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STUDENT DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES:

SCHOOL SYSTEM AND POLICE RESPONSE TO HIGH RISK AND DISRUPTIVE YOUTH

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INTRODUCTION

ACQUISITIONS

This paper reviews research on strategies and techniques to alleviate discipline problems in public schools. More specifically, we examine strategies developed between police agencies and school systems aimed at preventing, reducing, or controlling serious student misbehavior and crime. We will spend most of our time examining programs and projects that demonstrate police-school cooperation. When this is not possible, we will turn to programs or projects that apply a crossover technology; for example, school programs using police-like contingency planning or police programs using classroom curricula.

Here, at the beginning of this paper, it is important to differentiate clearly between "disciplinary violations" and "crimes." For the purposes of this paper, disciplinary violations represent only violations of school rules; they are rightfully censured solely by school district employees. Crimes, on the other hand, represent violations of federal, state, or local laws and concern law enforcement agencies as well as school system officials. Usually, when programs share areas of interest and concern they also share communication and planning. In this paper, we examine research into this sharing.

of trials, errors, experiments, and new approaches. It is this current period that interests us. It is here that we begin to see interagency coordination and cooperation ranging from the local to the national level. However, before we move closer and begin to examine the specific research, we might usefully ask ourselves the nature and extent of the information that education and police officials have available. In other words, what do each of the key players — police and educators — know about a student who commits a serious misdeed in a school?

To answer this question, let us first tease out places where differences are likely to occur. First, school district administrators are likely to have various degrees of understanding of the differences between "discipline" violations and "criminal" violations. That is, some educators will be better than others at understanding that much of what they call "discipline" should actually be called "crime." Second, school districts will have various degrees of working relations with local law enforcement agencies. For example, school districts with their own school security offices staffed by commissioned officers (or with active police-liaison programs) will likely have very close relations with local police; districts with school security offices staffed by non-certified personnel will have different, and probably more distant, relationships; and districts with no security or police-liaison program will undoubtedly have the least developed working relations. Third, police departments, themselves, will possess varying degrees of sophistication when it comes to collecting and analyzing data about crime in the city or in a school. Their capabilities will range from small departments that only use a "pin map" to identify problem areas, to major departments that use sophisticated computer modeling to identify activity and trends in any part of their city for any type of offense for any time of the day or season of the year.

ent pressures than do school officials. Unlike school superintendents who have most to worry about the quality of education throughout their district in relation to state and national norms, police chiefs have to set contact and arrest priorities based on local standards of tolerance combined with the necessities of "political expediency." The question of the day may not be so much one of knowing what is illegal, but of knowing what is sufficiently against local norms to warrant assigning manpower and resources to stop it. Viewed in that light, police-school agreements take on an even greater importance, for without them, school officials may well find that police officials care little for the kinds of problems that are crippling certain schools.

Now: with this background, we are ready to begin examining research into police-school "discipline improvement" programs. Many of these programs will really focus on preventing violations of school rules (discipline), just as they claim; others are actually dedicated to crime prevention.

PART II: REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

In this Part, we will follow a model that says: a "strategy" leads to an "approach" which leads to a "program." For each strategy we will ask: what is the strategy; why should we be concerned with it (rationale); what do we know about it (point of origin, duration, type of evaluations available); and what else might we want to know about it.

Both for the police agency programs and for the school system programs, we will consider three primary strategies. These are the strategies of PREVENTION, RESPONSE, and CONTROL. For the purposes of this paper, "prevention" refers to actions taken in advance of a problem, designed

"In the high school the police officer's role is similar to that of an American military advisor overseas" wrote Bud Vestermark in 1971 (Vestermark, 1971:11). His presence may be unwelcome, his advice only grudgingly heard. When needed, for example to respond to a serious "fight," he may insist on resolving it in ways that are contrary to the principal's wishes. The principal may find himself being threatened with charges of obstruction of justice. In a phrase, police on school grounds often present something of a mixed blessing; while they are capable — at least in theory — of resolving crises, their presence may have the unintended consequence of triggering a different kind of crisis even while resolving the first one. Police on campus can be provocative.

