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## **Improved Learning Opportunities for English Learner Students Resulting from Increasing the Bilingual/ESL Weight HB 197 – Increasing the Weight for Bilingual/ESL Education**

**IDRA Testimony – Presented by David Hinojosa, J.D., National Director of Policy, Before the Texas House Public Education Committee, July 24, 2017**

Chairman Huberty and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) the opportunity to present written testimony of its research and analysis on increasing the funding weight for English learner students (ELs).

IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization that is dedicated to assuring equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. Since its founding in 1973, IDRA has conducted extensive research and analysis on Texas school finance, including cost studies on EL students and programs, which have been used to help inform policymakers for the past five decades.

Strong, recent research shows that increased funding by the states has contributed to both improved student performance and lifetime outcomes, especially for underserved students (Jackson, et al., 2016; Lafortune, et al., 2016).

IDRA Recommendation:

Increase the bilingual/ESL weight to .25 to better reflect the true costs of providing essential opportunities for English Learner students. This also will help reduce recapture for school districts educating ELs, as their WADA will increase and, in turn, their property value/WADA will decrease.

## **History of Funding- Bilingual/ESL Education and Compensatory Education**

The legislature is well aware that the current weights do not reflect actual costs of essential programs. In the 1970s, IDRA engaged in a bilingual education cost study using an *expert panel* methodology to identify what practitioners in the field of bilingual education considered to be critical elements of an effective bilingual education program. IDRA researchers collected actual cost information on the various components and developed an actual dollar cost figure for program delivery. The bilingual education cost levels varied slightly depending on the grade levels involved and the number of years a program had been in existence, with newer programs reflecting slightly higher costs for start-up (Robledo & Cortez, 2008).

Around the same time, the Governor’s Office of Educational Research and Planning conducted an audit of exemplary school districts, resulting in a recommendation for a “beginning” bilingual weight of (0.15) for bilingual education programs, with an increase to (0.40) in two years. The Governor’s bill was defeated and the allotment was set at \$50 for each student in a bilingual program and \$12.50 for each student in an English as a second language class (Dietz, 2004).

In 1984, the legislature convened a school finance working group to study school finance, including the weights. After examining the essential services and programs required to assist EL and economically disadvantaged students (ED) in meeting state expectations and standards for students, the group recommended a (.4) weight for both bilingual education and compensatory education. **While the legislature rejected the proposed weights and arbitrarily set the bilingual weight to (.1) and the compensatory weight to (.2), importantly the legislature went to a weighted system tying the additional funding to the regular program allotment.**

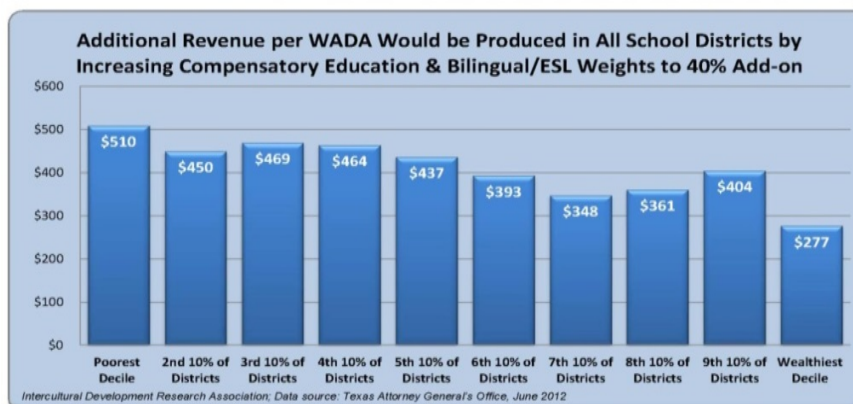
In 2004, the state commissioned a cost-function study that analyzed low student passage rates on the state assessment. The state study concluded that it would take an additional \$1,248 to assist an EL student who failed to pass the state assessment and an additional \$1,960 to assist an economically disadvantaged student who failed to pass the state assessment. The state did not adjust the weights upward in response to the study (Dietz, 2004).

## Performance and Need

**Over 30 years later, the weights remain unchanged but the standards and expectations for students and schools continue to evolve.** IDRA’s review of recent data reflects significant gaps between ED and non-ED students and EL and non-EL students (Appendix). In spite of successful experiences of individual ED and EL students in classrooms across Texas, the data show significant challenges facing our schools today. With such great and immediate need, there appears no reason the weights should not increase significantly for the next biennium.

