

NHCAE Questionnaire for NHC BOE Candidates 2020

1. Why are you running for a seat on the Board of Education?

I am running for the Board of Education because I want to be on the team that makes New Hanover County Schools better. NHCS is better than it is showing the public, and it can be better, much better, than it is showing itself right now. I am a team builder, a collaborator, a communicator, and an innovative, outside-the-box mover and shaker, and I want to use these skills to unify the Board of Education in its approach to governing our school system. I realize that the Board of Education does not really run the entire educational show. Rather, it provides oversight, and in the case of NHCS, sorely needed oversight, on consistent compliance with policies and procedures set forth by them. It is the Board of Education's responsibility to hire a competent Superintendent and then ensure that he has what is needed to run an exemplary, world-class show. By that I mean, delivering high quality education to all its students with high quality and appropriately trained education professionals and support and ancillary staff, in clean, safe, and well-maintained facilities and athlete venues.

I believe that I am uniquely qualified for this job because I am a demonstrated leader, a Sleeve-Roller-Upper and Do-er. I have won and earned accolades, as have the other candidates, but I am most proud of how I have put my words and ideas, in partnership with those of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members, into action over the years. I am a Search and Re-Apply kind of girl, always looking for best practices and innovative, yet manageable strategies to bring into our classrooms and into the daily operations of the school system. I am an active substitute teacher and a passionate advocate for engaging all parents in their children's education, educating all parents on how to advocate for their children, and encouraging all parents and community members to use their time, talent, and voice to enhance and improve our schools.

I believe that all children can and want to learn and that it is incumbent upon the Board of Education to ensure that the Superintendent and his entire staff meet all children where they are and develop learning strategies and provide teaching tools and resources to efficiently, effectively, and equitably educate all of our children, without regard to race, color, gender, orientation, or socio-economic status.

John Quincy Adams said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader." I want to be that leader for all the children, teachers, administrators, and other equally as important NHCS employees.

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2. In your opinion, what is the County Commissioner's role in relationship to public schools in New Hanover County?

I believe there needs to be a strong working relationship between the Board of Education and the County Commissioners. After all, the County Commissioners provide ~ 30% of the NHCS budget income (over \$112 million). I would like for the two bodies to be regarded as Partners in Education.

3. In your opinion, what are the three most important issues confronting New Hanover County Schools right now and please explain why you believe that?

- ✓ Physical and Emotional Safety of Students and Staff
- ✓ Academics
 - Virtual Learning and Access to Technology
 - Eliminating Racial and Socioeconomic Inequity to Reduce the Achievement Gap
 - Career and Technical Education
- ✓ Transparent Communication from Board of Education and Superintendent to all NHCS Stakeholders (parents, teachers, Central Office staff, employees, and community partners)

4. If you are elected, what are concrete action steps that you plan on taking to address the issues mentioned above?

I would like to reiterate that one person on the Board of Education cannot take action steps alone, so my priority will be to work with other Board members and the Superintendent to reach consensus on the important issues and action steps, prioritize them, and expect the Superintendent to bring them to fruition.

I am very concerned about the above issues and think **NHCS and its Board of Education are going to have to try new things even if they are hard** to deliver the high-quality education parents expect for their children.

Physical Safety

Keep SRO's in our schools. They add another set of eyes and ears on school campuses and another layer of caring adult role models in our schools. Well-trained school resource officers can operate more like counselors and educators, working with students to defuse peer conflict and address issues such as drug and alcohol use as well as working with crisis hotlines in real time to intervene in potentially dangerous situations before regrettable behavior occurs. Their presence in the schools also demonstrates that law enforcement officers are more than just people who patrol our streets, highways, and communities to "catch the bad guys." SROs should not be used at schools as disciplinarians. That task falls to teachers and school administrators.

Employees should not be forced to choose between their safety and their jobs. My professional industry, that of Occupational Safety and Health, gained traction when

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OSHA was formed so that workers would not have to make this choice. Safety should be an automatic, a given, an expectation, so we must develop plans and evaluate all possible options for feasibility and sustainability.

