

The People's Voice, LLC

Ethics Ballot TM

3205 B Corporate Court Ellicott City, MD 21042

2018 Howard County Questionnaire Board of Education Candidates

Candidate: Anita Pandey

1. Why are you running for this office? What qualifications do you uniquely bring to hold this office?

My daughter, a proud HCPSS student recorded a short video that outlines my qualifications and vision, so thanks for watching it:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8sy6-aYrfQ&feature=em-share_video_user

My mother, Mrs. Savitri Pandey is my role model and my primary reason for running. She wasn't 'schooled' in the dictionary sense, yet she is the most educated person I have met. She wasn't permitted to attend elementary school, much less college, so she has made it her life's mission to ensure that her girls got the highest "degrees" obtainable in their respective fields, and that we do our part. She instilled in me an undying fire and a unique sense of purpose—to enable the less fortunate, the "forgotten" and the invisible in our communities to excel.

I've been teaching and simultaneously learning for 28 years. The last 17 have been dedicated to teacher education. This range of experience, plus my experiences as a parent in HC, as well as my training and policy-impacting advocacy and skills make me a highly qualified BOE candidate.

I'm a proud parent of two HCPSS students, a trained educator, and a teacher educator. I have also been actively involved in the educational policy realm, particularly through my advocacy on behalf of a number of international and national children's and young adult organizations. These include the ACEI, the NAEYC, CAEP (the largest accrediting body), NCLR, ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages), NABE, TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other *Languages*), ABC (Association for Business Communication International), AAAL (the American Association of Applied Linguistics), IAWE (the International Association for World Englishes), as well as NGOs like the Unforgotten. I have authored over 70 peer-reviewed pieces, including three books (the latest from Columbia University's Teachers College Press), and serve on the Advisory board (a nominated position) of one international journal and have served on the Editorial Board of six other international journals. My simple Columbia University book Website (www.languagebuildingblocks.com) lists the organizations that have invited me to provide Professional Development in the last two years. In MD, these include Kennedy Krieger Institute, First English Lutheran Pre and K, Baltimore, Saint Vincent de Paul, the Y of Central Maryland, Waverly Head Start (Baltimore), and the Community Action Council of HC.

2. Describe why you feel you have a viable campaign.

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I have the good fortune of being an educator, a teacher educator, a policy advocate, and a proud parent, so I could be the spokesperson for multiple parties, while continually getting timely feedback from every age group in every section of Howard County. I have also been reaching out—even prior to deciding and filing to run-- to multiple organizations around town (e.g. the Office of Children and families, the 50+ Centers, the Office of Aging, the Horizon Foundation, our BOE) as well as other BOE members across the state, and delegates and elected government officials for input and collaboration. Some of my County-specific engagements that have helped me develop a proactive support base that is critical to a viable campaign include parents and trained educators that I met through organizations on which I have served (listed below), as well as through testimony I provided in Annapolis, and through my children's friends--who have seen me in 'action' and/or taken survival Spanish and/or Hindi/Urdu with me:

- **Director**, Howard County African American History Project (HCAAHP; <http://hchsmd.org/hc-african-american-history-pr/>), a subcommittee of the **Howard County Historical Society** [We began recording the educational experiences and **early childhood experiences** of earliest residents on Fels Lane—e.g., the legendary Ms. Sophie Pollock who turned 99 on Jan. 17, 2018--and in other areas in and around Main St., historical Ellicott City, MD], spring 2015 to date.
- Author and Co-Director (with Tyrone Tyler), *The Fire Next Door, a mini* documentary on the 1965 fire on Main Street in Ellicott City, MD that killed a mother and four of her children, and paved the way for sociopolitical change, HCAAHP.
- **Invited member**, Validation Focus Group for MD-HSSCO Needs Assessment Project, MD Head Start Association, Children's Services Bldg., Ellicott City, July 12, 2013.
- *English as a Second Language Volunteer* for HC Residents & for *Project Literacy*, Howard County Central Library, June 2009 to 2017.
- PTA member & Convener, *Multilanguage Games*, World Fair, Centennial Lane Elementary School, Ellicott City, MD, May 3, 2013 & 2014 & Parent Volunteer for Joint CLES & BMMS World Showcase, 2017 & 2018.
- PTA member & Cultural Activities Co-Chair, PTA, Centennial Lane Elementary School, Ellicott City, MD, Spring 2013 to 2014.

