes.

COMMITMENT TO YOUR OWN HERO'S JOURNEY

At Acton Academy, the Hero's Journey is not just a cute cliché. It's what our Studio is built on. We ALL have a calling to change the world. Our calling to live a Hero's Journey is not just for the learners, but for parents as well.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do you mean by “a hero’s journey”?

We believe that each of us has a special calling in life, and a series of trials and tests that must be faced with integrity and purpose in order to live a satisfying and fulfilled life. Our mission is to prepare your child for his or her special journey.

Is Acton Academy Amador a Montessori school?

We respect and incorporate Maria Montessori’s philosophy, but we are not a Montessori school. We also use the latest interactive technologies, hands on projects and the Socratic Method for discussions.

What grades do you offer?

For 2021–2022 school year, Acton Amador is accepting young learners ages 4 1/2 (Pre-K) through 11 (5th grade). As the founding group matures we will grow into adding a middle school studio.

Will children be grouped together by grades?

We believe that children learn best when working with children younger and older than themselves rather than split up into groups based solely on age. In addition to individualized curriculum, all ages of students work together in a community.

What is a “running partner”?

Running Partners are classmates who meet together regularly to set goals and hold each other accountable for meeting those goals. Running Partners encourage and inspire each other by asking good questions, listening and providing affirmation.

What is your calendar schedule?

School begins at 8:30 am each day (drop-off starting at 8:00 am) and finishes at 3:15 pm.

Our school year is divided into 7 learning sessions (Quests) each with a theme, such as Edison’s Lab, Entrepreneurship, Robotics, Marine Science, Community Garden, Survivor, Charity Chess Quest, to name a few. Each Quest is a grand adventure, culminating in a public Exhibition Night for family and friends to come celebrate the learning process from that session. We operate on an 11-month calendar, but our flexible program allows your family to travel or vacation during the year, without sacrificing any learning. Seven sessions, followed by 1 to 2 weeks off to refuel and for holidays, make up the school year.

What does an average school day look like?

School begins at 8:30 am each day (drop-off starting at 8:00 am) and finishes at 3:15 pm. Our learning time is broken into morning Socratic discussions, core skills time, collaborative learning Quests/projects, PE, Art, STEM and free time. Multiple outside recess breaks are an important part of each day. Using the incredible eLearning tools now available, we are able to provide the rigor needed for learning math, vocabulary, spelling, and grammar in about 90 minutes each day, while freeing up the rest of the day for engaging, project-based collaborative learning.

*Core Skill Time Period Breakdown:

MON-FRI

8:45-10am Core Skills

MON/WED/FRI

10-11:30am Collaborative Core Skills (Goal Setting, Meet with Running Partner, etc)

TUES/THURS

10-11:30am Physical Activities

Is it really possible for students to complete core skills in only 90 minutes each day?

Yes, we promise it is! An unbelievable amount of time is wasted in traditional education because of discipline distractions, disengaged students, and inefficient learning methods. Acton Academy approaches learning radically different from the traditional model of a one-size-fits-all lecture with passive students who are required to move at the same pace of the class. Using a learner-driven model, we allow each Hero to set their own goals, choose learning platforms that work for them, and provide a consistent atmosphere of reward and accountability. While we do not believe standardized assessments are important, we do occasionally administer standardized tests at the beginning and end of the year to measure baseline data on core skills. Based on these test results nationwide, Acton Academy learners have been advancing far faster than in traditional schools, averaging as much as three grade levels gained each year. By using a more efficient learner-driven model, we are able to free up massive amounts of time for Heroes to pursue their own learning interests through collaborative projects, apprenticeships, and life-integrated learning.

How do you track a student's progress?

Heroes at Acton Academy Amador demonstrate progress through portfolios, learning exhibitions, peer reviews, goal monitoring, online dashboards, learning badges, and possibly a once-a-year-standardized test. In place of traditional letter grades, we use a system of badges which are not earned until a learner has reached **mastery** in that specific area, thus ensuring a young person successfully learns and processes what they are studying.

