

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 8, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Recommendation Arising from the Balwin, North Edmonton and Princeton Schools' Cluster Study

ORIGINATOR: C. McCabe, Assistant to the Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Rick Bell, Jenise Bidulock, Dean Caouette, Meredith Colgan, Michael Ediger, Brian Fedor, Leanne Fedor, Andrea Furness, Darlene Jones, Tony Kernaghan, Kerry-Ann Kope, Roland Labbe, Randy Leal, Shirly McNeill, Jamie Pallett, Deanne Patsula, Howard Saumer, Larry Schwenneker, Cindy Skolski

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the administration be authorized to undertake the provincial and board mandated processes to consider closure of North Edmonton School.
2. That in conjunction with recommendation one above, the administration bring forward information to the Board of Trustees regarding;
 - a. emergent capital funding as required to complete a comprehensive modernization of Balwin School as a kindergarten to grade nine school;
 - b. program enhancements at Balwin School;
 - c. any other matters relating to the implementation of the recommendations.

* * * * *

In accordance with the Closure of Schools Regulation, and pursuant to the School Act, school boards have the authority to close schools. North Edmonton School is eligible for closure in accordance with Board Policy FL.BP (Appendix I), which identifies space utilization (under 40 per cent) and/or an average enrolment per grade and/or high cost of operation and maintenance as criteria for such selection.

Background

These recommendations are brought before the board in conjunction with a study completed in schools in this area of the city with the goal being to improve programming opportunities and learning environments for students. The study was planned to result in recommendations to the board for the consideration of one or more of the following:

- the relocation or consolidation of programs;
- the upgrading and preservation of existing space;
- the closure of schools;
- the demolition or decommissioning of space; and
- an alternative arising from the community consultation process.

North Edmonton School

Background

According to City of Edmonton demographic data, the number of pre-school and elementary school age children has declined steadily since 1996. As well, projections for school-aged children show an overall decline to the year 2030 (Appendix II). Based on these numbers it is projected that the population of school age children in the North Edmonton catchment area will continue to decline.

North Edmonton School was opened in 1917 and has a capacity for 448 students. The September 30, 2004 enrolment at North Edmonton School was 193 students, which represents a 42 per cent utilization rate. Enrolment at North Edmonton School has been declining steadily since 1971 (Appendix III).

Rationale

The option to consider the closure of North Edmonton School, and subsequent relocation of the school administration, students and staff to Balwin School, was the option which received the most support in the course of the cluster study. Parents, staff and community members saw this option as the least disruptive to students and the most cost-effective solution. The option also allows for the retention of existing programs and services in the cluster, and affords a choice for parents of elementary children of either the K-9 configuration at Balwin School or the K-6 configuration remaining at Princeton School. Balwin and Princeton parents favored the option as it retains a junior high program in the cluster and could lead to more program choices for students.

Projected enrolment at North Edmonton School for next year is 204 students in kindergarten to grade 6. There are 272 public elementary students living within the North Edmonton attendance area, including students designated to North Edmonton School who live in Miller neighbourhood in Castleman-Steele Heights. Of these students, 90 currently choose to attend North Edmonton, with the remaining 182 students dispersed among 42 other district schools. Appendix IV shows the total capacity, student population, and student enrolment for North Edmonton School.

If North Edmonton School were to close, the 204 students would be designated to Balwin School for kindergarten to grade 6. Some students might choose other nearby public elementary schools. There is space available in Balwin School to accommodate North Edmonton students.

Educational Considerations

There are 22.250 teachers, support and custodial staff on staff at North Edmonton School. Closure and relocation of North Edmonton School students as recommended would result in numerous educational benefits, by enrolling students in a larger, upgraded school setting at Balwin School.

Balwin School can accommodate the entire student population of North Edmonton School. This would maintain the continuity and sense of community valued by parents and staff. It is expected that the high needs designation for North Edmonton School could be maintained, allowing the continuation of the full day kindergarten program currently in place. Students would continue to gain from the school-wide implementation of the balanced literacy program that has been integrated into daily instruction. Due to the high needs designation, other programs that support student learning, such as nutrition programs, could also be maintained at the Balwin site.

