



Riverside School District

ESL HANDBOOK

2024-2025 School Year

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Student Identification and Placement

Enrollment

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Mission Statement

The mission of the English Language Development (ELD) Program in Riverside School District is to provide instruction and support to foster the linguistic, academic, personal, and social growth of English Learners (ELs).

Goals and Objectives

The purpose of the English Language Development Program (ELD) is to create a culturally responsive and diverse environment where students acquire English, and are given the opportunity to develop the language skills necessary to communicate for social and academic purposes. To meet this goal, instruction addresses the ELD and Pennsylvania Core Standards in the four domains: Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening. Our belief is that instruction should be tailored to the individual needs of each student. The ELD program aims to develop both basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), as described in the [Basic Education Circular \(BEC\)](#) for ELs.

Program Goals

- Facilitate English language acquisition through the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension.

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- Help students learn to use English effectively to participate and succeed in academic, social, extracurricular, and community environments.
- Provide educational experiences that will prepare students academically, and will empower them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maximize their learning potential.
- Facilitate the acculturation process by exposing students to the customs, traditions, and behavioral expectations of their new surroundings.
- Orientate students and their families to the school and the community.
- Encourage students to continue to value and celebrate their cultural heritage, and maintain their native languages.
- English learners acquire full proficiency in English at or better than expected growth.
- Classroom teachers and administrators understand and accept the specific language acquisition needs of ELs and actively seek ways to better serve this population.
- Non-English parent(s) are provided access to participate in their child's education on an equal basis as their English-speaking peers (communication in a mode and language they can understand, timely notification of the English Language acquisition progress of their child, opportunities to participate in district programs)
- Collect data and analyze to monitor EL progress by grade level and WIDA levels to better inform evaluative practices.
- Create standardized policies and procedures to create a uniform ELD program.

Parents/guardians have the right to refuse ELD Services. Refusal of ELD programs and/or services indicates an informed, voluntary decision by the parent/guardian to not have the child placed in any separate, specialized ELD service or instructional program. A "waiver" indicates a desire by the parent/guardian to waive the child from participation in all or some of the ELD programs or services offered by the school. If parents/guardians wish to opt-out of ELD Services, they must contact the

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ESL Department via email or phone:

Lohora@riversidesd.com kpetrucchi@riversidesd.com

(570) 562-2121 ext. 2234, 3373, or 1125

Additional information regarding our district's obligations can be found in the [Guidance for Parent Right to Refuse the LIEP](#).

LIEP Description

Daily ELD instruction is conducted by both ESL Specialists and non-ESL teachers throughout the school day.

ELD Planned Instruction

The ELD instruction is provided by certified ESL teachers with the goal of increasing language development and proficiency. All teachers in the ELD Program have the ESL Program Specialist certification along with an Instructional I or Instructional II certificate.

Riverside's program combines both dedicated time for ELD instruction and may also include push-in into content area classrooms for specialized content-driven ELD instruction. All ELD Instruction is conducted in English.

The ESL teachers collaborate with the content teachers to plan and discuss appropriate accommodations and scaffolds for the ELs in their classes. It is anticipated that by the end of the school year our ELs will have increased their proficiency in all four domains: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Based upon the needs of our EL population, a combination of theories is utilized. Theories include behaviorist (vocabulary acquisition), interactionist (engaging and presenting opportunities for communication), comprehensible input based on Krashen's theory (i+1), and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development.

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Hours and method of delivery of instruction are determined based on student needs in the four language domains and may include instruction for background knowledge and specialized vocabulary in the content areas.

Guidelines are as follows:

Level 1: Estimated weekly hours - 5-15 hours

Level 2: Estimated weekly hours - 5-10 hours

Level 3: Estimated weekly hours - 3-10 hours

Level 4: Estimated weekly hours - 1-5 hours

ELD Curriculum is aligned to the [PA Core Academic Standards](#) and the [PA English Language Development Standards](#) in conjunction with the WIDA Performance Definitions ([Speaking and Writing](#) and [Listening and Reading](#)) and [WIDA Can-Do Descriptors](#).

If an ELD course is used to replace a content area class, the standards used in this ELD course are the same as those in the content course with specialized accommodations for ELD.

Planned ELD Instruction in Content Areas

Content teachers deliver content-embedded ELD in structured collaboration with a certified ESL teacher providing helpful tips and advice to content teachers periodically.

ELD must be incorporated into all classes taught by non-ESL licensed teachers in which ELs are enrolled. These teachers are responsible for deliberately planning for and incorporating language instruction as well as supports, modifications, and accommodations customized to the English language proficiency of an individual EL so that the EL can achieve academic success. Content instruction and assessment must be comprehensible for the EL based on what they can do.