## Potential Impact of Basing Cost of Expert Research and Studies

Increasing the weight could lead to much better support and meaningful opportunities for school children. In 2012, IDRA conducted an analysis of how much more revenue would be generated per WADA for school districts if the weights were increased to (0.4). The analysis below shows that school districts across Texas and their school children would benefit substantially.



This additional funding could help school districts provide a high quality education to all learners so long as the funding is carefully monitored. Some research-based examples of programs and services follow.

Bilingual Education	Compensatory Education
Stipends for teachers and principals with bilingual and ESL certification	Stipends for teaching in schools with higher populations of ED students
Accelerated learning and high quality tutoring	Accelerated learning and high quality tutoring
Content-testing for new students first entering U.S. schools	Socio-economic school integration plans
Professional development for all teachers of EL students centered on language/content learning and cultural competency	Professional development for all teachers on cultural competency
Coaching and mentoring of teachers	Professional learning communities
Local monitoring programs to ensure biliteracy and bilingualism	Block scheduling
Smaller class size	Smaller class size
Bilingual books, supportive materials and technology, and curriculum	Family engagement
High quality pre-K	High quality pre-K

## Effect on Recapture

In addition, if the weights increase as a result of the study, so too would school districts' WADA counts. Not only would this result in increased funding as noted above, but it also would provide more accurate property values per WADA for which state and local revenues are determined. Below is a general example of how more accurate WADA counts could affect a district's recapture.

### Scenario I Recapture at Copper Penny Level (\$319,500)

If I had 5,000 ADA and 20% EL and 60% ED, my WADA would be estimated at

$$1,000 \text{ EL} \times .1 = 100 \text{ WADA}$$

$$3,000 \text{ ED} \times .2 = 600 \text{ WADA}$$

$$700 \text{ WADA} + 5,000 \text{ ADA} = 5,700 \text{ WADA}$$

If the weights for the bilingual allotment and compensatory allotment increased to .25:

$$1,000 \text{ EL} \times .25 = 250 \text{ WADA}$$

$$3,000 \text{ ED} \times .25 = 750 \text{ WADA}$$

$$1,000 \text{ WADA} + 5,000 \text{ ADA} = 6,000 \text{ WADA}$$

So, if my property value was \$400,000/WADA under the old weights, based on \$2,280,000,000 total property value (5700 WADA x 400,000), it would now be \$380,000/WADA under the .25 weight (2,280,000,000/6,000).

The recapture at the copper level of \$319,500 would be reduced roughly 25% under this scenario (400,000-319,500/380,000).

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IDRA thanks this committee for the opportunity to testify and stands ready as a resource. If you have any questions, please contact IDRA's National Director of Policy, David Hinojosa, at [david.hinojosa@idra.org](mailto:david.hinojosa@idra.org) or 210-444-1710, ext. 1739.

## Resources

- Cortez, A. (2012). *Report of the Intercultural Development Research Association Related to the Extent of Equity in the Texas School Finance System and Its Impact on Selected Student Related Issues*, Prepared for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund in *Texas Taxpayer & Student Fairness Coalition v. Williams*, No. D-1-GN-11-003130, Travis Co. District Court (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association). [http://www.idra.org/images/stories/IDRA\\_School\\_Finance\\_Equity\\_Report\\_08162012.pdf](http://www.idra.org/images/stories/IDRA_School_Finance_Equity_Report_08162012.pdf)
- Dietz, J.K. (2004). *West-Orange Cove Consol. Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Neeley*, Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, 2004 WL 5719215 (Travis Co. Dist. Ct.).
- Jackson, C.K., Johnson, R., & Persico, C. (2016). *The Effects of School Spending on Educational and Academic Outcomes: Evidence from School Finance Reforms*, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 131(1), pp 157-218.
- Lafortune, J., Rothstein, J., & Whitmore Schanzenbach, D. (2016). *School Finance Reform and the Distribution of Student Achievement*, NBER Working Paper No. 22011 (Cambridge, Mass.: National Bureau of Economic Research).
- Robledo Montecel, M., & Cortez, A. (2008). "Costs of Bilingual Education," in *Encyclopedia on Bilingual Education* (Vol. 1, pp. 180-183). Sage Publications.