3. How do you believe one eliminates the appearance of conflicts regarding campaign contributions?

- i) I would ensure that none of my campaign donors has ever done business with the BOE, nor intends to
- ii) I would only use my donations for essential campaign needs—e.g., a domain name, reasonable hosting fees, flyers, and/or signage, and essential events that forward the mission of education, particularly for our most 'at-risk' and/or marginalized students, and
- iii) I would continue to follow filing and other campaign protocols.

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4. If you are elected, what are your top priorities for 2019? Discuss at least three areas of concern for The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and how you would address them:

i. to enhance educational outcomes for all students--to reduce achievement gaps across students and schools--by focusing on inclusive pedagogy and revisiting how we teach reading, ESL and Special Needs (my areas of expertise) with the objective of greater success

ii. to help reduce our budget deficit through sound decision-making with input from all stakeholders and through carefully thought-out and well-executed Community partnerships, and

iii. to listen to and learn from our students, and to retain and reward our educators through the provision of monetary and in-kind resources and incentives (e.g., affordable housing in HC, as many cannot afford to live here, as they have shared). Our children have so much to teach! My first book is titled *The Child Language Teacher* chronicles how I learned Spanish from a 5-year-old and taught my mother English—and how this enhanced my academic and social skills. I would value your input on this and other books I've authored and will gladly share a complimentary e-copy, so simply email me at anita.pandey@morgan.edu or at anitapandey4boe@gmail.com

Our educators are our greatest asset. No matter how great our buildings and instructional resources, without quality instruction and oversight, schooling could be minimally impactful. My father's elementary school class, for instance, met only when the skies permitted, in a remote and rural Monsoon nation famous for its torrential downpours that still last over a week (with continuous heavy rains). That's because the farming community 'school' he attended didn't have a designated building and couldn't afford to build one back then. They would meet under a Mahua tree in the village of Holapur, district Sultanpur in UP, northern India, and write on slates with sharpened branches of trees using "dudhiy" (an off-white paint sold in little bottles) that they washed off during breaks in the flooded sugarcane, wheat and rice fields all around them. They didn't have books and pens and pencils, so school supplies that we get are a luxury in contrast.

5. What do you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the current Board of Education, and Superintendent?

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The strengths of the current Board of Education and Superintendent include their commitment (they ask pointed questions at meetings, suggesting that they are engaged), and their cordial and collaborative rapport with each other, which translates to professionalism (with others, as well—based on my observations).

From what I have seen and read, like each BOE member, Dr. Martirano is very professional and a more transparent and well-liked individual than the person that occupied his office before him. He is for “open meetings” (personal communication with Board members), and is also open to community partnerships, as evidenced by the successful creation and ready-to-roll-out community-wide interaction-enhancing program *Talk with Me, Howard County*, spear-headed by former HCPSS employee Bonnie Bricker. At Town Hall meetings and through e-communication that he sends out, he invites community input on proposed programs, as well as suggestions, so his collaborative, student-focused (<http://storystrong.hcpss.org/stories/>), and community-engaged leadership is refreshing and clearly appreciated.

The weakness of this Board and of our Superintendent is their inability to make financially sound decisions (in the current climate), including putting a cap on high-salaried administrative staff, including Superintendents--as evidenced by the provision of raises and weekly allowances to some individuals who are already making much more than our most highly qualified and experienced teachers--and the pay-out deal the Board approved for Dr. Martirano’s predecessor, which is what I would describe as an unethical move).

6. How would you exercise oversight of the HCPSS budget, after it has been approved?

I would periodically ask for reports of all approved line items.

7. The HCPSS has experienced less socio-economic diversity of population in schools. Discuss related concerns and how you would address them. Include your ideas about how to provide equity in the HCPSS.