To counteract and defuse many of these feelings and situations, law enforcement professionals nationwide have for years endeavored to work with educators to improve relations even while helping local school principals reduce crime and delinquency. The first strategy they have used is that of PREVENTION.

Prevention Strategy

Prevention, as previously mentioned, is a strategy calling for thinking about and planning for events before they become problems. Over the years, police planners have developed a range of approaches that fall into a prevention strategy; they also have developed a variety of programs that fall into one or more of the approaches. For the sake of brevity and overview, we will touch on two methods that are reasonably well documented; within each, we will endeavor to find research about selected programs.

Classroom Education Approach: There are many, many programs that fall within this Approach. These programs assume that disruptive behavior

7

tion in Chicago). From their inception, police-taught education courses were designed both for elementary and secondary students. As alluded to in the opening paragraphs of this section, programs in the early 1970s, such as "Adopt-a-Deputy," "Police-School Cadet Program," "The 'Be A Good Guy' Plan," and "Officer Friendly," appear principally designed to overcome the wave of anti-authority sentiment that then appeared to sweep school-aged children. These early programs were not "educational" in the sense that there was a curricula. They were educational in the sense that they were designed to build friendship through familiarity (Pursuit, ibid: 319). Officers were assigned to schools — particularly elementary schools; their job was to visit classrooms (in uniform) and to speak with students. As fear and animosity toward law officers subsided, educational programs based on a set curricula began to emerge. Begun in Los Angeles by Vivian Monroe's Constitutional Rights Foundation, but eventually adopted widely from coast to coast, these courses slowly grew from short units within "civics" courses to stand-alone units that taught younger children about right and wrong, and taught older children about the finer distinctions between civil and criminal law. The central assumption of these programs was that youth needed clearly to understand the consequences of actions in order to be able to CHOOSE correct over incorrect behavior.

The principal research on modern-day LRE, as it relates to delinquency prevention, is found in Johnson and Hunter's 1984 research over a three-year period. As this program has undergone a rigorous "impact evaluation," it might be well to spend some time describing the findings.

From their study of LRE for three years in 61 classes using LRE and 44 classes not using LRE, the authors drew many useful and interesting conclusions. For example, while they found that "LRE can improve students' at-

clearly demonstrate the focus and intensity of this new genre of program. The broad goals of earlier education programs have been focused; the general interest in improving school/ police relations have been honed.

The Police Department and the Board of Education joint program planning committee define three SPECDA program goals:

1. To constructively alter the attitudes and perceptions of young people as they pertain to drug usage.

2. To increase student awareness of the effects and consequences of drug and substance abuse.

3. To build foundations for a constructive, ongoing dialogue between police officers, drug counselors, and young people. (Jacobs, 1986: iii)

Perhaps the best example of a program that targets a specific population (rather than a specific problem) is the Youth Awareness Program cosponsored by the District of Columbia Public Schools and the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. This program focuses on urban adolescents; it aims to help them make appropriate life-choices in the face of negative peer pressures and difficult socio-economic circumstances. Again, the program planners assume that children — in this instance children of lower socio-economic standing who attend urban schools — need forceful adult leadership in order to overcome strong peer pressures to engage in contra-legal activity. The sponsoring agencies work together to develop new policies, procedures, instructional materials, to train liaisons and resource personnel, etc. The courses last a semester. The program was evaluated in the 1983-84 school year. Pre- and post-testing revealed that younger students (12-14) gained significantly in knowledge and improved attitudes while gains among older students (15+) were not significant (District of Columbia Public Schools, 1984).

On-site Presence Approach: While there are many programs initiated by school districts that result in police officers spending some time in the

11

rather than by local educators. It appears that an underlying assumption of these police planners that by placing officers in secondary schools, they could fulfill a "security" function and also have informal access to the very youth who were committing delinquent acts in the community.

By the early 1980s, liaison programs had grown and matured into sophisticated units of city law enforcement departments. In 1981 the Wisconsin Juvenile Officers' Association published their Police/School Liaison Program Development Policy Guidelines complete with evaluation guidelines. In 1984, the South San Francisco Police Department published a complete history and evaluation of their school liaison program, including their updated Procedure Handbook for Police Liaison Officers. Their evaluation is best described as a "process evaluation:" contacts, meetings, arrests. This evaluation is only of limited use for this paper, as the "evaluation" simply concludes that effective prevention and early intervention is taking place, and the program should be continued. They have attached numerous support letters; they all reiterate that theme.