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Codified content curriculum should include scaffolding and accommodations based on English level proficiency and grade level.

The ESL Specialist consults and/or co-teaches with content teachers to ensure the content is comprehensible for the EL based on the ELs' English language proficiency level.

Reclassification, Redesignation, and Monitoring

Riverside follows PDE guidelines for [Reclassification, Monitoring and Redesignation](#) as follows:

- Reclassify ELs as former ELs (FELs) when they attain proficiency,
- Actively monitor the progress of FELs for a period of two years after reclassification and report students to the state in a monitor status for an additional two years, and
- Re-designate FELs as active ELs if they struggle academically as a result of persistent language barriers.

Reclassification

Exiting (Reclassification) the ELD Program is accomplished by meeting the reclassification criteria as defined by PDE. **A minimum WIDA ACCESS composite score of 4.5 indicates that the EL may be eligible for reclassification. In addition to the WIDA scores, two language use inventories are to be completed. At least a 10.5 score combining the converted WIDA ACCESS composite score with the two language use inventories indicate the student may be reclassified.** The language use inventories must be completed prior to the release of ACCESS scores each year for students **who, based on teacher input and previous ACCESS scores of 3.5 or greater, are likely to reach the threshold.** In some cases, students who were not identified as likely to reach the ACCESS score threshold and for whom no language use inventories were completed will unexpectedly achieve a score exceeding the threshold and the inventories should be completed as soon as the ACCESS scores are received.

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The ESL Specialist must:

- Select content teachers who will complete the inventories - ELA teacher (in most cases) along with ESL Specialist
- Train staff to use the rubrics and evaluate the students' language use
- Hold teachers accountable for completing the inventories

If an EL qualifies to be reclassified, parent notification should include WIDA ACCESS score and information about the 2-year monitoring period. The **PIMS coordinator/SIS Data Entry** needs to be informed of the reclassification prior to the October PIMS snapshot.

Criteria for ELs with Disabilities

An EL with a disability who has not met the criteria outlined above may be considered for reclassification if:

- The student has an IEP, AND
- The student has been continuously enrolled in an LIEP for at least four years, AND
- The student's overall composite proficiency level score on the ACCESS for ELLs® has not increased by more than 10% between any two years or total over the three most recent testing cycles, AND
- The school has documented evidence that the student has been provided with the appropriate level of language support, including ELD instruction, throughout his/her enrollment in the LIEP, AND
- A school-based team recommends reclassification.

A specialized reclassification form is provided in the PDE [Reclassification, Monitoring and Redesignation](#) document.

Criteria for ELs taking the Alternate ACCESS test

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ELs who are eligible for and take the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs® may be considered for reclassification when:

- They achieve a score of at least P2 on two consecutive administrations of the test OR achieve the same score for three consecutive administrations of the test, AND
- The IEP team, with input from an ESL/bilingual education professional, recommends reclassification.

Monitoring

Active monitoring the progress of former ELs (FELs) for a period of two years after reclassification and reporting FELs to the state for an additional two years (total of four years of monitoring status) is the responsibility of the **ESL Specialist**.

Monitoring first two years

A process for actively monitoring students' progress and achievement in the general academic program delivered without specialized, planned language supports is conducted for two years after reclassification. Our district tracks student progress in all core academic classes and solicits feedback from core academic teachers **quarterly** throughout the school year to preclude a student falling significantly behind.

Monitoring additional two years

Our district continues to report FELs to the state in PIMS for an additional two years after the active monitoring period. At the end of the fourth year after reclassification, ELs are coded as Former ELs in PIMS.

Redesignation

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If it is determined during the active monitoring phase that an FEL is struggling academically as a result of persistent language barriers, then the FEL may be redesignated as an active EL and be re-enrolled in the LIEP.

Through the quarterly monitoring form or teacher referral, FELs can be identified as struggling. In those cases, documentation must be reviewed to verify that the FEL is truly struggling as a result of persistent language acquisition needs and not academic needs. A meeting of all affected stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, and ESL Specialists, along with selected samples of work is to be held to decide the reasons for the academic struggle. Only if it is determined in that meeting that the FEL is struggling due to English language proficiency is redesignation applicable.

FELs who have been re-designated as active ELs must meet the state-required criteria to be reclassified as FELs again. In cases such as these, the monitoring process starts over from year one upon the second reclassification.

