

# **British Columbia: School Psychologists' Ratio and Roles 2022-2023**

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# Purpose

- **Gain information related to the current ratio of school psychologists to students in British Columbia**
  - Currently, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) recommends a ratio of 1:1000
  - When providing comprehensive and preventive school-based psychological services, a ratio of 1:500–700 is recommended (CPA, 2014)
- **Better understand the current role and potential role of school psychologists in British Columbia**

[https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Sections/EDsection/School\\_Psychology\\_TFpaper\\_Aug2014\\_Final.pdf](https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Sections/EDsection/School_Psychology_TFpaper_Aug2014_Final.pdf)



# Method

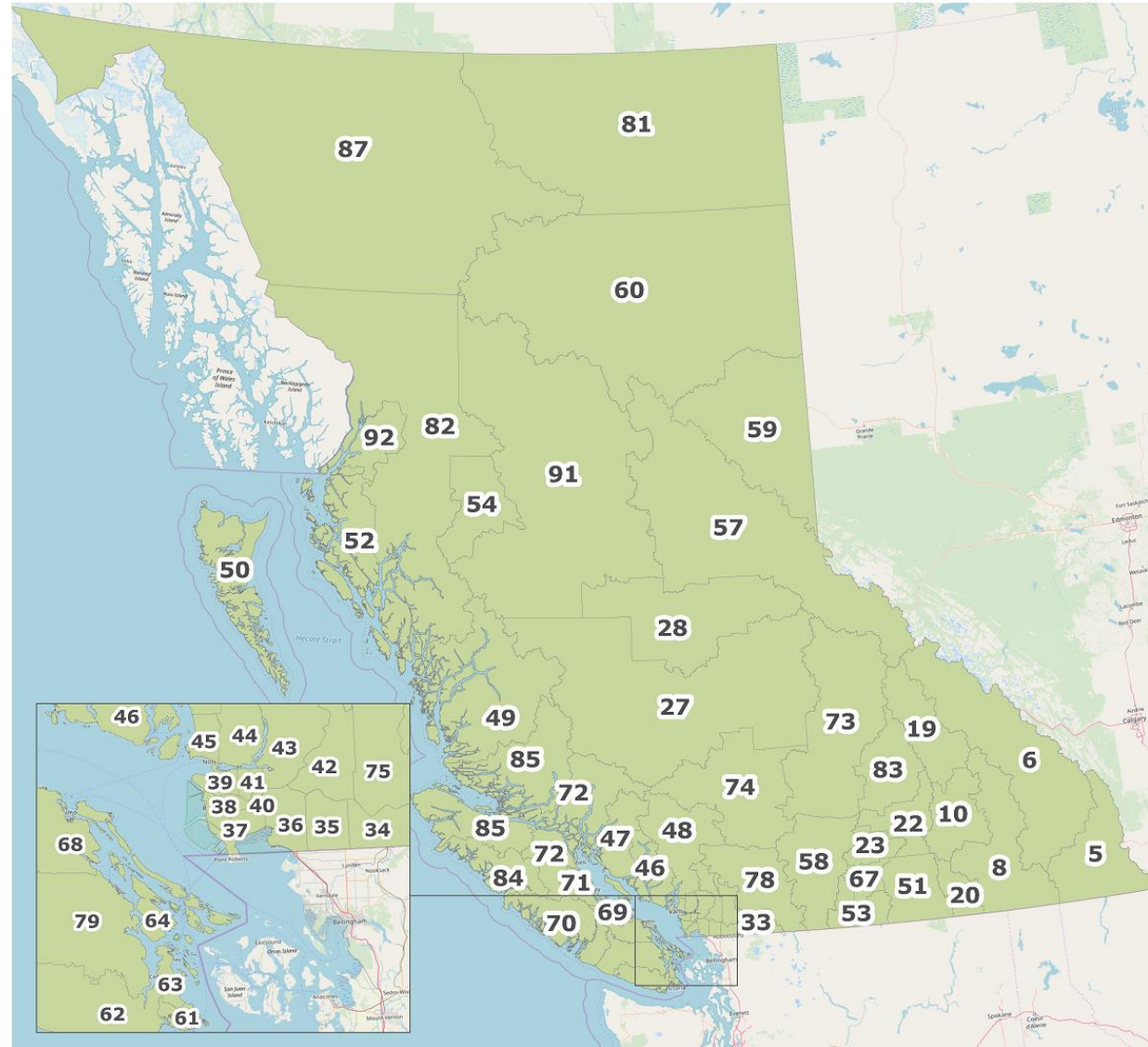
- **Recruitment**
  - Four notifications sent to all public school districts in BC
  - Targeted Principals/Directors of Inclusive Education or Learning Support Services
- **District are de-identified for data analysis**
- **Survey for 2022-2023**
  - # students in district, % student receiving Special Education
  - # of FTE School Psychologists, # of available FTE positions, # desired FTE positions
  - Estimate of current percentage of time in 8 different roles
  - Estimate of desired percentage of time in 8 different roles
- **Research approval through UBC**
  - H23-01586; UBC Office of Research Ethics ([RSIL@ors.ubc.ca](mailto:RSIL@ors.ubc.ca))



