



THE DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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Reimagining 901 Report

January 2025

Executive Summary

The Reimagining 901 initiative laid out a bold vision for Memphis-Shelby County Schools (MSCS) focused on equity, innovation, and student success. Building on the Destination 2025 strategic plan, the initiative addressed educational gaps, enhanced community engagement, and prepared students for a global future. Progress was driven by three cornerstones: reimagining education, schools, and communities, with a focus on foundational literacy, recruiting and retaining high quality teachers, and fostering world-ready graduates.

The District invested in academic excellence by expanding digital learning, increasing access to advanced coursework, and prioritizing teacher development. Additionally, MSCS worked to modernize its facilities, with upgrades to schools, athletic spaces, and infrastructure to create safe and inspiring learning environments. Partnerships with community organizations strengthened family support, promoted adult literacy, and enhanced neighborhood connections, solidifying schools as vital community hubs.

Reimagining 901 was launched in 2021 with the Academic Framework released the following school year. While never formally adopted as a strategic plan, Reimagining 901 sought to transform public education in Memphis and Shelby County. Through targeted action and a focus on continuous improvement, the District made strides toward closing achievement gaps and creating opportunities for every student. This report reflects the dedication of MSCS to empowering students to thrive in learning, leadership, and life.

Key Findings

- MSCS achieved an 83.4% on time graduation rate for the 2024 cohort, outpacing the target by 1.4 percentage points.
- The 2023 cohort had 36.6% achieve Ready Graduate status, just 1.1 percentage points below the interim target.
- In 2024, 26.7% of 3-5th graders demonstrated proficiency on the TCAP ELA assessment, falling short of the target by 13.3 percentage points.
- Math proficiency rates were 26.1 percentage points below the 2024 target, with 23.9% of 3-5th graders achieving proficiency in 2023-24.

Progress To Date

Metric	Status	2021	Most Recent Data		Current Milestone	Difference	2030 Target
			2023	2024			
On Time Graduation	Achieved Milestone	80.1%	—	83.4%	82%	+1.4	90%
Ready Graduate Status	Off Track	23%	36.6%	—	37.7%	-1.1	80%
Grade 3–5 ELA Proficiency	Off Track	14.7%	—	26.7%	40%	- 13.3	74%
Grade 3–5 Math Proficiency	Off Track	9.7%	—	23.9%	50%	-26.1	84%

Overview

The Academic Framework served as the foundation of the Reimagining 901 plan, providing clear strategies, identifying areas for improvement, and outlining program Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These strategies were designed to drive student success and achieve four key outcomes: 1) ensuring students graduate on time, 2) earning the Tennessee Ready Graduate designation, 3) achieving grade-level reading proficiency before middle school, and 4) attaining grade-level math proficiency before middle school. This annual report is based on the 2022–23 Academic Lifeline Framework which focused on three Strategic Initiatives.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Strengthening Early K-2 & Continuing Literacy 3-12
2. Recruit, Retain, Immerse, and Entrench
3. Relevant, Rigorous, and Equitable Academics

Key Initiative 1: Strengthen Early K-2 & Continuing Literacy 3-12

The first strategy focused on strengthening literacy across all grade levels. This initiative emphasized early literacy development in grades PK-2 and continuing literacy for grades 3-12. Recognizing that strong reading and writing skills were foundational to a child’s success, MSCS prioritized providing high-quality educational opportunities to close learning gaps and prepare students for future academic and career achievements.

Early literacy strategies centered on equipping teachers to support students in phonological and phonemic awareness. For continuing literacy, MSCS focused on building students’ capacity to engage with complex texts, apply critical thinking, and retain knowledge, ensuring they were prepared to succeed in post-secondary education and beyond. This comprehensive approach underscored MSCS’s commitment to addressing literacy as a vital component of long-term student success.

Selected Strategies:

- Reduce adult-to-student ratio in K-12 English Language Arts
- Engage deeply in the work of foundational reading skills instruction
- Build teacher capacity to understand how children learn to read
- Expose students and parents to the foundational tools of literacy
- Ensure literacy-rich environments and learning opportunities for students
- Provide consistent, intensive, and personalized tutoring
- Redesign of the Summer Learning Academy

Key Initiative 2: Recruit, Retain, Immerse, and Entrench

The second initiative focused on recruiting and retaining high-quality faculty, staff, and administrators while fostering a diverse and engaged workforce through professional and community development. MSCS aimed to strengthen existing partnerships with teacher residency programs which provide support to first-year teachers and have demonstrated significant impacts on student achievement.