I do not know how public school systems across the region, state, and country are going pay for the many new layers of Covid-related safety precautions that are required by the CDC and state and local Health and Human Services departments in order to reopen safely schools and not dilute their already compromised budgets. I will need much more information on costs and dialogue to make any determination of opinion. I do believe that teachers' input as to how the safety measures can be developed, revised as necessary, and enforced is not only warranted but crucial.

Emotional Safety

Since stress is permeating the lives of everyone, adults all the way down to our children, I strongly believe we need more counselors, social work workers, psychologists, and other mental health workers, ready to provide services in real time. These folks in our school system are working hard right now, but the backlog is staggering and stress and feelings of helplessness and fear are overwhelming. Partnerships with Department of Public Health for school nurses and the Department of Health and Human Services for mental health personnel have already been established but may need to be re-vamped with increased human resources. I believe face to face appointments and visits can be accomplished for students, families and staff that need services now and for whom virtual connections are not addressing all the needs and assuaging all the concerns and fears. NHCS just has to be willing to make the arrangements with necessary precautions. It should investigate utilizing our wonderful partners at Coastal Horizons via WHAT clinic professionals. If that is already happening, hallelujah! Let's publicize that broadly so students and parents will know how to access WHAT services. I hope that NHCS has been encouraging its employees to tap into their EAP benefits and get the support and help they need to stay whole and to be productive in their jobs and in their classrooms, whatever these classrooms look like.

Virtual Learning and Access to Technology

Access, or rather lack of access, to the technology and the internet is a huge barrier. I believe NHCS has to work more quickly to attain a 1:1 student to technology match. One device per household will not suffice if there is more than child in in the house. If cameras on devices are needed for classroom participation, then devices with cameras should be issued. NHCS has worked diligently with local internet providers to attain hotspots for students that need them. The City of Wilmington and New Hanover County Government have also provided free Wifi hotspots around our community. Parents need get frequent reminders about how to access community hot spots, and get those reminders through multiple sources. Online updates are not helpful to the families who need the internet get the information.

Teachers are very intelligent and pride themselves on their ability to reach their vast array of students to instill a love of life-long learning, but they still need professional development on how to be effective and engaging online/remote learning teachers.

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Parents and community helpers providing child care need much more training on how to use the platforms on which their children are learning and receiving instruction. They need a contingency plan with directions upfront as to what to do if these platforms crash or are not available for whatever reasons, so there is not mass confusion when it happens. Telling parents to call their school each time for directions is not a good use of teacher time.

Any NHCS Virtual Teaching Team and/or Advisory Committee, both at the district level and school level, needs teacher representation, cross-department and cross-grade level, to ensure that the school system front-line workers, its teachers, are getting what they need to be prepared for and do their jobs in the manner to which students and parents have become accustomed. We wouldn't send our employees to work without the appropriate PPE and training to use it properly, so why should we send our teachers to work without adequate training to teach remotely and online.

Regular surveys need to be sent to students, parents, teachers, and administrators while NHCS is in a remote and online learning mode to keep a pulse on instruction and other support system delivery and to be able revise plans on the fly as we move from Plan C to Plan B to Plan A.

Eliminating Racial and Socioeconomic Inequity to Reduce the Achievement Gap

I addressed this priority answered this priority in question 10.

Career and Technical Education

I strongly support Career and Technical Education throughout NHCS. It is an excellent opportunity for students to explore a number of career options while still in high school as well as earn credentials that will carry them straight into the workforce right out of high school. To get CTE information into the hands of students and parents even sooner than we now, I would support offering grade-appropriate courses and opportunities in NHCS middle schools.

I was a member of the work group that created, promoted, and opened SEA-Tech High School. I volunteer there and helped to create its Friends of SEA-Tech PTA. Both of my children took clusters of CTE classes at their traditional high schools (before SEA-Tech was opened) and were officers in the National Technical Honor Society that recognizes academic accomplishments of CTE students. I assisted in re-chartering the NTHS at Laney High School. I recruited local business leaders to speak to CTE and potential CTE students at their high schools using the Lunch and Learn model, and I have reached out businesses and civic organizations to explore mentorship, apprenticeship, internship, and job shadow options for NHCS CTE students.