Annual Notification

The **ESL Specialists** will notify parents/guardians of currently enrolled ELs with the following information within 30 days of the start of each school year:

- A notification of their child's continued participation in the LIEP
- A description of the LIEP including its intended benefits for their children and an explanation of its effectiveness
- A notification of their right to refuse services as previously discussed in the Student Identification and Placement section.

Grading Policy

Policy on grading of ELs in content classes

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- All EL students should receive grades for each marking period they have been in attendance.
- An EL cannot fail based on language; these students need accommodations and modifications to achieve at their personal best. All teachers are required to differentiate instruction and assessment (including grades) to align with the *WIDA Can-Do Descriptors* that coincide with the ELD level of their EL students. For downloadable copies of the *WIDA Can-Do Descriptors* visit: <https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/can-do/descriptors>
- The classroom teacher gives the grade, but should collaborate with the ESL teacher.
- The classroom teacher adapts the content material in order to give the student comprehensible input.
- The ESL Specialist and the content teacher confer about how best to adapt the material for the EL.
- The classroom teacher adapts the assessment in order to make it authentic and make it relate to the comprehensible input. The assessments and accommodation may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 1. oral assessments (interview)
 2. portfolio
 3. observation
 4. anecdotal notes
 5. projects
 6. multiple grading (achievement, progress, effort)
 7. eliminate some distractors from multiple choice assessments
 8. give the student more time
 9. read the assessment to the student
 10. provide a scribe for the student
 11. allow the use of dictionaries
 12. allow the use of class notes
 13. allow the use of texts
 14. take-home tests
 15. conferences

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- After teachers have adapted the material, adapted the assessments and conferenced with the ESL teacher, the EL, guidance counselor, and parents/guardians, the teachers may then fail an EL for the following reasons:
 1. Inadequate effort put forth to achieve
 2. Willful resistance toward learning after all attempts have been made to accommodate the learner

Policy on grading of ELs in ESL only classes

The ESL teacher may grade the ELs on any scale preferred. Fairness in content-area classes requires that teachers grade ELs and non-ELs in a coordinated way. That requirement does not apply to ELD classes.

Retention Policy

An EL may not be retained in a grade based solely on his/her lack of English proficiency. Evidence must be provided to show that all appropriate modifications and accommodations to instruction and assessment aligned to the student's English language proficiency (WIDA Can-Do Descriptors) to allow the EL meaningful access to the general curriculum as well as to promote second language learning were implemented and documented over time prior to considering grade retention. (BEC for ELs)

Documentation may include: student work, grade book, benchmark assessments, attendance records, and results of standardized tests. A meeting or several meetings over time with stakeholders (administrators, content teachers, ESL Specialist, parents/guardians, and others) must be held to discuss the possible retention with the documentation present.

Parental Right to Refuse Specialized Programming

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Annual Testing Requirements

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0®

The annual state English language proficiency (ELP) assessment, ACCESS for ELLs 2.0®, is required by federal law. The results of the state ELP assessment are used to measure students' English language proficiency and progress in each of the four language domains (reading, writing, speaking and listening).

Testing accommodations due to IEPs and 504s are made in accordance with the WIDA ACCESS for 2.0® Administration Guide.

There is no provision that allows parents to opt their children out of annual ELP testing.

Each student's original ACCESS for ELLs 2.0® score result report is placed in the student's permanent record folder by **the ESL Specialist for his or her grade.**

The ESL Specialist shares the results of each student's ACCESS for ELLs 2.0® testing with the appropriate ELD and content area teachers.

A copy of the score report is provided by **The ESL Specialist** to parents with the accompanying letter provided by WIDA.

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Pennsylvania State System of Assessment (PSSA) and Keystone Exams

ELs participate in all other annual state-required assessments (e.g., PSSA, Keystone Exams) according to those testing guidelines.

Student Participation in Related and Extra-Curricular Activities

ELs must be given the opportunity to participate in all school-related activities and extracurricular clubs.

Guidelines for ELs with Disabilities

Some ELs may have a disability and qualify for special education services. This could be determined at the time of enrollment if a student arrives with a valid individualized education program (IEP) or at some point during the school year. All procedures for the screening, evaluation, IEP, and the provision of services and/or instruction must be in compliance with the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) and [PA Chapter 14 Regulations](#). See PDE's [Bureau of Special Education](#) website for access to all related regulations, policies, guidance, and FAQs.

Right to dual services

LIEP and special education programming are not mutually exclusive. Special education services do not replace English Language Development services or vice versa. ELs must be afforded all supports, resources, and programming for which they are eligible. In other words, ELs are eligible for special education services if they meet IEP eligibility criteria and, conversely, students with a disability are eligible for ELD programming if they are identified as ELs.