The population of Balwin Junior High School has the potential to increase with a concentrated feeder of elementary students in the school. Students from North Edmonton School will benefit from being in a larger school setting at Balwin School. Facilities to enhance programs like art, music, and technology studies will be available to the students of North Edmonton School. Two large gymnasiums would enhance the provision of physical education programs. All students will benefit from the larger schools increased funding to purchase new curriculum resource materials and the expertise of specialized teaching staff. Both students at the elementary level and the junior high level may also benefit from opportunities for mentoring that will facilitate projects like reading buddies and leadership.

Parents and staff from North Edmonton School indicated a strong preference for retaining their current staff and student groupings if they were to relocate to another facility. In the instance of relocation of students, every effort would be made to ensure as much continuity as possible with current staff, in particular for those students in district center programs for students with special needs.

Should parents request a registration in a different school other than the designated receiving school, students would be able to register in that school, provided the school provides the appropriate program, even if pre-enrolment deadlines are past.

Capital and Financial Considerations

North Edmonton School's provincial audit score is 910. \$4.6M in modernization funding would be required to bring North Edmonton School to current standards. Savings in terms of operational costs of approximately \$200,000 annually would be realized if North Edmonton School were closed.

Transportation Considerations

Transportation of students to Balwin School from the immediate North Edmonton area would be unnecessary as students are within the recommended walking distance. Students living in the Miller neighborhood would continue to be transported to Balwin School or will be designated to another receiving school based on a review of transportation needs arising from the school closure.

North Edmonton School

| Date School Opened | Capacity | Current Enrolment | Projected Enrolment Sept 2005 | 5 Year Projected Enrolment |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| 1911 | 448 | 193 | 204 | 185 |
| Enrolment Declining Since | Number of Students designated to North Edmonton School | Number of designated Students Attending North Edmonton School | Number of Students Attending Other District Schools | Number of Staff Currently at North Edmonton School |
| 1971 | 272 | 90 | 182 | 22.250 FTE |

North Edmonton School

| *Audit Score | Cost to Renovate | Operational Cost Savings | Increases or Decreases to Transportation Costs |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 910 | \$4.6M | \$200,000 | Minimal cost implications |

* Provincial audit score is calculated by Alberta Infrastructure and indicates the relative condition of the building. A high audit score (600+) indicates a school requiring major upgrades.

Next Steps

Approval of these recommendations would authorize the administration to undertake further consultation with parents and communities. At the end of that process the board would make a decision regarding recommendations that the administration will present regarding the closure of North Edmonton School. This approach is consistent with the applicable provincial regulation and Board policy. Appendix V outlines the projected changes to enrolments in neighbouring schools should the consideration for closure process result in the closure of North Edmonton School. In addition to the impacts at North Edmonton and Balwin Schools, it is anticipated that enrolment at Princeton School will decline if a new elementary school is opened in Mayliewan neighbourhood. This is identified as a high priority in the district’s Three-Year Capital Plan.

JB:ME:pn

- APPENDIX I Alberta Regulation 238/97 – Closure of Schools Regulation and Board Policy FL.BP School Closure
- APPENDIX II Neighborhood Demographic Information
- APPENDIX III Historical Enrolment and Capacity
- APPENDIX IV Total Capacity, Student Population, and Student Enrolment
- APPENDIX V Changes to Enrolments In Schools Impacted By Recommendation

Alberta Regulation 238/97 – Closure of Schools Regulation

School Act Section 58

Closure of schools, etc.

58 The Minister may make regulations

- (a) authorizing a board to
 - (i) close a school permanently or for a specified period of time,
 - (ii) close entirely 3 or more consecutive grades in an elementary school,
 - (iii) close the entire junior high school program or the entire high school program in a school, or
 - (iv) transfer all students from one school to one or more other schools;
- (b) governing procedural and other requirements a board must comply with when doing anything described in clause (a).