# British Columbia



- **Public School Districts**
  - 60 public school districts
  - Includes the Francophone Education Authority that is province-wide
- **Ministry of Education and Child Care**
  - 2018/2019
    - 166 FTE School Psychs
    - 568,982 students
    - **Ratio = ~ 1:3428**
  - 2022/2023
    - Unknown FTE School Psychs
    - 590,584 students enrolled

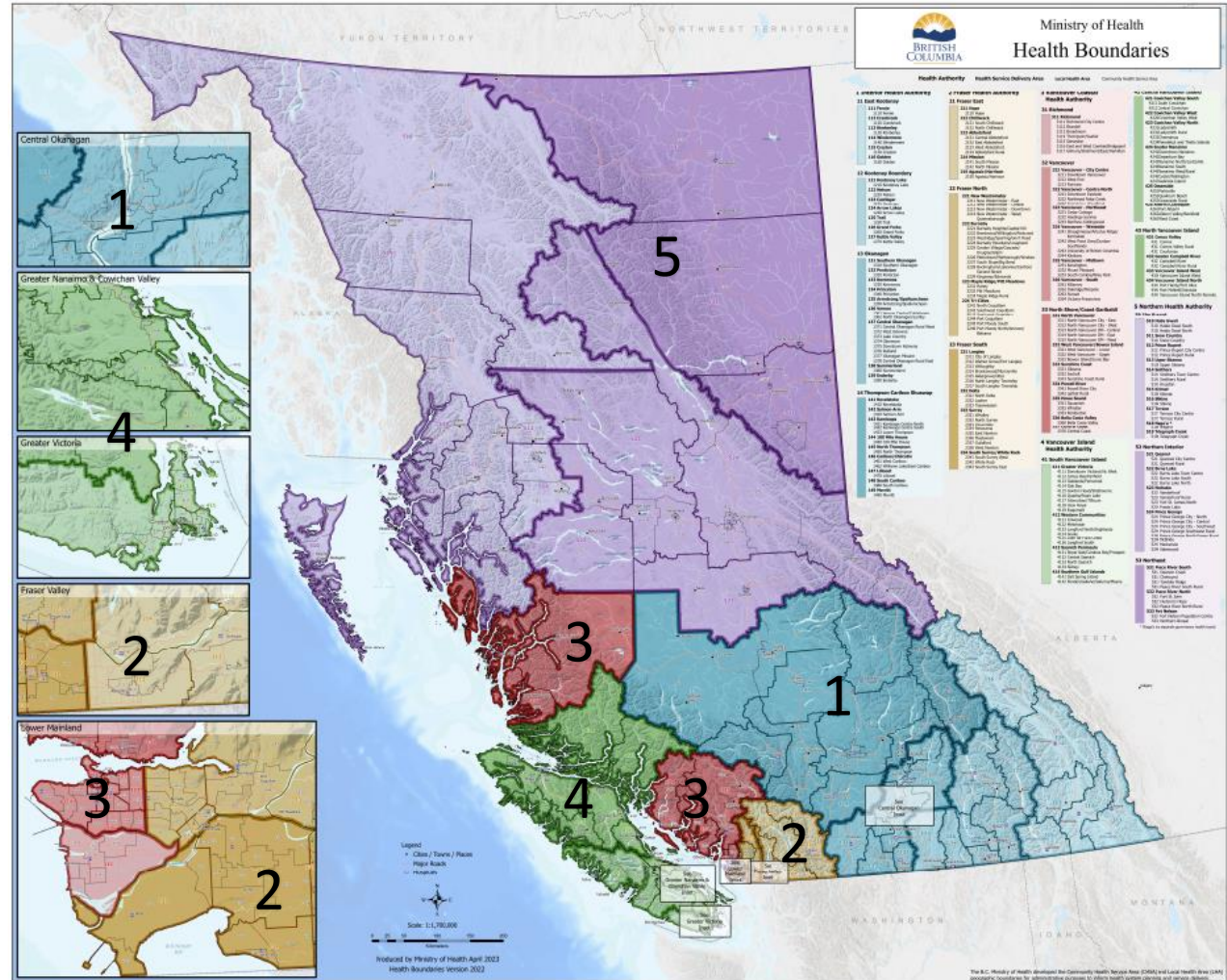


[http://docs.openinfo.gov.bc.ca/Response\\_Package\\_EDU-2019-95093.pdf](http://docs.openinfo.gov.bc.ca/Response_Package_EDU-2019-95093.pdf)

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/ministries/education>

# Results

- **Response Rate = 36.67%**
  - 22 / 60 districts
  - Participation from various regions within BC
- School districts located in various Health Authorities
  - Interior [1] = 4
  - Fraser [2] = 5
  - Vancouver Coastal [3] = 4
  - Vancouver Island [4] = 5
  - Northern [5] = 4



<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/geographic-data-services/land-use/administrative-boundaries/health-boundaries>

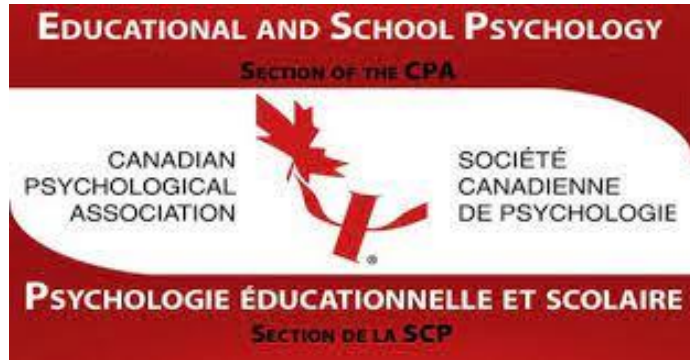


# Results

District Data 2022/2023		
Total Students Enrolled in Districts (N=21)	171,223	Range = 330 – 77950
Average % of student receiving Special Education Services (N=20)	14.7%	Range = 10% - 30%
# of FTE School Psychologists Hired (N=21)	55.5	Range = 0 – 8.9
# of FTE School Psychologists Desired (N=21)	69.6	Range = 0 – 8.9