Identification

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Student Identification and Placement

Enrollment

Riverside School District is required to identify ELs at the time of enrollment per the BEC for ELs, section titled [Screening, Identification, and Placement](#).

Identification

Riverside School District must notify parents of the identification and programming options, and appropriately place the ELs into a language instruction educational program (LIEP). This process must be completed within the first 30 calendar days of school or within 14 calendar days of enrollment if a student enrolls after the first day of school. The specific requirements for carrying out this process for K through 12th grade students are outlined in the [EL Identification Procedure K-12](#) document.

Level 1 Screening

The [Home Language Survey](#) is included in the registration packet for all students. Upon completion, **the secretary to the superintendent** examines this document for languages other than English. If another language is listed on that survey, then a Level 2 Screening is necessary.

Level 2 Screening

If the parent indicates use of a language other than English in any of the 4 initial questions, the Level 2

There is no waiting period for making a disability determination for an EL. A child must not be determined to be a child with a disability if the determinant factor for that finding is lack of English proficiency.

Programming Considerations

English Language Development instruction (or English as a Second Language) is part of an EL's general academic program and must be included in academic programs for ELs with disabilities. This content must be delivered by a properly trained and certified ESL Specialist either directly or by a special education teacher who is working in collaboration with an ESL Specialist.

The IEP team, which must include an ESL professional, must take into account the language needs of an EL with a disability when considering special education identification, program design, and placement.

Reclassification of ELs with Disabilities

An EL who has a disability must meet the state's definition of English proficient in order to be reclassified as a FEL. This definition and the provisions for reclassification can be found in the [Reclassification, Monitoring, and Re-designation](#) of ELs section.

Guidelines for ELs with Suspected Gifted Abilities

LIEP and gifted programming are not mutually exclusive. Gifted services do not replace English language development services or vice versa. ELs must be afforded all supports, resources, and programming for which they are eligible. In other words, ELs are eligible for gifted services if they meet GIEP eligibility criteria and, conversely, students with a gifted designation are eligible for ELD programming if they are identified as an ELs.

Student Identification and Placement

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There is no waiting period for making a gifted determination for an EL. A child must not be denied gifted testing or services if he or she is an EL.

Migrant Students

Some migrant children may also be identified as ELs. The PIMS coordinator should be informed of migrant children to update records.

Area Vocational-Technical School (AVTS) and Career and Technology Center (CTC)

ELs may not be denied access to participate in programs at AVTSs/CTCs based solely on English language proficiency. ELs participating in vocational programs must receive ELD instruction appropriate to their level of proficiency and content-area instruction must be aligned to the student's English language proficiency level. Comprehensive AVTS/ CTC schools are responsible for providing the LIEP and staffing for ELs as outlined in this document.

The school counselor with consultation from the ESL Specialist should communicate the English Language Proficiency of an EL to the AVTS or CTC for appropriate accommodations.

Non-Public Schools

Identifying non-public EL students

If our school district is within the geographic boundary of the non-public school, Riverside School District will screen the students to determine EL status. Our school district will count the non-public students who qualify as an EL on our District Fact Sheet Template within PIMS on the October submission and the May EL PIMS Data Collection.

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Riverside School District will provide a letter to each non-public at the beginning of each school year indicating how they may access our services.

Federal and Other Programs

If our school district accesses other Federal Program grants, such as Title I, Title II, and Title IV, we will coordinate services to maximize support to our teacher and our ELs. ELs are eligible to receive the services within those programs.

Family and Community Involvement

Communication with Parents

Communication with parents/guardians is in the preferred mode and language as specified in the Family Interview or other parent/guardian meetings. The types of documents to translate include at a minimum: school registration and enrollment instructions, EL Notification letter to include type of assessment, score, reason child was identified as an EL, description of LIEP, parental right to refuse specialized instruction, expected timeline for achieving proficiency, notices required by Special Education laws and regulations, grievance procedures and notices of non-discrimination, student discipline policies and procedures, report cards and progress reports, notices of parent-teacher conferences, information regarding gifted and talented programs, results of ACCESS for ELLs® 2.0 test, requests for parent permission for student participation in school activities, and other like-type parental communication.

If the parents' language is not a common language, then a cover page explaining in the parents'/guardians' language is provided on how they may have the document translated orally.

To provide parents/guardians with effective communication, interpreters or translators must understand (and be able to express in both languages) any specialized terms or concepts used in the communication.