Transparent Communication

I have outlined my ideas for better communication in many of your other questions, but specifically in question 12.

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I do believe NHCS should put out a clear, unified message about all of the return to school procedures and related issues and that principals should be uniformly rolling them out to their school communities, tweaking where applicable for their specific needs and concerns. Remote learning schedules should be very similar across the district by grade level (elementary, middle and high) to make it easier for parents to engage, especially if they have more than one child learning at home and who may need different ancillary support services, and for support staff to provide additional services.

5. How do you plan to address systemic racism embedded in our school system? What steps will you take to ensure that racial bias is eliminated in our schools and equity becomes a part of all schools in our county?

I am in agreement that the Board of Education members, all NHCS employees, and all students need education and training on implicit bias and what constitutes systemic racism. This training is under way, I know, but I have not been able to ascertain the extent to which the education and training has been conducted. I think the Board of Education needs to closely monitor the rollout, making sure no one is missed, and that there are systems in place for new hire education and training, periodic refresher training, and surveys and random behavior observations to ensure the education and training is being practiced. PTAs can then present similar workshops to educate parents and the community so that all education stakeholders are reading off the same page. While education and training does not and cannot force new behavior, it provides a foundation for open conversation and personal reflection and provides opportunities for role-modelling desirable behaviors.

I support using a 3rd-party consultant to lead such education and training within our schools, freeing up NHCS employees to continue their mission to provide high quality leadership and meaningful instruction. I believe the education and training should include some in-person instruction and dialogue to hammer home the importance of good and civil communication. This training along with subsequent goals and measurable action steps need to be included in the new Strategic Plan and incorporated into the 2020-21 and future budgets and into all schools' School Improvement Plans so that progress can be tracked and monitored. Grants can be pursued to ease the financial burden of such a vast and encompassing initiative. This training should provide, or at least suggest, common curriculum and instructional resources for teachers to use as a starting point so that well-intended but perhaps misguided lessons can be avoided. The NHCS Communications Department, including NHCS-TV, should be used for making parent and community workshops more accessible.

I think NHCS should make a deliberate and focused effort to recruit minority teachers. The Board's Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion with its cross-representation is a start, but who then is going to put the committee's recommendations into action? The Board is not. It needs a dedicated person within NHCS Central Office staff to manage the effort and report regularly to the Board of Education on progress. To that end, I think creating a department of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, or at the very least, creating a Supervisor or Director position, similar to what UNCW, the Wilmington Police

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Department, and most recently, New Hanover County Government have established, that oversees the Board Committee directives and recommendations is imperative. This person could visit HBCUs on a regular basis to talk with professors and educational teams about needs in NHCS and attend Job Fairs with the intent to recruit and actually hire good candidates for NHCS full-time and teacher intern positions. Of course, this can and should also be done at any college and university, not just HBCUs. NHCS can reach out to organizations and groups like the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce's African American Business Council and Genesis Block for mentors and potential business partnerships that may lead to apprenticeships, internships, and job shadow opportunities. This effort, with purposeful education and training and educational assistance for black and minority business owners and other community members about lateral entry teaching opportunities, might lead to new black and minority educators.

6. What steps will you take to build a more collaborative relationship with the New Hanover County Commissioners to increase their funding toward education and fill the gaps created by the N.C. state reductions in funding?

I would suggest establishing an annual retreat for the Board of Education and the County Commissioners so that each board can present highlights of their work and learn how each might support the other throughout the year as true Partners in Education. I would then like to see quarterly meetings of the Chair and Vice Chair of both government bodies for follow-up discussions. I would invite and encourage the Superintendent to invite County Commissioners to visit schools when they re-open to see them in action and to show the Commissioners priority project areas before it (NHCS) presents its budget request to them (Commissioners).