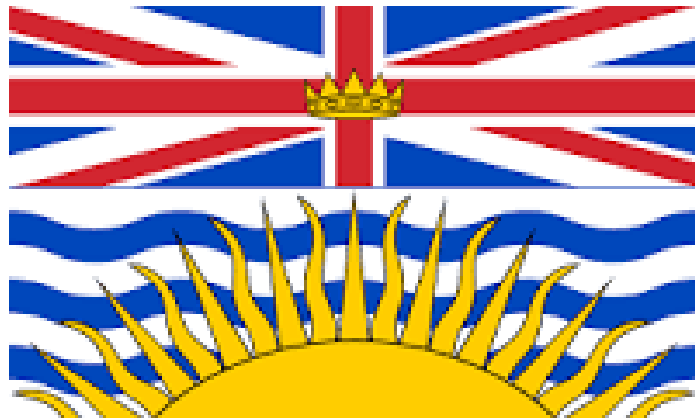


# Results



**CPA Recommended Ratio  
School Psychologists to Students**

**1:500-1000**



**British Columbia**

**School Psychologists to Students**

**1:3207 (Current) / 1:2572 (Desired)**



# Potential Roles of School Psychologists

Role	Overview
Assessment and Evaluation of Students	Direct/indirect assessment and report writing
Consultation/Case Conferences with parents and School Personnel	Indirect services such as consulting with school-based teams, school board teams, and families; assisting teachers to improve student academics or behaviour
Academic Intervention	Providing direct services providing help to students with academic issues
Social/Emotional/Behavioural Intervention	Providing direct services such as individual counselling, counselling groups, social-emotional learning groups)
Crisis Prevention/Intervention Planning or Direct Services	Serving as a member of a crisis team or called upon to address crises during/after an event
Collaboration/Liaison with Other Agencies	Working with other agencies to support students and families, such as early childhood agencies, community mental health agencies, post-secondary support services, etc.
Providing In-Service Education to School Personnel	Conducting in-services to help others better understand assessment or other topics
Research or Program Evaluation	Engaging in a review of district practices/programs or conducting other research