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It is also important that translators or interpreters understand the ethics of interpreting and translating and the need for confidentiality.

Siblings and friends of the parents/guardians should not be used unless requested by the parent for parent/teacher conferences. **At the parent's/guardian's request, a friend may be used for interpretation and/or translation; verify that the parent/guardian is aware that the friend will be listening to confidential information and document that this was discussed with the parent/guardian. At the parent's/guardian's request, a sibling older than 18 (out of the K-12 school system) may be used for interpretation and/or translation. Again, verify that the parent/guardian is aware that the sibling will be listening to confidential information and document that this was discussed with the parent/guardian and sibling.**

For meetings such as IEP reviews, behavioral health, and detailed data analysis discussions, specialized translators knowledgeable about the intended content should be used.

Community Involvement

Outreach to parents of ELs to inform the parents regarding how they can be involved in the education of their children and be active participants in assisting their children to attain English proficiency and succeed academically is the responsibility of all members of our school district. This includes holding, and sending notice of opportunities for regular meetings for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents of ELs.

Program Evaluation

Evaluations of LIEPs must be conducted at least annually and the results documented and reported to the state through the English Learner Reporting System (ELRS). The ESL Specialist/Coordinator completes the ELRS report prior to the established PDE deadline. Determinations to make changes to an LIEP based on program evaluations may be made annually, although more time for a program to produce positive

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results before taking action may be considered as long as that time is reasonable based on the program design and expected outcomes.

Evaluations must be based on student outcomes rather than program inputs. For example, a program evaluation may not be based on the number of hours that teachers collaborate each week, the amount of funds spent on resources, or the implementation of a particular intervention or support. A program evaluation should include evidence of student growth toward proficiency in English and academic achievement. The Future Ready PA Index and Growth to Target Tables are used to measure growth of individual students and the program as a whole.

If requested, parents/guardians may obtain a copy of the previous year's program evaluation or ELRS report.

Data Reporting

The Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) and the English Learner Reporting System (ELRS) must be completed annually. PIMS and the ELRS provide data and information on student numbers, teachers, 22 Pa. Code §4.26 compliance, and Title III.

Professional Development

District Staff

Annual professional development related to ELD for all district personnel working with ELs is part of the Professional Development Act 48 Plan. Input into this Act 48 Plan includes the ESL Specialist/Coordinator.

ESL Staff

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Student Identification and Placement

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Opportunities for professional development for ESL staff should be made available. Programs may include IU ESL workshops, PATTAN workshops, PDE in-person or web-based programs, PDE conferences such as the annual MEP/ESL Conference. Other conferences could include annual TESOL conference, annual WIDA conference, and Center for Applied Linguistics.

Title III

Riverside School District is a member of the NEIU Title III Consortium. A [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with member districts has been created and approved by the member districts.

Items contained in the MOU include:

- Title III EL Fund Definitions
- Purposes of Title III funding
- A description of how our school district must use Title III EL funds for activities
- A description of the authorized uses of Title III Funds at the LEA-Level
- Our consortium's plan for professional development
- Our consortium's plan for ensuring that all English Learner (EL) students participate in the annual English language proficiency assessment
- Our consortium's plan for program evaluation and continuous improvement, including data sharing and analysis
- An explanation of how funds will be spent to support the activities
- Procedure for the following:
 - Parental notification of Title III program placement
 - Equitable Services
 - Identifying non-public EL students
 - Providing supplemental instruction/services to non-public entities

Federal and Other Programs

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Student Identification and Placement

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Complaint Resolution Policy

Parents, guardians, or students with concerns regarding the district ELD program should contact the District ESL coordinator in writing. The written communication should include the nature of the problem, attempts at remediation, and proposed resolution to the problem utilizing a formalized district complaint form available in the administrative offices. If written communication is impossible due to language barriers, the parent, guardian, or student may contact the district ESL coordinator through a personal visit. The district ESL coordinator will utilize a translation service if applicable to communicate with the parent, student, or guardian in regards to the complaint or concern.

ELD Resources and Contact Information

Scott Pentasuglio
ESL Program Director

spent@riversidesd.com
(570) 562-2121 ext. 2205

Kristen Petrucci
ESL Program Specialist, Grades 7-12
kpetrucchi@riversidesd.com
(570) 562-2121 ext. 1125

Lindsey O'Hora
ESL Program Specialist, Grades K-6

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Student Identification and Placement

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Level 2 Screening

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lohora@riversidesd.com

(570)562-2121 ext. 2234 (West) or ext. 3373 (East)

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