*The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent, non-profit organization led by María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.*

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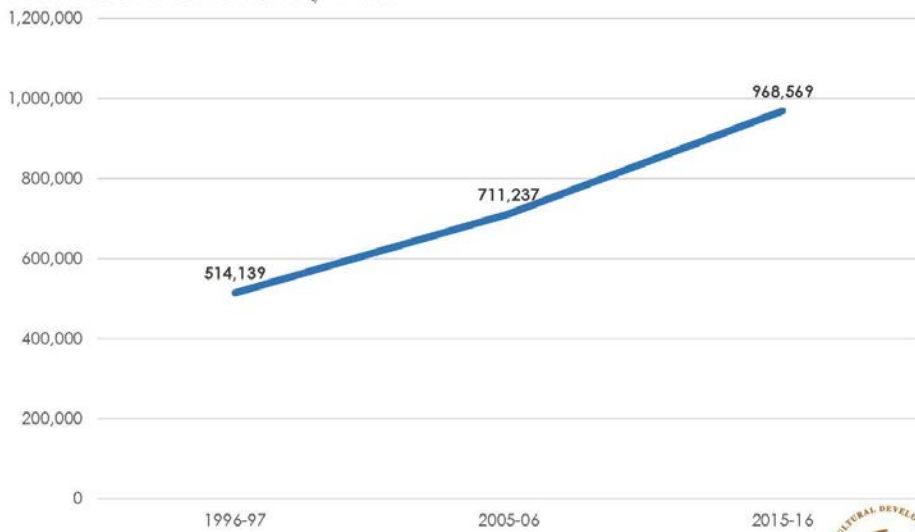
## **English Learner and Economically Disadvantaged Students in Texas – Demographics, Student Performance & Student Outcomes**

**House Public Education Committee Hearing –  
Cost Studies for Bilingual and Compensatory Education Weights  
March 7, 2017**

David Hinojosa, J.D.  
IDRA National Director of Policy



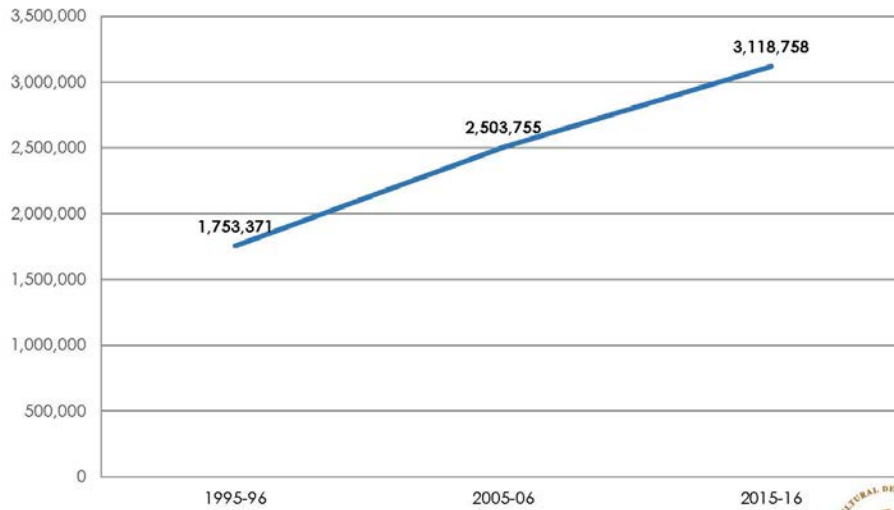
### **English Learner (EL) Enrollment in the State of Texas by Year**



Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 1996-97, 2005-06  
Source: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR), 2015-16



## Economically Disadvantaged (ED) Enrollment in the State of Texas by Year

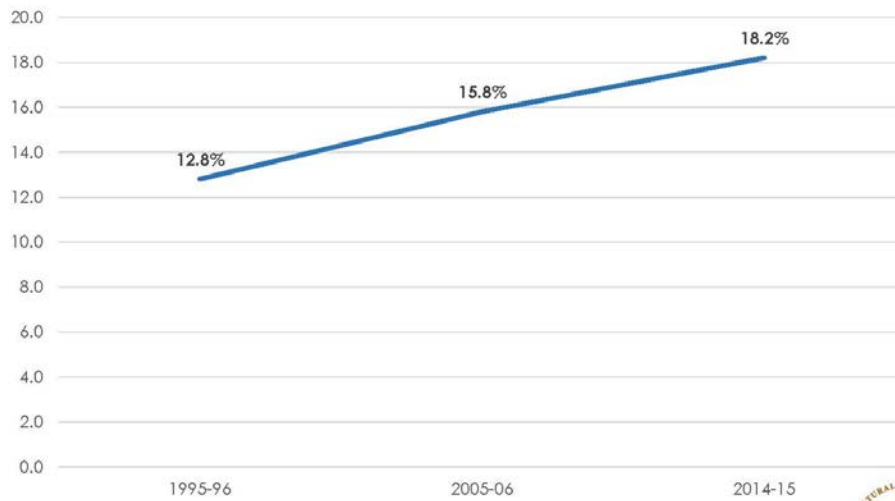


Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 1995-96, 2005-06  
 Source: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR), 2015-16