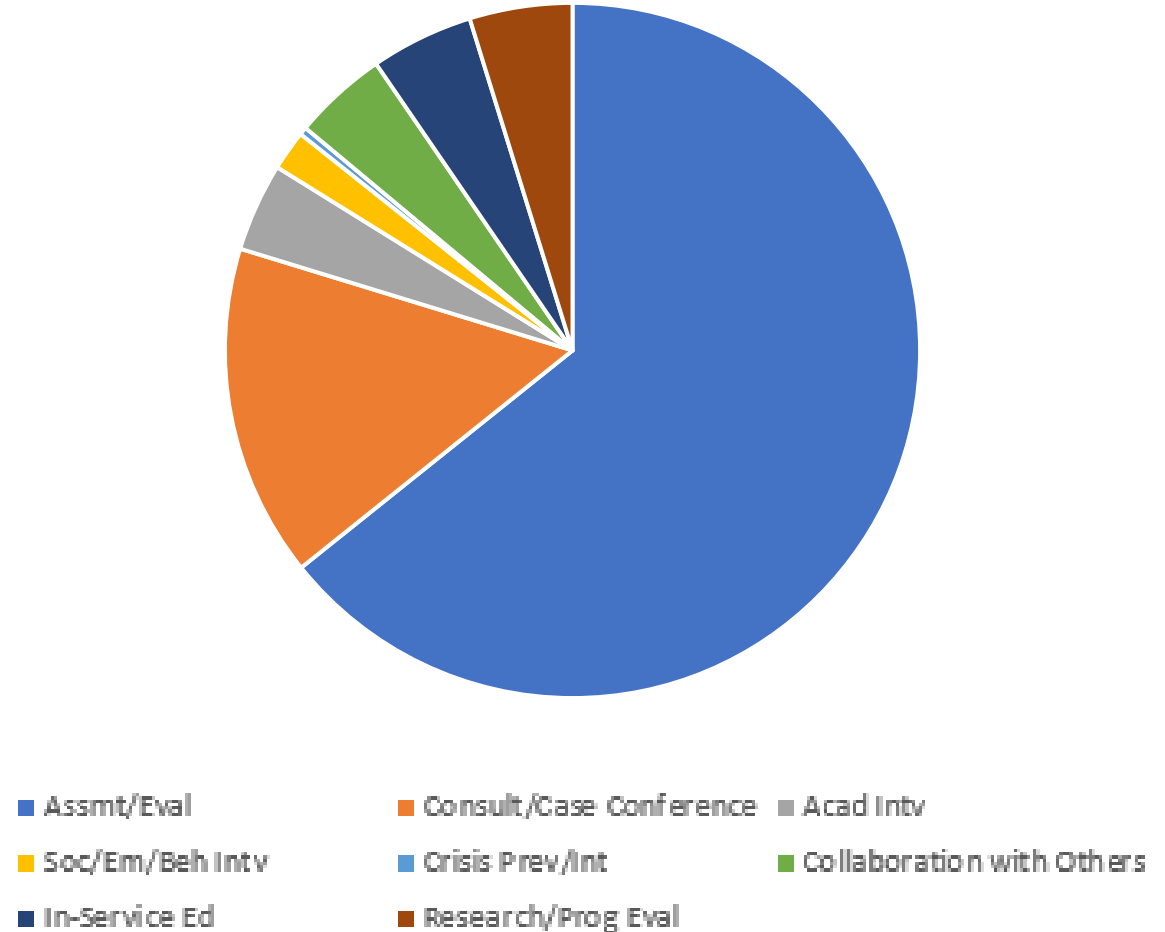




# Results – Current Role

Role (n=15)	% Current Time
Assessment and Evaluation of Students	64.4
Consultation/Case Conferences with parents and School Personnel	18.87
Academic Intervention	2
Social/Emotional/Behavioural Intervention	1.3
Crisis Prevention/Intervention Planning or Direct Services	0.6
Collaboration/Liaison with Other Agencies	4.6
Providing In-Service Education to School Personnel	5.33
Research or Program Evaluation	3.67