1988 cS-3.1 s42;1997 c25 s12

Division 2

Operation and Management

Powers of separate school boards

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS REGULATION

Definitions

- 1 In this Regulation,
- (a) "closure" means any action referred to in section 2;
 - (a.1) "Ministers" means, for the purposes of sections 6 and 7, the Ministers determined under section 16 of the *Government Organization Act* as the Ministers responsible for Part 7 of the *School Act*;
 - (b) "school" year means the 12-month period beginning on September 1 and ending on the following August 31.

AR 238/97 s1;223/2002

Non-application of sections

- 1.1 Sections 4 to 7 do not apply to a closure that occurs
- (a) in connection with the transfer by one board to another board of the ownership of real property on which a school building is located and the school building will continue to be used for the instruction or accommodation of students, or
 - (b) as a result of the Minister's having directed the board to dispose of the school building pursuant to section 200(3) of the Act.

Exemption from requirements

- 1.2 The Minister may, on the written request of a board or on the Minister's initiative, exempt a board from the requirements of sections 4 to 7 in respect of a closure that occurs
- (a) as a result of the board's inability to comply with section 57(2) of the Act, or
 - (b) for health or safety reasons.

Closure of schools, etc.

- 2 A board may
- (a) close a school permanently or for a specified period of time,
 - (b) close entirely 3 or more consecutive grades in a school, or;
 - (c) repealed AR 257/2003 s5,
 - (d) transfer all students from one school building to one or more other school buildings on a permanent basis.

Policies and procedures for closure of schools

- 3 A board may develop, and implement policies and procedures with respect to closure of schools that are not inconsistent with this Regulation.

Notification of proposed closure

- 4 (1) Where a board is considering the closure of a school, the board shall
- (a) raise the matter through a notice of motion at a regular meeting of the board, and
 - (b) in writing notify the parents of every child and student enrolled in the school who, in the opinion of the board, will be significantly affected by the closure of the school.
- (2) A notice referred to in subsection (1)(b) shall set out the following:
- (a) how the closure would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
 - (b) how the closure would affect the attendance at other schools;
 - (c) the number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure;
 - (d) the need for, and extent of, busing;
 - (e) program implications for other schools and for the students when they are attending other schools;
 - (f) the educational and financial impact of closing the school, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications;
 - (g) the educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open;
 - (h) and (i) repealed AR 257/2003 s7;
 - (i) the time and location of the public meeting referred to in section 5(1)(a).

- (3) A notice referred to in subsection (1)(b) may set out the following:
 - (a) the capital needs of the schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure, and
 - (b) the possible uses of the school building or space in the school building if
 - (i) the entire school is being closed, or
 - (ii) 3 or more consecutive grades in the school are being closed entirely.

Public meetings

- 5 (1) Where a board has given notice of motions at a regular meeting of the board that it is considering the closure of a school, the board
 - (a) shall organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of discussing the information provided to the parents under section 4,
 - (b) shall provide an opportunity for the council of the municipality in which the school is located to provide a statement to the board of the impact the closure may have on the community, and
 - (c) may hold other meetings with respect to the closure at times and places as the board may determine.
- (2) The date and place of the public meeting referred to in subsection (1)(a) shall be
 - (a) posted in 5 or more conspicuous places in the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the closure, for a period of at least 14 days before the date of the public meeting, and
 - (b) advertised in a newspaper circulating within the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the proposed closure, on at least 2 occasions as close as is practicable to the date of the meeting.
- (3) At least 2 trustees of the board shall attend the public meeting referred to in subsection (1)(a)
- (4) A board shall ensure that minutes of all public meetings held under this section are prepared.

Decision on closure

- 6 (1) A board shall not make a final decision on the proposed closure until at least 3 weeks have passed since the date of the public meeting referred to in section 5(1)(a).
- (2) A board shall give due consideration to any written submissions on the proposed closure that it receives after the public meeting referred to in section 5(1)(a).
- (3) A board
 - (a) shall by resolution decide whether to close the school, and

- (b) if the decision is to close the school, shall forthwith notify the Ministers in writing of the decision.

AR 238/97 s6;223/2002

Closure within school year

- 7 (1) All school closure procedures shall be initiated and completed within the school year in which the decision to close the school is made.
- (2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), on the written request of the board, the Ministers may extend the school closure procedures beyond one school year.