Additionally, MSCS implemented "grow-our-own" programs to invest in current employees, offering mentoring and support for teachers and principals pursuing degrees and credentials. The District also established teacher academies to inspire high school students to explore careers in education. These academies provided students with coursework, practicums, and valuable teaching experience, creating a leadership pipeline for future educators.

Selected Strategies:

- Maximize existing partnerships with teacher residency programs
- "Grow-Our-Own" teacher and principal pipelines
- Provide mentoring and support for employees to finish post-secondary degrees
- Identify professionals in other fields who wish to change careers to become teachers
- Create teaching pipelines that start with existing MSCS students
- Expand partnerships with education training programs at local colleges and universities
- Create central office pathways for current MSCS employees seeking a principalship or other administrative opportunity

Key Initiative 3: Relevant, Rigorous, and Equitable Academics

The third initiative focused on equipping students with 21st-century skills to ensure they are college- or career-ready in today's global environment. MSCS aimed to innovate alongside modern industries and post-secondary institutions by fostering student engagement through relevant instructional content and expanding learning beyond traditional classrooms. The "global classroom" concept encouraged access to diverse

programs and courses that extended beyond school walls, particularly at the secondary level.

Family engagement was another key priority, aiming to increase family involvement and eliminate barriers for students and families. MSCS committed to providing quality Pre-K access for all four-year-old children by 2031. Major building upgrades and redesigned learning spaces were also planned to support this initiative and create high-quality school facilities.

Selected Strategies:

- Expanded emphasis on social-emotional learning and attendance supports
- Enhance community engagement supports
- Expand opportunities for creativity, arts curriculum, theater, and performance
- Increase the effectiveness of and access to English language instruction
- Create innovative high school programming and expand access to advanced courses
- Enhance ACT preparation opportunities for students
- Develop transition programs for elementary to middle and middle to high school
- Expand access to digital devices to create equity in technology

Expected Year-Over-Year Outcomes

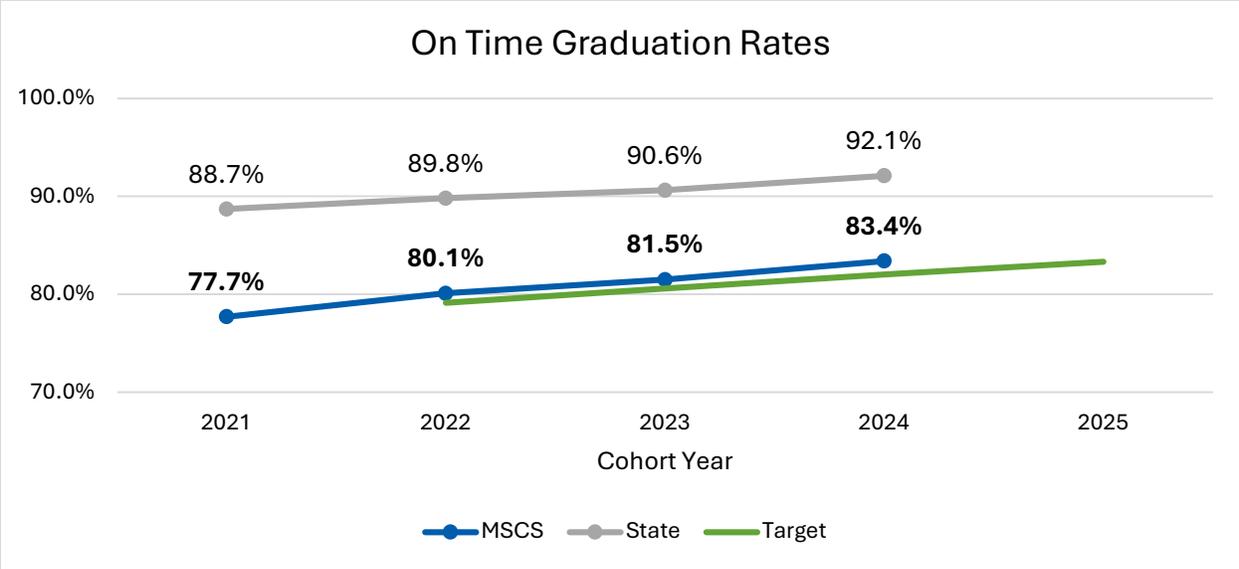
The vision of Reimagining 901 centered on achieving four specific outcomes for students, with a particular focus on their transition to middle school and key milestones at high school graduation. Each performance goal was grounded in state accountability data, with a long-term target of measurable progress by 2030.