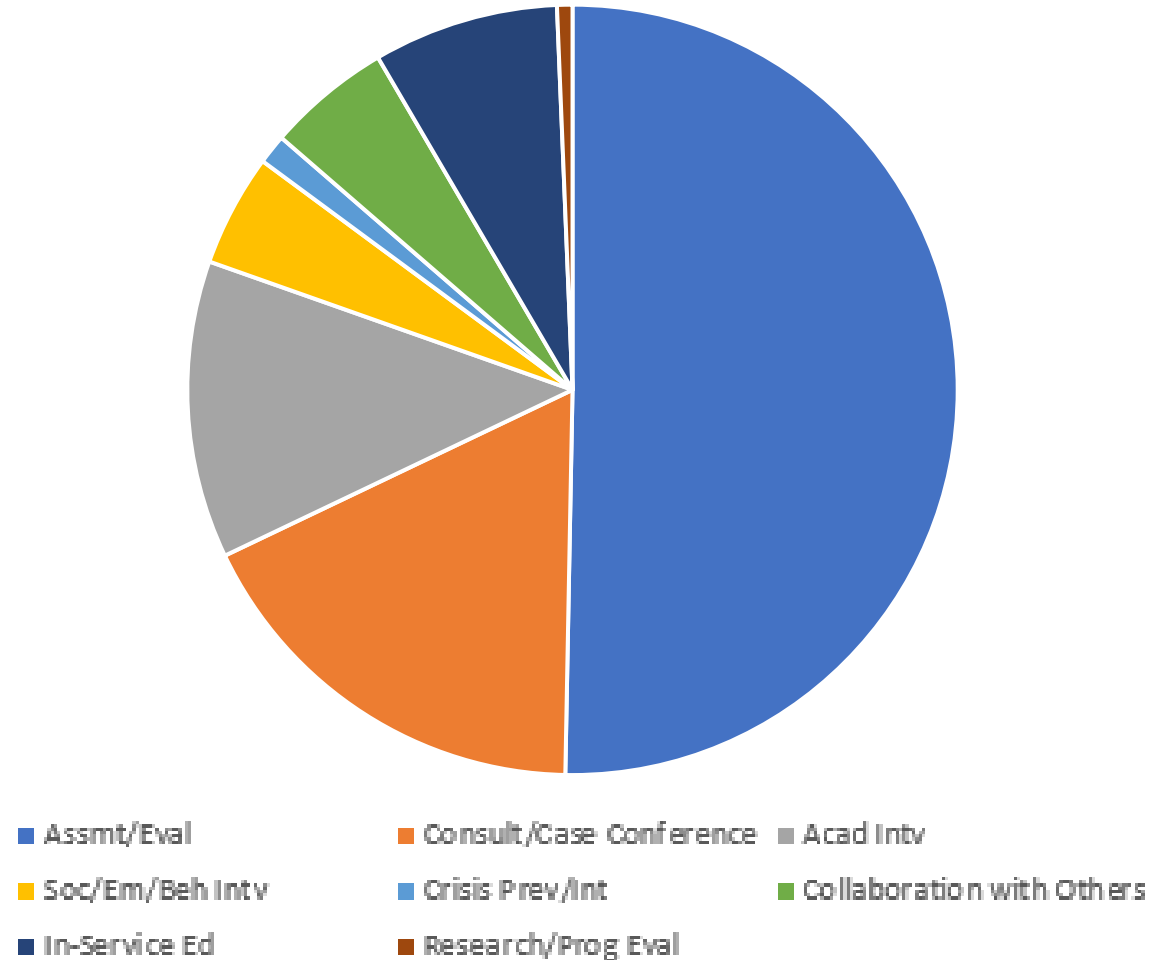
Estimated Current % of Time in Role



# Results – Desired Role

Role (n=13)	% Current Time
Assessment and Evaluation of Students	53.15
Consultation/Case Conferences with parents and School Personnel	21.23
Academic Intervention	3.54
Social/Emotional/Behavioural Intervention	2.31
Crisis Prevention/Intervention Planning or Direct Services	1.85
Collaboration/Liaison with Other Agencies	6.15
Providing In-Service Education to School Personnel	10.54
Research or Program Evaluation	2.08

Estimated Desired % of Time in Role



# Discussion

- **Survey of school districts in British Columbia**

- Overall, 35% response rate (21 of 60 districts)
- Respondents were Principals/Directors overseeing School Psychologists
- De-identified data presented; participation from across the province

- **Ratio of School Psychologists to Students in BC**

- 2018/2019:
  - 1:3428 (per Ministry of Education Information Briefing Note)
- 2022/2023:
  - 1:3207 (current)
  - 1:2572 (desired)
- *Current and desired ratios far exceed recommendation from CPA (1:500-1000)*



# Discussion

- **BC School Psychology ratio is currently over 3x the minimum ratio based on CPA recommendations**
  - High ratio increases wait time for assessments for students
  - May delay identification of students with special needs and services
  - Decreases capacity of school psychologists to engage in comprehensive school-based psychological services model



# Discussion

- **Current estimated role of BC School Psychologists**

- Assessment and Evaluation: 64%
- Consultation and Case Conference: 19%
- In-Service: 5%
- Research/Program Evaluation: 4%

