



ST. THOMAS MORE  
A C A D E M Y

Head of School

SEARCH PROSPECTUS



SAINT THOMAS MORE ACADEMY

SOUTH BEND, INDIANA

[stthomasmoreacademy.org](http://stthomasmoreacademy.org)

START DATE – JULY 2023

Partners in Mission School Leadership Search Solutions, LLC



## OVERVIEW

Saint Thomas More Academy, a new classical school in the Catholic tradition in South Bend, Indiana, seeks its next Head of School for the 2023-24 school year.

After years of planning and praying, a team of dedicated University of Notre Dame professionals and parents began building Saint Thomas More Academy (STMA) in the Fall of 2020. The school's mission is inspiring and attractive: to provide an academically excellent, beautiful, Catholic K-12 education, one that leads students to freedom in Christ.

With a distinctive approach to Catholic education in the South Bend area and a generous voucher program, the school has grown from 50 students in K-5 last year to over 130 students through 11th grade this school year. Through the generosity of two downtown Catholic churches, STMA has resurrected the classrooms of the former St. Patrick School to create learning and recreational spaces. The school attends daily Mass each morning in the beautifully restored and historic St. Patrick Catholic Church.

Students receive a unified vision of reality through a uniquely integrated curriculum, in which academic disciplines are interwoven to illuminate God's providential design for human history and the wisdom present in all aspects of creation. To preserve contact with reality, STMA promotes a hands-on, observational approach to the natural sciences. Music, art, and drama are an integral part of the curriculum.



## FAST FACTS



# 135

students in grades K-11



# 97%

of students are Catholic



# 45%

of faculty members hold  
advanced degrees

At STMA, students are formed not only in intellectual virtues, but also in the moral and theological virtues that equip them to love God and neighbor with attentiveness and joy. They learn their identity as children of God and understand they have a unique mission to fulfill in God's plan for the salvation of the world. Above all, STMA seeks to foster an apostolic community of friendship in Christ, the only source of true freedom. Students are nourished by the treasures of the Catholic Church, through the Catholic intellectual tradition as well as the spiritual practices of Mass, Confession, and a daily rhythm of prayer.

### ***Mission***

St. Thomas More Academy's [STMA] mission is to serve Michiana families by forming children in truth, wisdom, and authentic freedom. STMA aims to set its students on a lifelong quest:

- to know God, themselves, and the world;
- to live according to their identity as children of God in Christ;
- to love God above all things;
- to continually develop their intellects, wills, and affections;
- to be true friends;
- to serve their neighbors and the common good;
- to carry out their unique mission in God's providential plan;
- to do all of this for God's glory.

To this end, STMA provides a rigorous classical liberal arts curriculum that is rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition and centered on the daily offering of the Mass. From this core, the Academy transmits Christian culture to and through its students, teachers, school leaders, and parents, fostering an apostolic community of friendship in Christ.

### ***Vision***

STMA's students are educated to imitate our patron in his generosity, magnanimity, cheerfulness, and fortitude, and to offer their lives in loving service of God, their neighbors, and the common good. As we help our students grow, we look to three of St. Thomas More's educational principles:

- Virtue must be put in the first place, and learning in the second. If one's loves are disordered, it is impossible to see reality clearly.
- Every human being has inclinations to truth, goodness, and beauty that are part of the nature of the soul. But these are given as seeds to be developed, and because of original sin, contrary inclinations impede them. The work of education is to cultivate the garden of the soul, planting and nurturing true principles and noble loves, and constantly

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weeding out pride, ignorance, sloth, and all other vices.

- Children must be taught “to seek not praise, but utility” (“Letter to William Gonell,” 1518). In other words, we do not want our students to be ultimately motivated by the desire to impress others. We want them to love learning because it is an essential aspect of being human, and because their power of clear thinking enables them to better serve God, their neighbors, and the common good.

## ***Core Values***

### ***Freedom for Excellence***

STMA seeks true freedom for its students. This is a freedom from ignorance and sin, rooted in knowledge of our identity as children of God in Christ. It is also a freedom for excellence, found in the lifelong work of developing our intellects, wills, and affections through the intellectual and moral virtues and in the activities of knowing and loving truth, goodness, and beauty.