Expiry

- 8 For the purpose of ensuring that this Regulation is reviewed for ongoing relevancy and necessity, with the option that it may be re-passed in its present or an amended form following a review, this Regulation expires on November 1, 2008.
- 9 Repealed AR 223/2002 s5.

AR 238/97 s8;223/2002

Board Policy FL.BP School Closure

CODE: FL.BP
TOPIC: School Closure

EFFECTIVE DATE: 11-09-2001
ISSUE DATE: 25-09-2001
REVIEW DATE: 09-2006

The board believes that the closure of schools is an important consideration in ensuring the responsible use of the resources placed in its trust; making efficient use of the district's school space; and safeguarding the health and safety of students, staff, and the public.

A. SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

1. The board reserves to itself the authority to close an entire school or three or more consecutive grades in a school.
2. The board authorizes the administration, under the direction of the superintendent of schools and with appropriate consultation, to:
 - a. close or permanently relocate fewer than three consecutive grades in a school, or
 - b. temporarily relocate any number of grades from one school to another.
3. Discontinuance of a special needs program or an alternative program is not considered a school closure and is addressed in HA.BP Student Programs.

B. CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE

An entire school or three or more consecutive grades in a school may be considered for closure if one or more of the following criteria are met:

1. Total enrolment as of September 30 in the current school year is below the following levels:
 - a. elementary (K to 6) - an average of 15 students per grade, or
 - b. junior high (7 to 9) - an average of 30 students per grade, or
 - c. senior high (10 to 12) - an average of 120 students per grade.
2. The space utilization rate as defined by the provincial government as of September 30 in the current school year is less than 40 per cent.
3. The cost of keeping the school in operable condition or restoring it to operable condition is deemed by the board to be unreasonably high.
4. Closing the school is deemed by the board to be necessary to safeguard the health and safety of students, staff, or the public.
5. Parents and guardians of a majority of students enrolled in the school on

September 30 in the current school year agree that closure should be considered.

C. PROCESS FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE

1. Where the board is considering school closure, it shall raise the matter through notice of motion at a regular board meeting, and ensure that the following are carried out:
 - a. A written communication, the contents of which are consistent with policies established by Alberta Learning, is sent to the parents of every student enrolled in the school who, in the opinion of the board, would be significantly affected by the closure of the school.
 - b. A public meeting is held, with at least a simple majority of trustees present.
 - c. The time, date, and place of this meeting are publicized in accordance with policies established by Alberta Learning.
 - d. The City of Edmonton is provided an opportunity to provide to the board a statement of the impact the closure may have on the community.
2. Following the public meeting attended by trustees, there shall be a period of at least three weeks for parents and community members to present to the board further responses to the proposed closure.
3. The administration may hold additional public meetings, consult with parents at other schools, or provide other opportunities for public involvement as appropriate, at any time.

Reference(s):