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## Percent EL Enrollment by Year

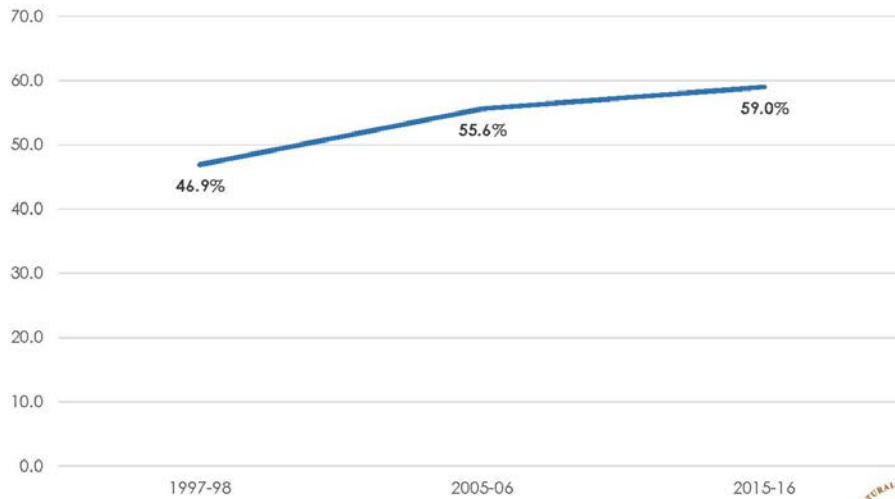


Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 1995-96, 2005-06  
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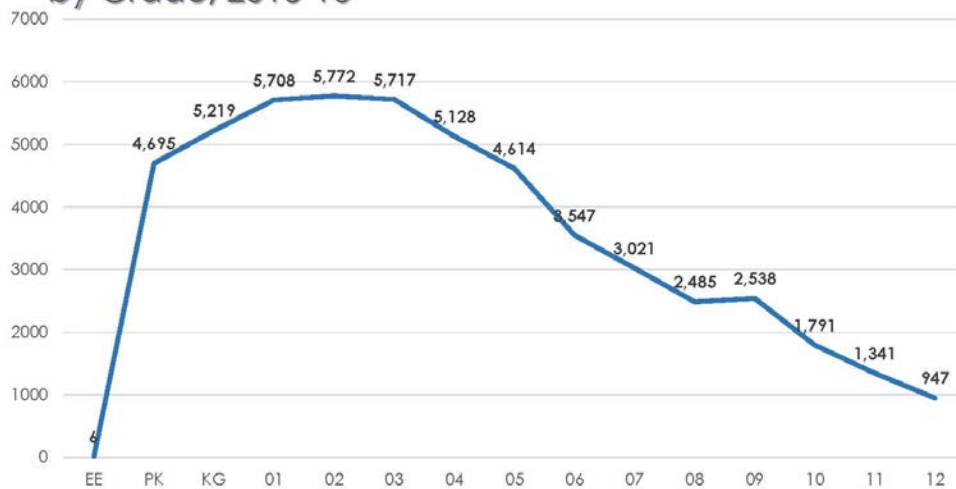
## Percent ED Enrollment by Year



Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 1997-98; 2005-06  
 Source: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR), 2015-16



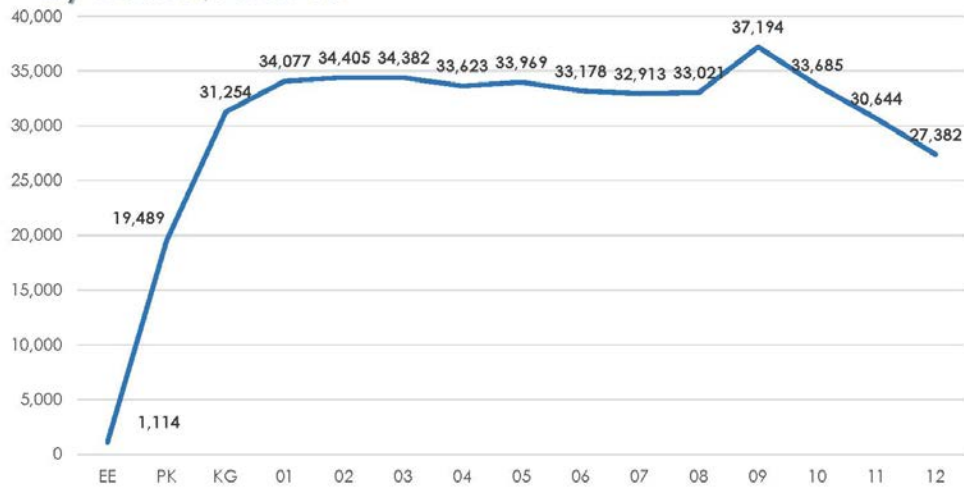
## EL Enrollment in ESC Region 20 by Grade, 2015-16



Source: PEIMS Standard Reports, ELL Students by Category and Grade, 2015-16.