### ***The Interdependence of Faith and Reason***

Faith and reason are two lights that profoundly depend upon each other. The light of faith is necessary to bring a person’s power of reasoning to its full potential and to open it up to its true horizon. And faith only takes deep root in strong minds that are able to see reality clearly. STMA strives for academic excellence, which is measured not by standardized test scores, but rather by true understanding and mastery of our classical liberal arts curriculum. By helping our students master the curriculum, we want to form scholars who think clearly and precisely and who also see the big picture and spiritual depths of what they are thinking about or doing. We aim to help our students see the logos in each created thing and in the events of history, so that they may better know and love the Logos in whom all things were made.





## FAST FACTS



Independent model



School-choice state



**\$600K**

In vouchers, approximately



### *Wonder*

A free and human life involves a daily search for wisdom. STMA cultivates the habit of wonder in our students because a lifelong search for wisdom is driven by wonder. Through our experiences of wonder, especially as children, we learn for ourselves that authentic happiness is found in understanding God, ourselves, and the world more and more deeply. Our students will develop a lifelong love of learning rooted in wonder and an awareness that the quest for wisdom is never finished in this life.

### *Catholicism*

True freedom is found only in Christ, and Christ remains with us in the Catholic Church, especially in the Sacraments, Scripture, and Tradition. The Holy Mass is the source and summit of STMA's plan of education. Our curriculum and pedagogy are informed by Scripture, the teaching of the Magisterium, and the intellectual tradition of the Church, and they are rooted in a Catholic anthropology. And in order to form children in freedom and virtue, we must transmit the traditions of Catholic culture since, borrowing the words of T.S. Eliot, "culture is the incarnation of religion."

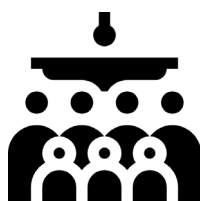
### *Family*

Parents have the primary responsibility for the education of their children and STMA aims to partner with parents in carrying out their sacred duty. STMA takes our responsibility to parents very seriously and asks that parents give us the trust and freedom needed to do our work well. We cultivate a familial environment in which children know they are loved unconditionally and find their teachers and school leaders to be models of holiness. We

## FAST FACTS



Classical curriculum



Daily Mass



National Board of Advisors

support parents in protecting their child's innocence. We offer formation for parents as well as children, and we seek to involve the parents and siblings of STMA students in the life of the school.

### *Friendship*

We grow in freedom and virtue through friendship, and friendship is one of our highest callings as human beings. STMA encourages and facilitates friendships among students, teachers, school leaders, and our families.

### *Joy*

Growing in wisdom and freedom, in a community of friends, for the sake of God's glory, brings true happiness. STMA teachers, school leaders, and students all seek to cultivate the habit of cheerfulness and to sow a joy and peace that is rooted in reality.

### *Loving Service*

Inspired by the parable in Matthew's Gospel (cf. Mt. 25:23), STMA aims to form faithful servants of God and neighbor. STMA students will learn that they have a unique mission to fulfill in God's providential plan for the salvation of the world, even if their role in the Body of Christ remains a mystery during their lives.

### *God's Glory*

The highest human act is to worship God and all of our human talents and activities are for the praise of His glory. By the example and encouragement of their teachers and friends, STMA students are taught to daily seek God's glory, rather than their own.





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### *Habit of Attention*

The habit of attention is not simply the ability to focus, but rather a way of looking at one thing as if it were the only thing. It is the loving attention that we give not only to school subjects, but even more importantly, to our friends, and to God in prayer. One of STMA teachers' most important jobs is to lead our students into this state of attention by giving it to them, as well as to the subjects that they are teaching. As Stratford Caldecott writes, borrowing from Simone Weil, "The attentive concentration on that which is sought and desired unites teacher and pupil through the presence of the 'third,' which is the living truth (the 'content,' if you like) not yet possessed and yet somehow invisibly present, implicit in the relationship itself. The relationship is what makes the truth flow. We learn because we love. The teacher's job is to bring about that relationship, that state of attention, or to be aware of it and nurture it when it arises, by loving the child" (Beauty in the Word, 31).