Response Strategy

Response strategies, as previously discussed, contain approaches designed to curtail further occurrences of a group of acts that the school system or the police department want to curtail. Like drug sales. Or gang activity. Or vandalism. Or burglary.

There are not many descriptions of programs involving the police that truly represent responses to particular problems. The bulk of the extant descriptions appear in three sources: in Surratt (1974); in Violent Schools - Safe Schools, 1977 (hereafter, the Safe School Study); and in Vestermark and Blauvelt (1978). In these works, we read about the range of police assistance programs for specific events: using police to help monitor after-school

While there is not a great deal of information on policing in schools in the Safe Schools Study, some of the findings are unusual enough to warrant further thought and discussion. For example, we find that suburban areas, then small cities, then rural areas, and lastly large cities report "very much support" from local police (47%, 41%, 39% and 29%). But when we look at areas served by police, the order is different. "Police on regular patrol," — infrequent at best, ranges from only 8 to 11% of responding schools — is most frequent in large cities (as would be expected). If we now juxtapose these findings, we discover that while about 11% of all large city schools have police on regular patrol (and 5% of them also have police stationed in the schools), it is these same respondents (administrators of schools in large cities) that are least likely to say that they receive "very much support" from local police.

The author of this paper recognizes that the "research" reported both by Surratt and by The Safe Schools Study is strictly quantitative and as such, of little use to those endeavoring to derive conclusions about the utility and effectiveness of particular approaches and strategies. We have been unable to locate any "impact" research or evaluations of these types of police-initiated school-based prevention programs. Furthermore, the author of this paper is surprised to note that it appears that short-term interventions that are planned and carried out by policing agencies either succeed in meeting their intended purpose (and are then discontinued) or fail to meet their intended purpose (and are discontinued). The only apparent difference (since the conclusions are the same) is that if they "succeeded" in the eyes of the commanding officers, they will likely be tried again. Tried often enough, some report of them reaches the general public. Quite a bit of time can elapse

Research on acute school-police relations is somewhat more plentiful, but — again — we mostly find descriptive information rather than impact evaluations. In this instance, the author of this paper proposes that descriptions of these policies and practices would not have been published/printed had they not been tested, even if only pragmatically. So perhaps we have some empirical research, after all.

Among this literature, Vestermark and Blauvelt (1978; 161) describe how to manage bomb threats. Blauvelt (1977) instructs us how to handle hostage situations in public schools. Vestermark (1971), writing a general treatise on "collective violence" presents what remains to this day the definitive tactical procedural manual for situational (spontaneous) and guided (planned) riots on school grounds. Williams (C 1978) gives us a crowd-control plan for schools; Campbell (1982) authors a manual for police/school handling of street gangs; the Milwaukee Police Department's Gang Crimes Unit (1984, 85, 86) produces an annually updated directory of gang indicia, terms, and signals; and Mourning (1985) discusses current policies and practices regarding the use of metal detectors in schools. To restate: these are all descriptive, and we can only suspect that they work because they are being promulgated, even if only — in some instances — as "fugitive literature".

School System Programs

By the mid-1970s, the nation had begun to realize that students were actually committing crimes in the public schools. The Gallup organization began reporting that "discipline" was the greatest educational concern in the country (Gallup Polls of Public Attitudes Towards Education) and the U.S. Senate began holding hearings in an effort to understand the phenomenon (U.S. Congress, 1975). By 1975, the then-six-year-old National Association of

crimes from disciplinary infractions as a precursor to developing and implementing truly effective programs.

While more detailed discussion of this schism should probably be held for Part III of this paper, readers might want to consider something of the differences in education and training of those in the law enforcement or school security fields as opposed to those in the education field. That is, those in control of educational planning appear to develop general responses to problems of discipline or delinquency while law enforcement professionals appear to develop "target-specific" data-based planning tools and programs aimed at particular populations of offenders. Of course we see all around us how these different planning processes lead to quite different programs and approaches for working with youth-in-trouble. General educational programs planned by educators; specific crime prevention programs planned by the police.