I have a good relationship with the County Commissioners, both the sitting Commissioners and the ones running for vacant seats, and across both parties, as do other Board of Education members. I have worked with several new and office-seeking Commissioners on various committees over the years. I have spoken before the Commissioners on several community and education issues.

7. What are your thoughts on the role of the NHCS BOE regarding oversight of Public Charter Schools to ensure that they are accountable for public monies received? This is in reference to racial and economic diversity, highly-qualified faculty, instructional materials and student data on learning?

I do not think the NHC Board of Education should have any oversight of public charter schools. They are governed by the Office of Charter Schools and not DPI. My only wish is that we could petition the state for the charter schools' per-pupil allotment if their students transfer back to NHCS during the school year.

The NHC Board of Education should focus on making *all* NHCS schools the best they can be so parents won't choose for their children to attend charter schools in the first place.

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8. What are your thoughts on the School Choice model being recommended for NC?

I am not in favor of vouchers for private schools using public tax dollars.

I am a firm believer in public schools and support internal choice options such as magnet schools, year-round schools, early college high schools, career and technical high schools, and other non-traditional high schools, and specialty programs within traditional high schools.

9. What will you do to make sure that all educators receive instructional materials that are funded by state and local monies but are administered at the discretion of the individual school administrator?

I am not certain that the Board of Education reviews individual school budgets so it would be hard for a Board member to determine how designated and undesignated funds are spent at the school level. I would hope that instructional material expenditures would be outlined in the school's budget and then monitored in the School Improvement Plan. If teachers feel like they are not receiving what they should, a conversation with the school principal would be warranted. Perhaps department leads could advocate for the funds or at least an explanation of why the funds are not being spent as allocated. If that doesn't work, the NHCAE could take up the cause with the Superintendent. That circles me back to the importance of regular, non-confrontational meetings and open dialogue with the Superintendent.

Funding for teacher supplies is not adequate, especially for teachers who are extremely creative and forward-thinking in setting up their classrooms and developing unique lesson plans each year or every couple of years. Action Based Learning strategies and equipment and flexible seating comes immediately to my mind. This is where Parent Support Organizations, community and faith-based groups, and business partners can really help out. I would encourage teachers to keep a log of their expenditures for several months and over the entire school year and let's add these up. With hard numbers and physical evidence of the need coupled with testimonials and success stories, we could look for grants to help cover the costs, we could present the information to our state legislators and County Commissioners for consideration in their upcoming budgets.

10. What measures would you support to increase awareness of cultural diversity needs for non-English speaking students, restorative justice processes, curb the drop-out rate, programs to identify and redirect students who may be on the School-to-Prison Pipeline?

I am familiar with and support the groundbreaking work in North Carolina of Judge J. Corpening, District Attorney Ben David, and UNCW professor and researcher Dr. Janna Robertson, among many others, on Eliminating the School-to-Prison Pipeline flow by establishing an Inter-Agency Governance Agreement on the handling school offenses. This agreement is not only good on paper, but has been helpful in bringing schools, law

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enforcement, justice system, DSS, and other government and community partners together to change disciplinary practices in NHCS. The effort has been slow but steady and needs constant and continued work and attention.

Efforts to close the achievement gap are neither cookie-cutter nor cut and dry to achieve results. Just throwing more money at lower performing schools is not the entire answer. Multi-cultural sensitivity training along with implicit bias training can lay a foundation and provide a sturdy framework for success in the classroom. The resiliency model should be mindfully incorporated into classroom lessons and into day-to-day school operations. Teacher student interns should be encouraged to take college classes on these topics. Student interns should be required to team teach at schools where the achievement gap has been identified since this is where most entry level teachers get assigned. Our new teachers need strong teacher mentors to help them through this difficult phase of the new career, although I know it is extremely hard for teachers at higher needs schools to take on one more task and still completely devote themselves to using every single minute of every single day to reaching their students. Perhaps, NHCS could explore some sort of teacher rotation plan that teams first year teachers with strong veteran teachers (or Central Office lead teachers) where the veteran teacher moves into a lower performing school and the beginning teacher starts with children who have fewer Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and who are mostly ongrade level or higher. Then the beginning teacher rotates to a school that has an opening and the veteran teacher rotates back to his/her home school. Just an outside-the-box thought...professional educators have more, I'm sure. Our new Superintendent was hired because he has demonstrated skills at closing the achievement. I look forward to learning more from him.