## **CURRICULUM**

St. Thomas More Academy's curriculum has nine fundamental components:

### **1. Faith and the Virtues**

Each day begins with Holy Mass in St. Patrick's church. Scripture, stories of the saints, prayers, and hymns are woven into the fabric of each day. Once a week, students will learn Catholic doctrine. For the 2nd graders, this will include preparation for First Communion and First Confession, and for the 8th graders, this will include preparation





for Confirmation. Our older students will have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Confession on a weekly basis. Every morning, our teachers will help the students learn and practice the “virtue of the week” using the “Education in Virtue” program developed by the Dominican Sisters of Mary, and a priest will give a monthly talk to each classroom about one of these virtues. STMA’s discipline policies and positive behavior recognition plan are structured according to these virtues. Students are surrounded by an environment of beauty in the school building, classrooms, and church that brings peace to their soul, and draws their hearts and minds to God.

## **2. Integrated Humanities**

STMA is using the St. Patrick’s Curriculum developed by Diana Philpott and Lisa Kearns. Salvation history provides the spine of this curriculum, and it includes geography, art, architecture, religion, music, literature (with read alouds), poetry, and science. The skills of the Trivium, including reading, spelling, writing, handwriting, copywork, grammar, logic, vocabulary, and rhetoric are developed in the context of true, good, and beautiful books. Children are introduced to historical lands and cultures as the story of the Israelites interweaves with great civilizations. They recognize the Incarnation as the center of history and follow the birth and growth of the Church as she spreads the Gospel to all lands. Children also grow to see that this story of salvation is their story. They learn that God has a plan, life is meaningful, and how they live matters greatly. Stories of saints and heroes develop strong imaginations and inspire virtuous ideals of goodness, nobility, and holiness. An explanation of the St. Patrick Curriculum can be found [HERE](#).



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### 3. Language Arts Skills (The Trivium)

Every day, students study phonics, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, writing, and rhetoric with their teachers in a formal way. Skills learned during this time will be reviewed and practiced throughout the rest of the day. For Phonics, Kindergarteners will use Memoria Press' First Start Reading, and 1st and 2nd graders will use Little Angel Reader Phonics Series. Natural Speller will be used for Spelling, and English from the Roots Up will be used for Vocabulary. In grades 5-8, students will use Michael Clay Thompson's Language Arts curriculum.

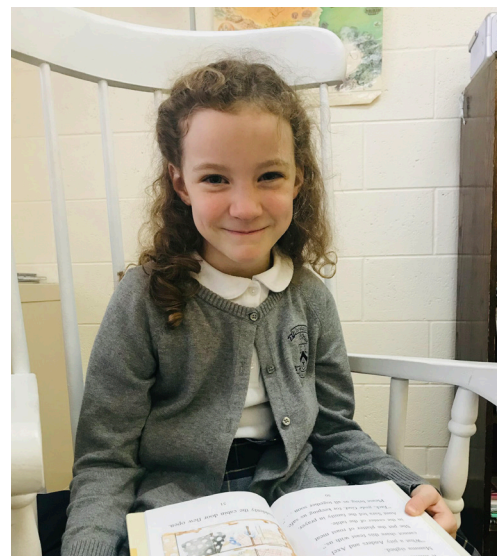
### 4. Latin (The Trivium)

Kindergarteners and 1st graders are exposed to the Latin language through hymns and prayers. Students begin to formally learn Latin in 2nd grade. Latin is an extremely logical language, and as students learn their grammar and syntax, they better understand the workings of the English language, and learn to think more logically. The study of Latin has a privileged place in STMA's curriculum because it is the language of the Roman Catholic Church, and the root of modern Romance languages.

### 5. Mathematics (The Quadrivium)

In Kindergarten and 1st grade, students will utilize the RightStart Mathematics curriculum, which includes hands-on manipulatives. In 2nd grade, students will transition to Math Mammoth, which focuses on mastery of concepts following a ladder of learning approach.