First, thank you for sharing this important observation and inviting our input. Pls. see the attachment, and specifically number Q6 for my response (Alas, I was unsuccessful in typing and pasting my recommendations in this slot)

Q7: Re EQUITY

As an educator and reading and language specialist, to me “equity” means equal opportunity and parity or a level playing field. This concept is exemplified in the vision that Mr. James (“Jim”) Rouse had for a specific planned community in Howard County, namely, Columbia. When Columbia was formed, it was “the place to be” (Gertie Williams, graduate of Tubman High School and Choir Director at Daisy) and many moved here for “the schools and the elementary school World languages” (Dr. Warren, personal communication). Research shows that Mr. Rouse wanted individuals from varied income levels and different walks of life to mingle and learn from each other (see *Better Lives, Better Places: A Biography of James Rouse* by J. Olsen,

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2003). The fact that the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association was a (financial) partner strongly suggests to me that quality education—not merely from area schools but from the purposely diverse community that it was designed to bring together. Much like a diverse portfolio, one of the projected high yields of this proposed community was the non-classroom-based opportunities living in Columbia offered to area residents and employees. Columbia, as Mr. Rouse envisioned it was meant to represent the epitome of this concept, namely, “equity.”

Let’s fast-forward to present-day HC, where the income and cultural and racial diversity of Columbia, instead of being replicated in like mode in every other zip code in HC, vary considerably. This has resulted in visible pockets of poverty and cultural homogeneity in many parts of HC; akin to segregated urban neighborhoods. To level such a disparate field will require artful decision-making by BOE members that would put marginalized students at center stage. In the realm of education, equity today means every student and employee of HCPSS has more or less similar instructional resources available to him/her, regardless of his/her family circumstances (e.g., income, social class, level of support and so on), and his/her location in Howard Cty. In short, we would expect all schools in Howard Cty to receive and provide more or less the same resources (i.e., highly qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff, library/media resources, academic and extracurricular offerings, facilities, etc.), and the same per pupil allocation, regardless of zip code and/or other factors (e.g., a student’s learning style, mental and physical capabilities, academic preparedness/readiness, classroom size and age of the facility, among others). All in all, an equitable or equity-oriented HCPSS would aim to ensure that all students and their families feel supported by the schools, and that the school community wants every student to succeed/excel, and would do everything to work with “underachieving students” so that they do not feel neglected and are not left behind.

Some of my most prized awards (see the photos that follow) have to do with my role in making education more equitable for all students—not just in MD:

The first one was awarded by the international organization ABC, Association for Business Communication International, with memberships from over 55 countries. In addition to the plaque featured below, and a cash prize of \$1,500.00, the award came with a featured Plenary spot at the 2017 Annual Conference in Dublin Ireland, so I got to share my winning paper, titled “*Capturing Cultural Nuances and Enhancing Politeness: the Language Building Blocks Model of Cultural Competency*” (which also focused on how to diversify our workforce across the board).

To me, HCPSS could achieve this by ensuring that all low-morale-D, lower-income (relative to others), single-parent, and lower-performing and/or “at-risk” students receive individualized attention, as well as relevant and meaningful instruction, PLUS appropriate assessments (matched to instruction). Too often “special needs” students are conflated with “ELLs.” Labels themselves could be problematic and prompt classist classes. “ELL,” for instance is a negative term by default; it merely identifies the language a student is in the process of “learning” and fails to mention any other(s) that they might have already mastered. Below are selected radio interviews and podcasts that focus on the need to change or reverse the pattern of stigmatization or negative lang. attitudes that are so pervasive in our schools and communities. For genuine

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educational equity to be at work in HC, all of our schools and the communities in which they are located would need to be free of stereotyping and bias—racial/cultural, sexual-orientation-wise, as regards variations in physical and cerebral attributes, age, and more). We also need to bridge language divides and the inequities they (and other prompts) spawn in our (public) schools.

We have a lot of work to do. Here is my response to a parent who responded to my HoCo School Interest (FB) post with Delegate Ana Sol-Gutierrez's request for testimony from Marylanders in early Feb. of this year:

Parent: "So, the students who have spoken English all their lives now have to take the time in school to learn a language from someone else [sic] home country. I think it is time to learn English."