On Time Graduation

2024 Milestone Target: 82 percent of the 2024 cohort will graduate on time, and 90 percent by 2030.

Current Progress: MSCS achieved an 83.4% on time graduation rate for the 2024 cohort, outpacing the target by 1.4 percentage points.

Reimagining 901 set a goal of achieving a 90% on-time graduation rate by 2030, with a milestone target of 82% for the graduating class of 2024. The 2024 cohort exceeded expectations, achieving an 83.4% on time graduation rate—1.4 percentage points above the milestone. This impressive progress also narrowed the gap with the state average to 8.7 percentage points, a significant improvement from the 11-point deficit in 2021.



Cohort Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2030
Graduation Rate	77.7%	80.1%	81.5%	83.4%	—
State	88.7%	89.8%	90.6%	92.1%	—
Target	—	79.1%	80.6%	82.0%	90.0%
Difference	—	1.0	0.9	1.4	—

Strategic initiatives centered on credit recovery, before and after school tutoring, high school course planning, and early intervention for struggling students have likely played a key role in narrowing the graduation gap. With sustained focus and support in these areas, MSCS is well-positioned to maintain strong progress and achieve the 2030 goal of a 90% on-time graduation rate.

Ready Graduate Status

2024 Milestone Target: 45 percent of the graduating cohort in 2024 will achieve a Ready Graduate Destination with a goal of 80 percent by 2030.

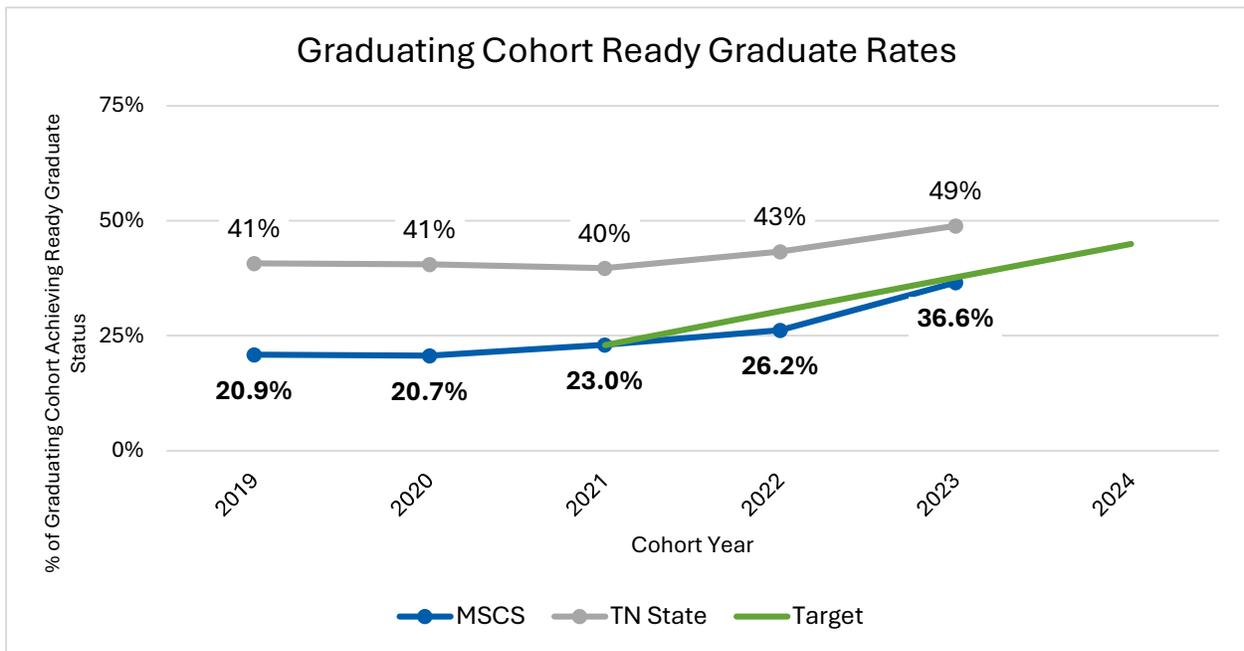
Current Progress: The 2023 cohort had 36.6% achieve Ready Graduate status, just 1.1 percentage points below the interim target.