- **Desired estimated role of BC School Psychologists**

- Assessment and Evaluation: 53%
- Consultation and Case Conference: 21%
- Collaboration/Liaison: 6%
- In-Service: 11%



# Discussion

- **BC School Psychologists' Role**
  - Current under-utilization of training of school psychologists' knowledge and skills as outlined by CPA training standards (CPA, 2007; 2014)
    - Assessing and diagnosing mental health issues
    - Program planning and evaluation
    - System-wide prevention measures
    - Evidence-based interventions and treatments
- **Decreased access to comprehensive school-based psychological services in BC**
  - Decreased time spent on academic, social/emotional, and behavioural interventions
  - Mental health promotion
  - Crisis prevention/intervention and trauma-informed care

<https://cpa.ca/sections/educational/advocacy-and-outreach-resources/>  
<https://cpa.ca/cpsite/UserFiles/Documents/publications/CPA%20Practice%20Guide.pdf>



# Limitations and Future Directions

- **Survey Limitations**

- Response rate of 35%; desired would be 100% participation
- Respondents (District Principals/Directors) asked to give average role breakdown
- School psychologists may be more specialized in their district roles and engage in different percentages of activities

- **Looking Forward**

- Survey BC school psychologists regarding their current role, current competencies, and desired roles
- Collect data across Canada to gain a better understanding of the practice of school psychology



# Acknowledgements

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  - Hira Peracha, BA, Masters student
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