Badges are translatable as transcripts to other academic institutions. Completion of 80% of the required badges at 100% mastery translates to a grade of 80%.

8:00	Drop-off / Free Time
8:30	Daily Launch (Socratic Discussion)
8:45	Core Skills Goal setting, math, Writers' Workshop, reading, civilization discussion, "Brain Breaks" throughout
11:30	Lunch / Free Time
12:30	Quest Launch (Socratic Discussion)
12:45	Quest Hands-on work, team-based challenges, sciences, coding, entrepreneurship, art & music, history, report on goals
2:45	Studio Maintenance
3:00	Closing Group (Socratic Discussion)
3:15	Pick-up

ACTON ACADEMY

Amador County

Do students have homework?

While there may be work that needs to be completed on days Heroes are at home, we believe it is important that learners do not have any evening or weekend homework. We believe that children need time to play, relax, and be with family and friends, and are committed to ensuring plenty of learning during studio hours so that time outside the studio can be free for other important pursuits. We also believe family time is sacred and those relationships need to be nurtured on evenings and weekends without the distraction and conflict that homework can bring.

How does Acton Academy Amador ensure a high-quality learning environment?

Deep at the core of Acton Amador is our commitment to serving customers and receiving transparent feedback. Because of this, we ask families to participate in a monthly Customer Satisfaction Survey, where we ask them to rate us 1-5 on how well we accomplished our promises. We then **share the results with the community**. These surveys are our most important metric to measure the success of the learning community.

Why a learner driven classroom?

At Acton Academy Amador we believe in learning to **be** and learning to **do** and an important part of this is encouraging learners to take responsibility for their own behavior and hold those around them to a high standard. When something isn't working, we want our learners to work together to solve the problem, not look for an adult to solve it for them. This creates a sense of independence and confidence that will serve them well in all areas of life.

What do you mean by "every child can change the world"?

We believe each of our learners will find a passion — something they love and have a gift to do. They will use this gift to serve others and fulfill a need they are passionate about in the world. This may be by becoming a shoe-shiner who tells stories and makes people's day just by doing his job with love and vigor; it may be by becoming a coach who sees the light in a child's eyes and guides her to pursue a dream; it may be by becoming a father or mother who leads a family on a Hero's Journey; it may be becoming an entrepreneur or business leader guided by compassion and integrity; or it may be by becoming an artist or writer who brings beauty to people's lives.

How much is tuition for Acton Academy Amador?

For the 2021-22 school year our tuition is \$4200 per year. We are able to divide that up into 12 monthly payments of \$350.00 per month. Broken down hourly, that equals \$3.33 per hour. How are we able to provide such a life-changing learning environment for 1/3 of what other private schools offer? (EL Dorado county private schools are averaging \$12,000 per year) Currently we can offer such low tuition because Acton Academy is a **Learner-Driven** environment, which means we don't need dozens of adults hovering around and "maintaining order" all day. Learners are able to organize and learn on their own, track and evaluate each other's work, all without interruption and interference from adults. Because we do not want or need excessive faculty and staff, we are able to serve more families.

Acton Academy Amador | 2020-2021 CALENDAR

7 Labor Day (No School)
8 First Day of School

SEPTEMBER '20						
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MARCH '21						
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12-16 Fall Break
19 Session 2 Start

OCTOBER '20						
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APRIL '21						
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5-9 Spring Break
12 Session 6 Start

11 Veterans Day (No School)
23-27 Thanksgiving Break
30 Session 3 Start

NOVEMBER '20						
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MAY '21						
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24-28 Early Summer Break
31 Memorial Day

21-31 Holiday Break

DECEMBER '20						
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JUNE '21						
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1 Session 7 Start

1 Holiday Break (Cont.)
4 Session 4 Start
18 MLK Day (No School)

JANUARY '21						
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JULY '21						
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5 July 4th (No School)
9 Last Day of School

15-19 Winter Break
22 Session 5 Start

FEBRUARY '21						
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AUGUST '21						
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