The Ready Graduate designation was a new indicator launched in 2018 for the 2017 graduating cohort. The designation indicates that a student has an increased likelihood of “seamlessly enrolling in post-secondary education and securing high-quality employment.”¹ The requirements to be considered a Ready Graduate have evolved over

¹ Tennessee Department of Education. (2018). *Ready Graduate Indicator Overview (2018-19)*. Tennessee Department of Education. https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/ccte/ccte_ready_graduate_overview_2018-19.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

the last seven years, but since the 2019 cohort, a student must achieve one of the following: 1) 21+ on ACT, 2) 4 EPSOs, 3) 2 EPSOs & 1 industry certification, or 4) 2 EPSOs & 31+ on ASVAB.² The cohort rate reflects the percentage of graduating students who demonstrated readiness for postsecondary education or a career after high school.³ Ready Graduate data lag for one year, so the 2022-23 graduating cohort is the most recent data available.

MSCS achieved its highest Ready Graduate rate in six years for the 2023 graduating cohort. To reach the 2024 cohort goal of 45%, MSCS needed to achieve 37.7% in 2023. With a rate of 36.6%, MSCS fell short by just 1.1 percentage points, but made a significant improvement, increasing by over 10 percentage points from the previous year.



Cohort	2021	2022	2023	2024	2030
MSCS	23.0%	26.2%	36.6%	-	-
TN State	39.7%	43.3%	48.9%	-	-
Target	-	30.3%	37.7%	45.0%	80.0%
Difference	-	-4.1	-1.1	-	-

² Tennessee Department of Education. (2023). *Ready graduate appeals guide (2023-24)*. Tennessee Department of Education. https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/data/acct/2023-24_Ready_Graduate_Appeals_Guide.pdf

³ Tennessee Department of Education. (n.d.). *District performance: Ready graduate*. Retrieved January 16, 2025, from <https://tdepublicschools.ondemand.sas.com/district/00792/performance/ready>

MSCS has implemented numerous initiatives laser focused on increasing Ready Graduate rates and ensuring that our alumni are ready for a career or college after graduation. Specifically, MSCS revamped its ACT prep courses adopting the Chalk Talk platform which utilizes adaptive learning and ACT targeted curriculum. The College, Career, and Technical Education Office also launched numerous additional career pathways for students expanding access to more industry credentials in addition to the increase in advanced academic courses which can count as EPSOs.