[HA.BP](#) - Student Programs

[School Act](#) Section 58

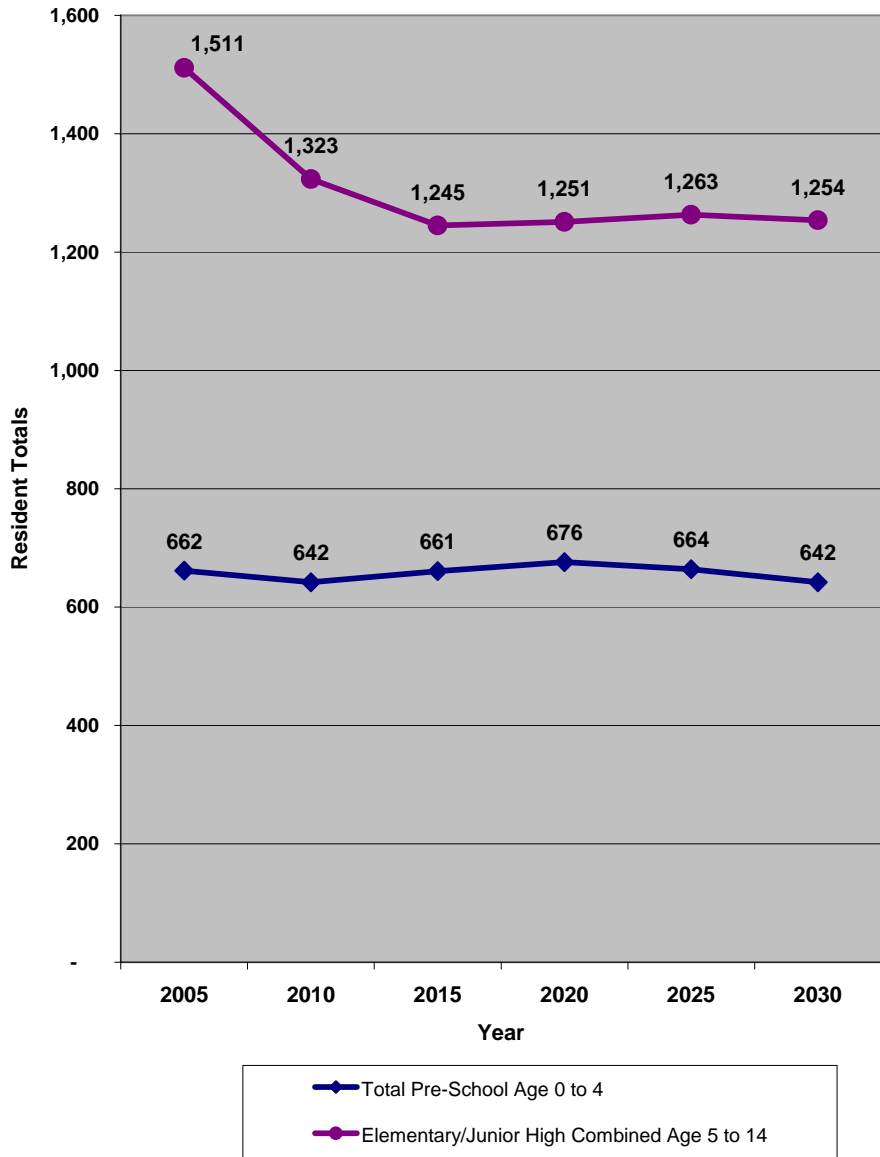
Alberta Learning's [Closure of Schools Regulation](#)

[Alberta Infrastructure](#)- see School Capital Manual 2002-2003 Section 5.2.1 Utilization Rate and Section 5.2.2. Area, Capacity and Utilization Procedures

Neighbourhood Demographic Information

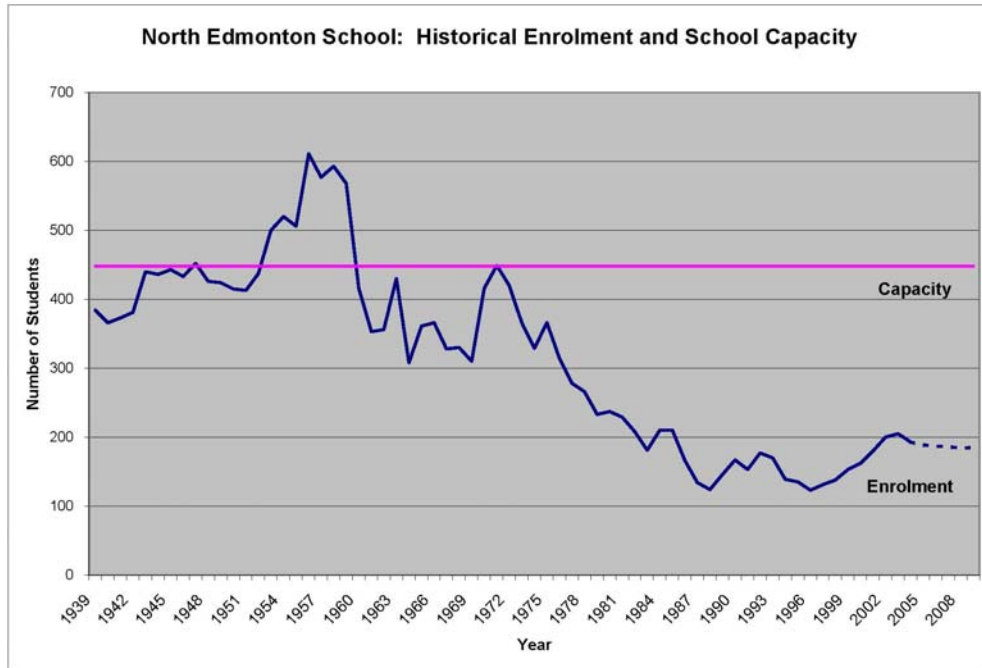
25 Year Projection by Age Group Balwin, Delwood, and Belvedere Neighbourhoods