Prevention Strategy

Within this first strategy, the research points to two types of law enforcement approaches open to educators when dealing with youth who present problems of serious disruption or crime. First, the district's administrators may turn to the police in an effort to develop closer working relations; and second, if the school district has its own office of school security, district officials may look there for help developing methods for improving "discipline" in the schools. In either case, the assumption on the part of the education officials is that those with law enforcement backgrounds have technical skills to offer that may well supplement the district's own planning or technical skills.

Working-With-Police Approach: When we were discussing ways police work with schools, we saw programs that brought law officers into schools as

Data Collection/Planning Approach: This approach assumes that by defining acts clearly and by collecting "clean" and current information about the nature and extent of problems it will be easier to plan successful programs. Put another way, before program planners can hit a target they have to at least SEE the target. Surprisingly, careful data collection and planning is by far the exception rather than the rule in delinquency prevention programs run by school districts. Frequently the process of collecting and analyzing data is omitted entirely from the planning cycle. This fact is tacitly acknowledged by the American Association of School Administrators in their 1981 publication on Reporting: Violence, Vandalism, and Other Incidents in Schools when they wrote; "In many cases, school districts still do not have clear records of incidents of school crime" (American Association of School Administrators, 1981: 2) and then went on to write a booklet telling how to do it correctly. That school administrators are hampered in their planning of prevention programs because they often misname events (confusing disciplinary violations with law violations) is also discussed in detail in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention-sponsored School Discipline Notebook (National School Safety Center, 1985: Chapter 3). This theme — about the need to separate discipline from crime — is picked up by Rubel and Ames (1986), as they are discussing a problem-solving strategy for school-based crime and discipline for the National Institute of Justice's "Issues and Practices" document entitled Reducing School Crime and Student Misbehavior: A Problem-Solving Strategy. Here, the authors push the need for naming events and tracking their occurrences; they describe (in Chapter V) the form and format for a computer-driven incident analysis system. This is the first point at which this author has seen the law enforcement technology known as "incident analysis" applied in an educational setting.

sion Alarm Systems in Reducing School-Related Crime and Vandalism in an Inner-City School District." Here, he found that while intrusion alarms appeared to have some capacity to reduce burglary, there appeared to be no other statistically significant reductions. That is, attendance did not change substantially, and daytime offenses were unaffected. Of course, the author of this paper can't help but wonder what else he expected to find: the usual assumption among security specialists is that intrusion alarms (burglar alarms) help prevent after-hours-hours break-ins by electronically simulating a populated building. Put differently, the idea is that the type of person who declines to enter an occupied building to commit a theft will also be dissuaded from entering an alarmed building to commit a burglary because the alarm will — at least in theory — summon people who will discover his presence.

Child-Centered Intervention Approach: Perhaps the most notable effort to bridge the gap between a school district's security operation and the principals who run the schools is seen in the National Association of Secondary School Principals' book Effective Strategies for School Security (Blauvelt 1981). Here, the author has combined humor with common sense and hard-headed policing to produce a work that on the one hand provides solid guidance for handling youth who commit crimes in schools, and on the other hand remains sensitive to the reality that the offenders are public school students and the district administrators have to conduct themselves within the bounds of reason and prudence. The underlying assumption, shared by NASSP, was that school principals could probably do a great deal more to help reduce and prevent crime in their schools if they possessed more technical skills to help them in that task.

Blauvelt has authored many other works on school security and administrative management of crises, but one speaks to this section with particular

ment some program to address a particularly chronic problem, they focus quite specifically on the "intolerable behavior" that they want changed. While there are volume upon volume of school-based prevention programs that are designed to encourage good behavior, improve the social climate of the school, or target slow learners with enriched curricula, these all fall outside the scope of this paper. Indeed, this survey of the research has shown that there are very few descriptions of programs that feature highly focused, school-initiated responses to seriously disruptive and criminal youth. The author of this paper suspects that the reason for the paucity of evaluative research follows from the very nature of the programs that the educational planners must consider; quick and decisive responses to particular problems. Like locker thefts; bicycle thefts; assaultive behavior; drug dealing. Usually, the problems don't stay around long enough to design a program, set up a research agenda, and seek money to fund it. But occasionally they do; there appear to be a few programs that are caught by the "response strategy" net that have been reasonably well described and evaluated.