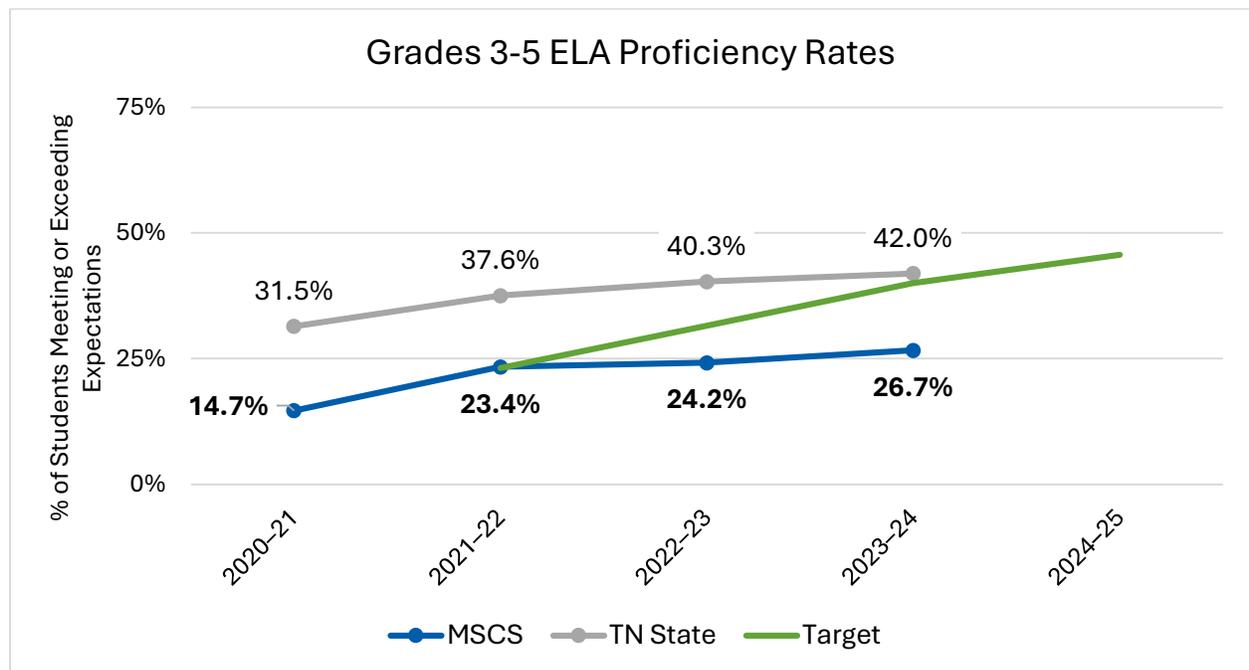
3–5th Grade Reading Proficiency

2024 Milestone Target: 40 percent of 3–5th graders will score proficiently on the ELA TCAP assessment by 2024, reaching 74 percent by 2030.

Current Progress: In 2024, 26.7 percent of 3–5th graders scored proficiently on the ELA TCAP assessment in 2024, falling 13.3 percentage points behind the target.

As part of the Reimagining 901 plan, the District established ambitious goals to boost ELA proficiency aiming for a 25.3 percentage point increase in three years. These bold goals were necessitated by the setback in scores related to school closures because of the global pandemic when proficiency rates dropped drastically. The most recent assessment in 2023-24 demonstrates the steady upward progress at 26.7% proficiency, the highest in the last four years.

MSCS has also made gains in closing the gap between the District and the TN state average in the last four years. This year there was a 15.3 percentage point gap, 1.5 percentage points closer than at the 2020–21 benchmark.



	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2029-30
MSCS	14.7%	23.4%	24.2%	26.7%	-
TN State	31.5%	37.6%	40.3%	42.0%	-
Target	-	23.1%	31.6%	40.0%	74.0%
Difference	-	-0.3	-7.4	-13.3	-

The District has implemented several key initiatives to promote early literacy and strengthen the foundational skills necessary for our youngest students (K-2) to grow their reading skills and develop a lifelong love of reading and learning. MSCS demonstrated its commitment to individualized instruction and low student-to-adult ratios by assigning Specialized Education Assistants (SEAs) to K-2 classrooms. Additionally, students who were not proficient could receive high dosage tutoring before, during, or after school.