Teaching strategies such Action Based Learning are extremely effective for all students but especially effective for students who struggle and who tend to have discipline issues. ABL intentionally incorporates movement into all classroom lessons to keep oxygen pumping to the brain to keep students more engaged in academics than classroom shenanigans. I have been working with a team to educate and train teachers and principals on this data-driven and time-tested teaching strategy for several years, and we are finally starting to get traction. As a Board member, I would encourage and pretty much insist that more strategies like this be explored, using direct and intentional input from teachers and other educators to find best practices.

Other ideas for eliminating the achievement gap involves addressing students' non-academic needs and "meeting students where they are." These include reducing class size, lowering student to teacher, student to counselor, and student to social worker ratios. They also include in partnership with organizations like Communities In Schools that places more caring adults in the school building to support academic achievement and success and the NHRMC Resiliency Task Force that trains NHCS employees and other community members on how resiliency and trauma-informed, family-focused systems can improve early childhood as well as academic, health, and social outcomes in our community.

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I believe we need to work quickly to get English as Second Language students in their first two years of school and students with learning disabilities and other special needs back into the classrooms for face-to-face instruction as soon as possible. Call it Plan C+.

11. North Carolina has seen a wave of educators who have gone to other states because their pay can increase as much as \$10,000.00 the first year of their move. What steps will you take on behalf of New Hanover County educators, many who work multiple jobs to support their families, to increase their salaries to the national average?

The Board of Education has no authority to increase teacher pay. It can only lobby / write letters on your behalf to suggest this. I would be willing to approach other Boards of Education across the state to see if together we could collectively have some influence on our governor and state legislators to increase teacher pay.

I would lobby to reinstate the Masters Degree incentive pay.

I would be willing to approach the County Commissioners and even the Wilmington City Council to try and secure funding that would increase teacher supplements and provide additional stipends for extra duties. I would need to do some research from the other counties across the state and southeast region to see what their supplements are and for what activities they provide stipends as well as familiarize myself with exempt employee laws that govern these. I would support teachers receiving stipends or "exchange time" for extra hours they work on such things as attending professional development activities and learning opportunities during the summer, selling tickets at middle school athletic events, book fairs, after-hours PTA meetings, extended field trips, and education-related evening or Saturday events.

12. What steps would you take as a School Board member to be more transparent and visible to educators and families in the county?

I believe in transparency across all factions of NHCS and the Board of Education as permitted by law. I would like to have more detail communicated from the Board about the nature of closed meetings, especially those regarding "personnel matters". I believe NHCS employees and parents have the right to know if inappropriate behavior is trending and can then be on the look out to see if those behaviors are being addressed. I would like to have Call to the Audience pre-recorded calls published with the Board meeting minutes, and the names of presenters and topics discussed included in the minutes. I would like for approved minutes to be posted as quickly as possible after they were approved.

I am a staunch proponent that we cannot over-communicate what is happening in our school system, the good and the not-so-good, and that we need a solid, consistent two-way flow of information between NHCS and parents and community. I would like to see the Board of Education in partnership with the PTA Council and other Parent Support

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Groups to host quarterly, or at least bi-annual, Town Hall gatherings for open and frank Q&A and dialogue. I would like to see the same with the Board of Education and the NHCAE and/or other NHCS Teacher groups. I would encourage the Superintendent to hold these same meetings with parents, teachers, and students because he can easily share concerns with his Senior Staff, and they in turn with their staffs, before festering can set in.

I believe in behavior observation-based management and in walking the talk, so I would be in schools, in classrooms, and in central offices to see our employees and students in action, asking questions for clarity before jumping to conclusions and making rash decisions, but more importantly for building relationships within our school and school support communities. I would seek opportunities to create partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and community members in order to grow the human resource and financial capital so necessary to bring innovative and relevant opportunities into our classrooms and to all departments across our system so that all students, teachers, and staff benefit.