Before presenting these individual programs, readers should realize that the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice has for years taken a keen interest not only in programs, themselves, but also in the theoretical basis for preventing delinquency in school settings. In 1979 OJJDP published Delinquency Prevention: Theories and Strategies, an exhaustive examination of the range of strategies then available to school systems and communities to address severely disruptive youth. More importantly, this work discusses in detail the practical implications for each strategy. Put differently, the authors carefully catalogue each of the many theoretical approaches to delinquency prevention and explain why they would or would not succeed based on findings from research.

...implements selected alternative education approaches in order to enhance student learning and prevent behavior problems. These include more individualized instruction and reward structures, goal oriented work and learning emphases in the classroom together with enhanced student-teacher relationships and administrator support to create a positive school climate.

The program is being evaluated in order to determine the process by which different schools implement the programs, and to measure project impact on student achievement, delinquency and on related behavior problems among program participants.

The expected goal...is to produce and verify a positive program impact as measured by improved learning, reduced delinquency, dropouts and expulsions, and by successful student transition to higher education or employment.... The program...will require 3 to 4 years to complete. (OJJDP, 1983).

Control Strategy

School district strategies for dealing with acute problems of disruption are pretty well limited to "crisis contingency plans." Here we are speaking about options open to a school principal when there has been a homicide, a rape, a bomb threat. Again, the author of this paper finds himself repeating a distressing but recurring theme: there are many examples of contingency plans and none of them have ever been researched or evaluated for their effectiveness. As with police control strategies, the true test of "success" appears to be that the particular plan has survived the rigors of review and made it into print.

Examples of contingency plans for educators range from the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service publication "School Security: Guidelines for Maintaining Safety in School Desegregation" (1978) through the National Alliance for Safe Schools' "Checklist for School Crisis Contingency Plans" (NASS, 1984). These plans share a root assumption; that the very process of planning puts educational leaders in control of events, rather than allowing the events, themselves, to control the decision-makers.

27

and accomplishments differently since we have had a chance to read about the wide range of single-focus projects in this field.

U.S. Department of Education

For the past twelve years, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education division of the Department of Education has provided instruction to school officials nationwide in the "school team approach" to problem solving. Over this period, the "problem" has been drug abuse and disruptive behavior in schools. During part of this time, the Office of Juvenile Justice sponsored research and evaluation to ascertain the success of this model.

> The School Team Approach is an effort to build competence to deal with local problems. Implementation of the Approach begins with recruitment of a school whose administrator is concerned about given problems and committed to efforts to do something about them. Two weeks of residential training is provided to a school-selected team consisting of seven persons drawn from both school and community and including the school's principal or another administrator. (Grant, 1981; 1)

By providing intensive workshops to members of the school's community (parents, teachers, students, administrators) this program has been able to build a team of highly skilled PLANNERS. By the time this School Team leaves a training cycle, they have with them a well developed plan for combating drug dealing, drug abuse, or some other disruptive school-based problem.

As mentioned in the introduction to this section; this program uses COOPERATION among members of the school's community to drive PLANNING to combat a significant problem, to achieve an IMPROVED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

Writing in the Executive Summary of the OJJDP-sponsored evaluation of Phase I of this program, Joan Grant notes that "The findings suggest that such an effort can decrease the amount of victimization reported by students

tional setting, the Justice Department's program incorporated that same strategy and expanded it. Here we see a model that is testing the assumption that "information is power" and that computer-aided data analysis about the nature and extent of school-based misbehaviors must precede planning, and that planning based on this solid information should lead to improved management of student crime and misbehavior. It is also a fundamental premise of this program that CRIMES (violations of laws) must be carefully identified and catalogued separately from DISCIPLINE (violations of school rules).

As the model developed — and was tested in a total of 77 schools in four school districts nationwide from 1983 to 1986 — it asked the research questions:

1. Will local school districts accept and benefit from a program that addresses crime and discipline problems in school through partnerships between education and law enforcement?