## **6. Science (The Quadrivium)**

Twice a week, younger students will use James Partridge's *Natural Science Through the Seasons*, as well as Anna Comstock's *Handbook of Nature Study* and *Nature Notebook Series*, to learn to observe what is seasonally happening in the natural world around them, and begin to deduce the order intrinsic in the universe. Every day, students will have some time to observe plants in the classroom gardens, noting how they are developing in a systematic way. Once a week, they will go on an observation walk around the school grounds. Students in grades 5-8 will study Bernard Nebel's *Building Foundations of Scientific Understanding*.

## **7. The Fine Arts**

Students will have dedicated time for Music three or four times a week. In Music class, in addition to learning modern music theory and folk songs, students will learn to sing hymns and Gregorian chant through the Ward Method so that they can sing at Mass as an all-school choir. Students will have dedicated time for Art twice a week in the 1st two trimesters, and dedicated time for Drama twice a week in the 3rd trimester. The Fine Arts have a privileged place in STMA's curriculum in order to develop the students' creative powers, train their aesthetic sense, and properly order their affections.

## **8. Recess/Gym**

Children need to exercise their bodies in order to exercise their minds, and so STMA will have several short recesses daily, punctuating blocks of study. This will also give them time to socialize. The students will



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practice playing organized games and sports once a week during a longer Gym period.

## 9. Lunch

At lunch, multiple grades will be together, providing an opportunity for the older students to develop a relationship with the younger students. Lunch will be an opportunity for students to socialize, practice good manners, and serve one another by helping with cleanup.

## STUDENT LIFE

### *Spiritual Life*

St. Thomas More Academy students receive and participate in the treasures of the Catholic Church. They will be encouraged to see how they are called by God to sanctify their ordinary life - school work, family life, time spent with classmates. As Christ instructs his apostles, "Let the children come to me," Mass will be offered each day with a weekly opportunity for sacramental confession for all students in grades 3-12. Along with prayer throughout the day, students will be immersed in beauty that will draw their hearts and minds to God in the school building, classrooms, and Church. Once a month, students receive a talk from a priest or a Notre Dame undergraduate about the virtue of the month. On the last Friday of each month, STMA has Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Adoration.





### ***Athletics***

Students have the opportunity to play soccer (fall), basketball (winter), and track and field (spring). All students in grades K-11 have gym class once a week.

### ***Arts***

Students will have Art class twice a week. Three times during the academic year, Art class will be replaced by several weeks of Drama classes. Students will have Music class three to four times a week throughout the year.

## **PARENT FORMATION AND COMMUNITY**

The Catholic Church teaches that parents are the primary educators of their children. STMA enthusiastically embraces this and is dedicated to helping parents achieve excellence in their task of educating children of God. To this end, we host speakers and offer mini-retreats, as well as provide suggested readings for parents interested in deepening their understanding of their work in parenthood. We also provide opportunities for STMA parents to grow in community with each other.

## **THE POSITION**

The ideal Head of School will be someone who loves the fullness of the Catholic faith, and lives it in his/her life through practice of the moral, intellectual, and theological virtues. The HOS will embrace and model the 5 key values of the school: 1) Faith AND Reason, 2) Freedom for Excellence, 3) Family 4) Friendship and 5) Joy. As the leader, the Head of School will demonstrate in all actions a firm willingness to be individually responsible for the overall operation of the school, and a joyful acceptance of accountability for that responsibility.

### ***Organizational Management***

The Head of School will own the responsibility for the entire school, and all responsibilities ultimately stop with him or her. The Head of School will manage all operations of the school and is charged with assisting the Board in developing and implementing workable and effective policies. The Head of School will also, with an entrepreneurial and creative spirit, make decisions quickly and creatively to maintain the school's attainment of its mission, both in the short and long-term.

The Head of School will:

- Lead the school in maintaining good relations with the school families, personnel, constituents, and community contacts of the school. Help those families and friends understand the vision and mission of the school.
- Administer the school in conformity with Board policy and in accordance





with the laws of the state, provided those laws do not violate Catholic teaching upon which the school is founded. Understand that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that the school is acting to support parents in their vocations.