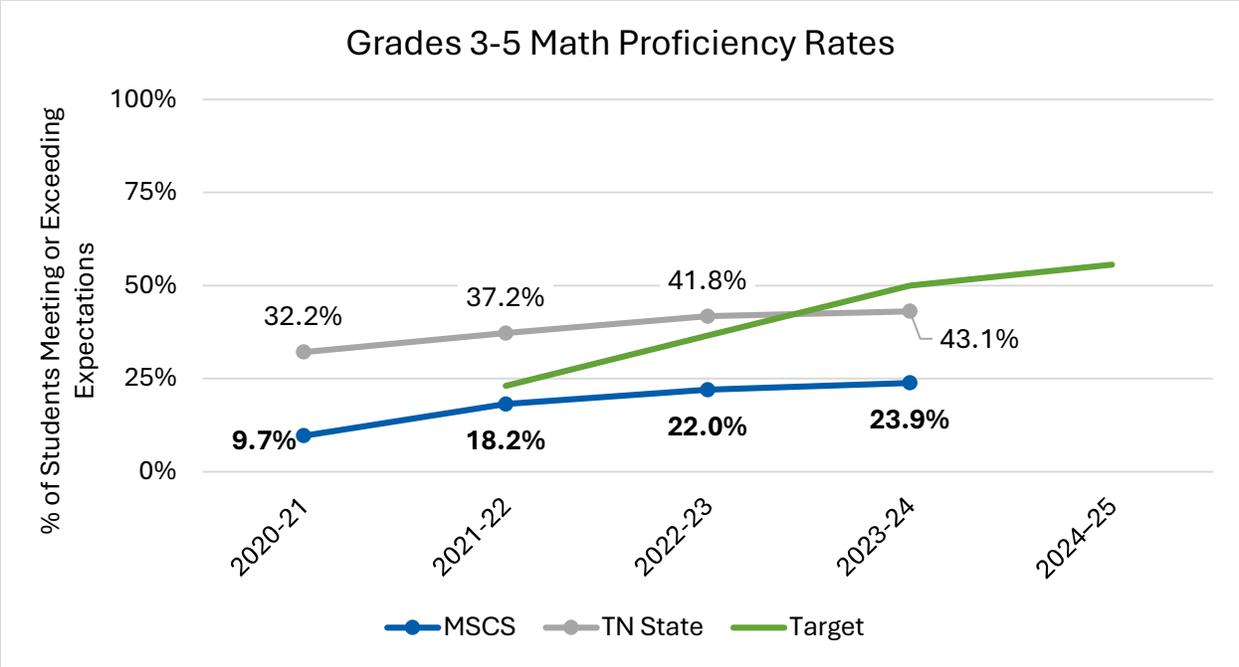
3-5th Grade Math Proficiency

2024 Milestone Target: 50% of 3-5th graders will score proficiently on the TCAP Math assessment by 2024.

Current Progress: 23.9% students in 3rd-5th grade scored proficiently on the TCAP Math assessment in 2024, 26.1 percentage points below the target.

Proficiency rates in math demonstrate similar trends as ELA. In 2020-21 as students returned to in-person learning and took the TCAP Math assessment, 9.7% of them attained proficiency. The following year, proficiency rates jumped 8.5 percentage points to 18.2% after students returned to in-person learning. Since then, the District has made small incremental gains in math proficiency with the highest rates achieved in 2023-24.

Overall, MSCS remains 26.1 percentage points below its 2024 target. Although the goal has not yet been met, the District has made progress in narrowing the gap with the Tennessee state average. In the most recent year, MSCS was 19.2 percentage points below the state average, reflecting a 3.3 percentage point improvement from the baseline deficit.



	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2029-30
MSCS	9.7%	18.2%	22.0%	23.9%	-
TN State	32.2%	37.2%	41.8%	43.1%	-
Target	-	23.1%	36.6%	50.0%	84.0%
Difference	-	-4.9	-14.6	-26.1	-

To enhance students' math skills, the District offered high-dosage math tutoring sessions before and after school. Additionally, the Summer Learning Academy was held annually to mitigate summer learning loss, ensuring students were prepared for success from the first day of the school year. While MSCS fell well below its target, it can build on the realized gains and make significant headway in achieving the 2030 goal.

Conclusion

The Reimagining 901 initiative, launched in 2021 and building on the earlier Destination 2025 plan, established a forward-thinking approach aimed at equity, innovation, and student success. While never formally adopted as a strategic plan, Reimagining 901 guided MSCS to focus on three major initiatives—strengthening literacy (K–2 and continuing 3–12), recruiting and retaining high-quality personnel, and preparing world-ready graduates—to drive improvements in on-time graduation, Ready Graduate status, and elementary proficiency rates. By expanding digital learning during the pandemic, boosting access to advanced coursework, and prioritizing teacher development, the District surpassed its 2024 on-time graduation goal (reaching 83.4%) and made measurable strides in Ready Graduate attainment, though it continued to lag behind targets for English Language Arts and math proficiency. Despite these challenges, MSCS

steadily closed achievement gaps, fostered vital community support, and moved closer to its vision of preparing every student for success in school, work, and life.

Report Prepared by the Office of Data Strategy & Performance Management

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