2. Will a data-based analysis process be effective in helping schools identify and reduce recurring problems? (Rubel, 1986a)

To date, the program has shown promise in these areas:

1. Helps Students
   a. Brings troubled youth to the assistant principal's and counselor's attention for early intervention.
   b. Reduces FEAR of crime/disruption to increase stu-dent's attention on the business of education.
   c. Communicates consistency within the school both for policies and practices (rules and consequences).

2. Helps Principals
   a. Enables principals to target his/her energies to attack one problem at a time.
   b. Shows precisely who and what is going wrong throughout the school (students or teachers).
   c. Checks whether the specific intervention is working, as planned (on-line feedback loop).

PART III: DESCRIBING A RESEARCH AGENDA; FROM THE PRESENT TO THE FUTURE

For the author of this paper, there have been some surprising findings. First and foremost, it appears that there is a substantial difference between the kinds of programs that result from police wanting to work with school systems versus school systems wanting the help of the police. It appears that when police agencies consider working in a school setting, the emphasis is on education, either with primary or secondary school youth. The education may be informal (Officer Friendly) or carefully planned (McGruff). On the other hand, when school district officials solicit the police for cooperative programs, the emphasis appears to be upon using police to help with special patrols or security-related assignments. In some cases, the emphasis is on formal or informal agreements about how the police departments will respond in certain circumstances. While this author does not know exactly what to make of this difference, the theme is too common in the literature to be wholly disregarded.

Another surprising finding is that school and police programs that target specific chronic problems of youth crime have seldom been researched. From the school side, we don't know much about curricula to prevent drug dealing, weapons possession, or battery. From the police side, we don't have an array of response or control options for common problems such as theft of school property or battery on school grounds.

How Much Planning and Analysis is Going On?

The only program found during this research that relies heavily on data collection and analysis to guide project planning and to verify the suc-

33

What Form Does This Planning Take and Does it Help?

The planning model currently being tested in the Safer Schools - Better Students program of the Departments of Justice and Education is described in detail in Rubel and Ames (1986). Fundamentally, this is a computer-aided incident analysis system that calls for recording certain information from every teacher's referral of a student into the office of the principal or assistant principal for discipline. The data are entered daily and processed by a school district's central computer on a routine basis. This routine is established by the local school district.

The district's computer produces tables and charts displaying key elements of information relating either to individual students or groups of incidents. For example, it is possible to produce a table of the students most frequently referred by teachers to the main office. It is also possible to produce a table of the teachers most often referring students out of their classes. Or it is possible to request a table of the kinds of dispositions a particular administrator is making for a particular kind of offense. Or it is possible to produce a chart displaying the period of day, day of week, and zone of the school where any type of incident is occurring (fights, battery, vandalism, locker thefts, tardiness, etc.)

This list is practically endless, and can be modified by each school district to produce the specific information that they want. Clearly, the information collected on the teacher's referral form determines what is placed into the computer; that, in turn, defines the output options.

Once the data are returned to the principal and assistant principals in a useful form, that administrator begins to plan — using the planning methods developed by the Education Department's Drug and Alcohol Abuse Pre-

Some of the questions raised by Fox suggest other avenues of inquiry. Fox examined working relations of "line officers" with "line school administrators." The answers were useful, even though the research is now over 20 years old. His study should probably be refined and replicated. What, though, of the working relations of the next two tiers above the local officials? In school districts, what of the relations at the field-supervisor level; what of the relations of the district's superintendent and the chief of police? There is some evidence from the experiences of project personnel associated with the Safer Schools program that relations at the "line" level are controlled by local precinct captains and may not accurately reflect a superintendent's working relationship with the chief of police. Of course, that — too — carries implications for policy and practice, and must be considered in any school district plan to work cooperatively with the police to curtail crime and disruption in the schools.

Implications for Practice

Most of the major themes in this paper carry SOME implication for practice.

We have noted how law enforcement professionals have developed many kinds of programs over the last 25 years. The first projects were aimed at overcoming youth's antagonism for authority. The next wave of projects were aimed at taking advantage of youth's capacity to learn about, and participate in, crime prevention. The current cycle of projects endeavor to instruct youth how to apply peer pressure to reduce specific problems, such as drug use. When planning projects that are meant to be co-sponsored between police and education departments, some of this history is useful. It would also be useful to recognize the increasingly sophisticated use by police

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