- Operate as a Board member ex officio and assist in the preparation of the agenda for each Board meeting. Manage and interact with a board that is emotionally invested and passionate about the school's excellence and success.
- Identify necessary operations which do not yet exist (we are a startup school), set up such operations, or hire, delegate, and manage someone else who will do so.
- Delegate all responsibilities he or she cannot personally execute on.
- Collect and compile all necessary data and perform any studies, including accreditation, that may be required of the school. Lead the staff through early years of growth by providing good change management and communication to bring the staff, faculty, and families through necessary changes
- Develop a realistic annual budget, and plan an operating plan and its related details accordingly.
- Assist in the continued development and execution of STMA's strategic plan. Provide the first draft of the operating plan and budget for board comment and approval
- Develop, execute and achieve targets for STMA enrollment, marketing, and fundraising.
- Obtain / maintain school accreditation and status in Indiana's school

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choice program.

- Maintain current physical plant and provide input and execution for new physical plant as needed

### ***Personnel Administration***

The Head of School is responsible for the overall spiritual, personal, and professional growth and leadership of the school's faculty and staff. The Head of School leads in the area of personnel relations to maximize the educational benefits for each student.

The Head of School will:

- Create a vibrant, mission-focused culture and environment of friendship among the STMA faculty, staff, students and families.
- Lead, manage, and hold accountable the staff and faculty as they carry out all of the operations of the school.
- Develop (with board approval) the STMA staffing plan and execute accordingly.
- Manage all teams he or she has delegated to effectively.
- Hold faculty, staff, and students accountable.
- Plan and oversee staff meetings and faculty prayer times.
- Conduct appropriate administrative, faculty, or staff meetings as necessary.
- Direct and approve the practices and procedures of teacher in-service training, conference and seminar participation, and continuing education,





especially those which have direct impact on the application of the classical teaching methods used within the school.

- Interview prospective personnel and recommend to the Board candidates deemed qualified.
- Make recommendations to the Board for the continuance of employment or the re-issuance of teacher contracts. When necessary, initiate disciplinary procedures involving teachers or staff.
- Administer all other Board personnel policies in such areas as salary, placement, leave, fringe benefits, and grievance procedures.
- Communicate the overall strategic vision to faculty and staff and ensure they understand it.
- Resolve problems which may arise between parents and teachers, teachers and students, or staff members, applying virtue-based principles of problem solving.
- Maintain and keep current all personnel files and records for the school.

### ***Curriculum and Instruction***

The Head of School is the instructional leader, where the Head serves the teachers so that they can spend their time serving the students. The Head of School leads in developing, achieving, and maintaining the strongest possible educational programs and services which promote the goals and objectives of the school.



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The Head of School will:

- Create a culture of responsibility, joyful accountability, and productive feedback.
- Direct a program of evaluation through frequent classroom visitation, lesson observation, and self-evaluation of teaching methods, curriculum content, and class- room management.
- Thoroughly understand the Catholic and classical model of teaching
- Lead in curriculum development and staff and faculty recruitment, along with the academic dean.
- Form and oversee the academic departments or special committees of the faculty in the development of the instructional program.
- Oversee the scheduling of all teachers and students into appropriate courses or classrooms.
- Assist teaching as needed

### ***Student Body & Families***

The Head of School supervises the welfare of the student body and its individual students in their spiritual and academic growth, the quality of their learning program, and their physical well-being.

The Head of School will:

- Review and approve curricular plans as submitted by teachers, including the goals and objectives of each grade or course.
- Hold teachers accountable for implementing policies for student discipline
- Administer strict student disciplinary measures when necessary and proper, such as probation, suspension, or expulsion.