Source Data: Edmonton Population and Employment Forecast to 2030 (draft February 2005)



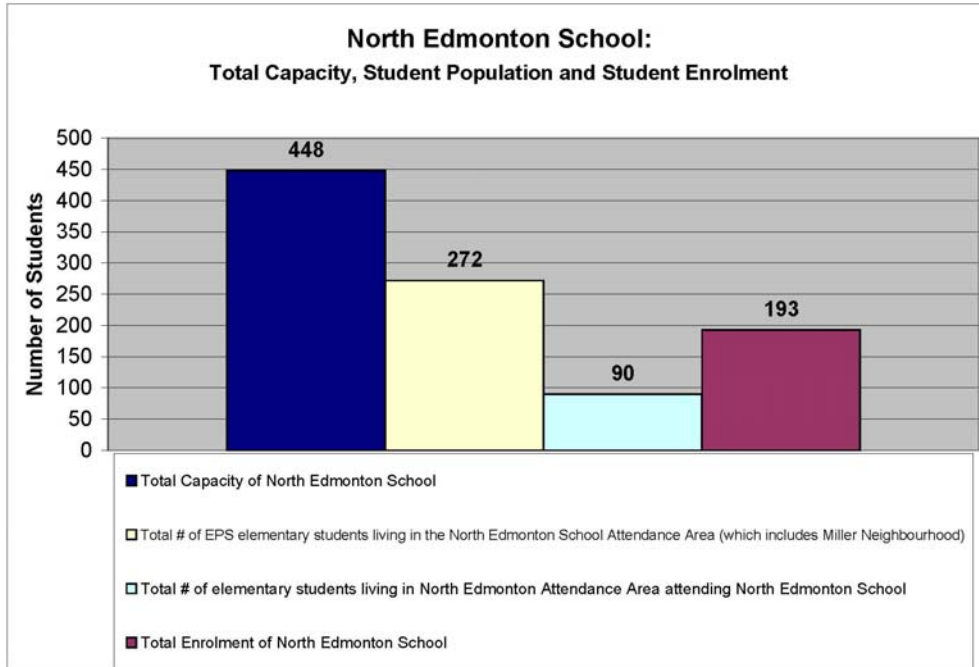
March 8, 2005

Historical Enrolment and School Capacity



March 8, 2005

Total Capacity, Student Population, and Student Enrolment



March 8, 2005

**Projected Changes to Enrolment In Schools Impacted by Recommendation
(Refined Option B)**

Closure of North Edmonton School

Summary of redistribution of programs:

- Relocate K-6 students from North Edmonton as a group to Balwin School

Enrolment Projections for 2005-2006*

Enrolment information is based on projected enrolment for September 30th, 2005.

Balwin School

Net Capacity: 758

Utilization Rate: 36%

| | Grade 7 | Grade 8 | Grade 9 | TOTAL |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Balwin School | 83 | 81 | 96 | 260 |

| | Kinder Garten ** | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | TOTAL |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------|
| North Edmonton School | 23 | 26 | 25 | 31 | 33 | 33 | 33 | 204 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Balwin School | FTE Enrolment: 260 | Adjusted Enrolment: 270 |
| North Edmonton School | FTE Enrolment: 204 | Adjusted Enrolment: 210 |
| TOTALS | 464 | 480 |

Utilization Rate with relocation of North Edmonton students: 63%

* Assumes all student attend their designated school.

**Kindergarten students have been counted as 1.0 FTE to show the impact of full day program.

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