I believe NHCS should put out clear, unified messages about all of the changes happening in our school system as we return to school and that all principals should be uniformly sharing these messages in their school communities, tweaking where applicable for their specific needs and concerns.

13. What commitment would you make to increase the local salary supplement for non-teaching school employees (who were excluded in the current General Assembly's state employee \$500 bonus and pay raise)?

I absolutely support paying fair market wages for Educational Support Personnel such as teacher assistants, child nutrition workers, custodians, bus drivers, and clerical workers. I am amenable to discussing how incremental pay increases via supplements over a carefully planned period of time might be used. Supplements would have to come through local sources, such as the County Commission and perhaps local endowments, so frequent and frank discussions would be needed to make that happen.

I support pursuing the "Turning TAs into Teachers" tuition reimbursement pilot program in NHCS, if we are not already using it, to "build our bench" and show our dedicated teacher/teaching assistants that they have a path up in NHCS. I would like to explore options to use some classified employees for multiple jobs within the school system as an opportunity to get more work hours.

14. NHCAE is the voice of educators, support staff and administrators in New Hanover County. How would you involve our Association in the School Board decision-making process?

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I have always been a huge supporter of teachers and value their opinions on how to educate our children. I am a substitute teacher, and have been since 1998, and have seen the evolution, if you will, of our school system over the past 22 years. I have experienced some of your struggles directly and have tried to be a voice for you as often as I can. I will continue to include your voice if I am elected.

As I said in an earlier question, I would like to see the Board of Education and the NHCAE (in conjunction with other organized NHCS Teacher groups) meet quarterly, or at least bi-annually, to discuss concerns. I would like to re-instate an official seat on the Board's Policy Committee for a principal and include a teacher and ensure teacher representation on other Board Committees as well.

Although not a member of the NHCAE, I attend events that you sponsor when I am invited. I have attended Red for Ed rallies and have written letters of support on your behalf. Recently, through my position with the NHC Council of PTAs (current VP), I have worked closely with the NHCAE to raise the voice and concerns of teachers to the Board of Education and to NHCS Senior Staff about returning to school safely and prepared. I advocated to have teachers on key work groups, and I have encouraged all teacher groups to work together to present a unified collective voice, similar to how PTAs/PTA Councils operate using their motto, "Every Child. One Voice." I am with you!

15. About Stephanie Kraybill.

I am an Industrial Engineer from Virginia Tech with minors in Safety Engineering and Psychology. My husband and I moved to Wilmington 25 years ago and started our own company with a Safety Division (me) and an IT Division (him). We have two grown children, both of whom attended NHCS K-12.

I volunteer in the community in several capacities: PTA (local units, district Council, and NCPTA), Communities In Schools, Azalea Festival Youth Art and High Writing Contests, and recruiting volunteers for local races. My primary volunteer focus, though, is in NHCS. I currently serve on the Title IX Committee, Crisis Management Team, the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), and All Hands on Deck Committee. I have served on numerous other school and community committees, including School Improvement Teams at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, the work group that created and rolled out the Career and Technical High School SEA-Tech, the Eliminating the Achievement Gap Committee, Blue Ribbon Commission for the Prevention of Youth Violence Committee (now Voyage)'s Education Action Team, and the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Education Action Committee.

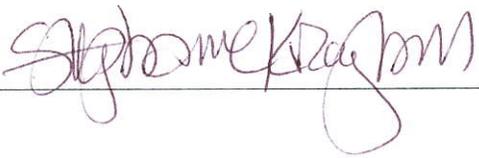
Helen Keller sums it up for me, "Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much!"

This is the end of the questionnaire.

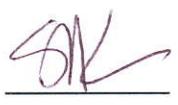
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Thank you very much for taking the time to complete it. Please refer to the cover page for the deadline and methods for return of your questionnaire. If you have questions, please call Amanda White at 910-398-3200 or contact her at NHCAE@outlook.com.

Your Signature: 

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