- Ensure a school-wide program of student evaluation, including achievement testing, and insure that proper record keeping, and reporting procedures are followed by teachers and staff.
- Oversee cumulative records for each student in accordance with the policies
- Develop and oversee extracurricular activities and the personnel who supervise them.
- Communicate with families, through parents committee or other
- Execute on other board-directed assignments, including new needs that arise.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- Practicing Roman Catholic in full communion with the Church
- Masters or Doctorate degree
- A demonstrable and deep understanding of classical education, STMA's mission, and its culture (mission/culture fit)
- 5+ years of experience in leadership at a school or other educational setting
- Teaching experience
- Commitment to pledge fidelity to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church
- Experience serving on and managing boards
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Strong commitment to and experience in developing staff and faculty
- Leadership experience in a startup environment
- Proven ability to communicate frequently, clearly, and with various audiences
- Growth mindset – willingness to own mistakes and eagerness to receive feedback.
- Strong relationship-building skills

## OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Saint Thomas More Academy is uniquely positioned for growth and excellence, where with the right leader it can take advantage of a unique combination of untapped potential and unmet needs in South Bend: hundreds of faithful Catholic intellectuals associated with local universities have talents to share; hundreds of faithful Catholics graduate each year from these universities and look for the opportunity to stay in South Bend as teachers and faculty; and the local Catholic community is incredibly strong, where there is high demand among families for Catholic classical learning models. STMA exists at the intersection of this untapped potential and these unmet needs, and therefore has the prospect of growing into one of the finest schools in the Catholic tradition in the United States.





With tremendous enrollment growth in two short years, the current campus facility is at capacity. The next Head of School must work closely with the Board in strategizing plans to accommodate the increased interest in the school by mission-aligned families. The Board aims to grow the school by 20 students each year until a full K-12 enrollment of 400 students is reached.

The next Head of School must work closely with faculty members on their own professional growth and development and ensure standards of the classical curriculum and pedagogy are met.

With a young school, there is an unique opportunity to be an architect of new school traditions and marketing the model in the local, regional, and national Catholic educational landscapes.

## **ABOUT THE AREA**

South Bend is located in northern Indiana about 95 miles east of Chicago. The city's name is drawn from the fact that it's situated on the southernmost bend in the St. Joseph River. Together with neighboring Mishawaka, the area has a population of approximately 320,000. South Bend is the home of the University of Notre Dame, St. Mary's College, Holy Cross College, and Indiana University-South Bend.

The area is now home to such companies as Crowe-Chizek, AM General (which makes military vehicles.), Bosch, Honeywell, and Woodwind & Brasswind. The city hopes to grow with the undertaking of a new nano-technology campus near the city, which has already brought new contracts for factories and businesses around the city.

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The area boasts a low cost of living and an array of parks and other diversions bound to keep locals entertained. Like many Rust Belt cities, South Bend has faced economic challenges since it lost nearly a quarter of its population during the latter half of the 20th century, after some of its major manufacturers closed. That said, parts of the area are on the rebound. For example, the downtown along the scenic St. Joseph River has undergone revitalization in recent years, bringing new apartments and condos that are attracting young professionals and empty nesters, as well as new bars and restaurants.

South Bend is a city with museums and galleries filled including the Studebaker National Museum and The History Museum. The area also boasts many outdoor recreation activities for all seasons. In the warmer weather, there are several golf courses, biking and hiking trails, a skate park, and lakes for water sports. In the snowy season, there are nearby opportunities to ski and snowshoe.

The regional airport in South Bend has recently become an international one. After Indianapolis, the area's airport is the second busiest in the state with service to 12 nonstop destinations and connections worldwide. South Bend is also convenient to both Midway Airport and O'Hare International Airport, which provide routine shuttle service.





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## APPLICATION PROCESS

The search committee is on a fast-track to identify and secure the next Head of School. All inquiries and applications will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality and with the greatest respect.

The successful candidate will be expected to assume the responsibilities of the position in July 2023. Do not delay. Connect with us today!

- To apply, please submit the following four documents, confidentially and as separate PDF attachments.
  - » Letter of Interest that aligns your experiences and skill sets with the current needs of the school as you understand them.
  - » Statement of Catholic educational leadership philosophy.
  - » Current resume with all appropriate dates included.
  - » List of five references with names, relationships, phone numbers, and email addresses. References will not be contacted without your knowledge and approval.
- Please include "Saint Thomas More Academy - Head of School" in the subject field.



***Assemble all of the application materials in one email to:***

Kyle Pietrantonio, Partner  
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