## ED Enrollment in ESC Region 20 by Grade, 2015-16



Source: Texas Education Agency, TAPR 2015-2016, Region 20: San Antonio.



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## Top Languages Spoken by ELs in Texas

State	
Language	Count
1. Spanish	885,460
2. Vietnamese	16,045
3. Arabic	10,623
4. English	8,312
5. Other (Unspecified)	6,250
6. Urdu	4,809
7. Mandarin (Chinese)	4,364
8. Burmese	3,605
9. Korean	2,798
10. Telugu (Telegu)	2,252

Source: PEIMS Standard Reports, ELL Students by Language and Grade, 2015-16.



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## Percent at Level II Satisfactory Standard and Above: **STAAR Reading**, 2016

Grade	Non-ED	ED	Non-EL	EL
3	86	63	75	62
5	86	63	76	54
8	90	72	84	43

Source: Texas Education Agency, STAAR Summary Report-Combined, Spring 2016 \*Non-ELL does not include monitored ELL

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## Percent at Level II Satisfactory Standard and Above: **STAAR Math**, 2016

Grade	Non-ED	ED	Non-EL	EL
3	86	67	75	69
5	87	69	77	66
8	80	62	73	47

Source: Texas Education Agency, STAAR Summary Report-Combined, Spring 2016

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## Percent at Level II Satisfactory Standard and Above: **STAAR Science, 2016**

Grade	Non-ED	ED	Non-EL	EL
5	85	64	75	58
8	84	64	77	42

Source: Texas Education Agency, STAAR Summary Report, May 2016 (combined)

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## Percent at Level II Satisfactory Standard and Above: **STAAR Writing, Grades 4 and 7, 2016**

Grade	Non-ED	ED	Non-EL	EL
4	80	59	70	56
7	81	57	73	32

Source: Texas Education Agency, STAAR Summary Report, Spring 2016

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## Percent at Level II Satisfactory Standard and Above: **STAAR Social Studies, 2016**

Grade	Non-ED	ED	Non-EL	EL
8	76	51	66	27

Source: Texas Education Agency, STAAR Summary Report Combined Summary, Spring 2016

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## Percent at Level II Satisfactory Standard and Above: **STAAR End-of-Course, 2016**

Grade	Non-ED	ED	Non-EL	EL
English I	78	53	70	20
English II	80	55	73	17
Algebra I	89	75	83	60
Biology	95	87	93	70
U.S. History	97	91	95	73

Source: Texas Education Agency, STAAR EOC Summary Reports, Spring 2016 (Non-ELL does not incl ELL-Monitored)

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## STAAR Percent at Postsecondary Readiness Standard, 2016

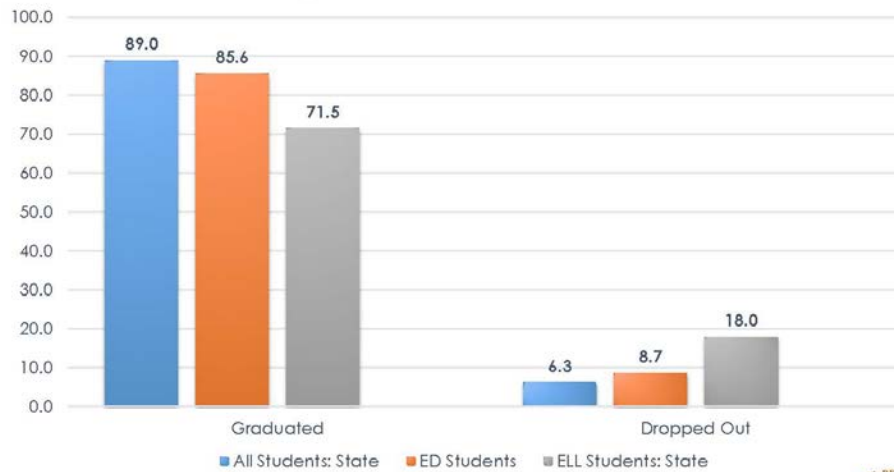
	State	ED	EL
Two or more subjects	45	32	19

Source: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, 2015-16

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## Four-Year Longitudinal Rate, Class of 2015



Source: Texas Education Agency, Texas Academic Performance Report, 2015-16

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