Pandey's Response: Of course we want our kids to master English and that's precisely the point--dual immersion programs accelerate English mastery and ADD another language and broader cultural awareness to our children's portfolios + they enhance math and science skills--most likely because kids compare language patterns and meanings--a mathematically involving computation! Parents will have the option of sending their children to such programs, when they become available. There's high demand for them in Utah, OR, CA, DC, VA, NM, FL, TX, PR, and all over the country. English has borrowed from over 99 languages, so simply learning a little of another language has been proven to make English spelling and comprehension easier for our students (i.e., lang. history as a learning strategy), and to make them more social. For those students who come from homes where another language is "primary" for home-based communication, use of their home language or another lang.--in addition to English--makes English easier for them to understand and master. It's a WIN-WIN for all and does not add to a school's budget (unlike what folks might think):

Here are pieces worth reading:

<http://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201703/dual-immersion-schools-put-kids-ahead-curve-30956>
<https://www.americancouncils.org/news/why-dual-language-immersion-approach-will-change-achievement-american-public-schools>

As a reading and language specialist, I would argue that denying any student access to his/her primary and/or home language--at our schools--is not only counterintuitive to instruction, but unethical! Research shows that language inclusion is a sure way to ensure equity, while making all students feel at home and eager to learn. Through continued professional development and an inclusive curriculum and instructional resources and assessments, I would work with the BOE to ensure that all elementary schools in HCPSS would offer every child an additional language—when their brains are most apt to acquire language and embrace differences. I would emphasize the need to validate the diverse backgrounds of our student body, and of our educators (to minimize cultural dissonance) and the value of teaching everyone to embrace the many heritage languages and cultures in Howard County, so that we do not end up sending conflicting messages, but do our part to support families in their child-raising/socialization/teaching efforts. I share my experience as a parent of bilingual preschoolers entering monolingual HCPSS schools in a heavily-cited piece titled “Why I Kept My Kids Out of Preschool” (2015--attached), and would like our parents to feel like genuine partners. Even if we do not speak or understand another language, we could, for instance, help all children pick up a little or a lot more than a

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smattering of an additional language at an early age--at lunchtime and through music and art and social studies and/or geography in later grades, for instance--as these “teach-able moments” and/or subject areas facilitate and lend themselves well to conventional language mastery, as well as to the preparation of well-rounded global citizens knowledgeable in varied (classical and other) musical traditions, diverse instruments, art forms and traditions, and so much more in our vast and interconnected world). As I share in my latest book, *Language Building Blocks* (<https://www.tcpres.com/language-building-blocks-9780807753552>), from 4th Grade onwards, the bulk of our vocabulary is Latinate (not Anglo-Saxon), so exposing our students to a language that is closely related to Latin (e.g., Spanish and Italian) or one that is more intuitively mathematical (e.g., Chinese, Korean, and Arabic) would go a long way, and would likely jumpstart and accelerate our students’ math and science skills, as well.

As a parent, I’ve been advocating for curricular diversification (which also falls under my first objective). A group of us met with Dr. Stout, HCPSS Curriculum Director on Dec. 15 to discuss preliminary steps in this direction, starting with our Social Studies, Reading, Media Center, and History offerings. I would continue advocating and, with the support of my fellow educators, grow our support base and following once I have the privilege of serving on our Board.

The following are selected radio interviews and podcasts in which I share my thoughts on how we could collectively work to eliminate inequities in P-12 instruction and assessment:

Anita's Radio Interviews: Selected Broadcasts & Podcasts

Milwaukee Public Radio/WUWM's *Lake Effects* Anchor Amy Kiley interviews Anita Pandey about best practices in reading and more for underperforming schools in the home of America's private/"charter" schools, namely, Milwaukee:

<http://wuw.com/post/expert-considering-students-home-language-could-help-school-performance#stream/0>

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/edutalk/2015/01/29/nabe-english-language-learners-misidentified-in-a-multi-lingual-world>

Anita's Podcasts on the "WORD gap" & early quality assessments, including preschool assessments like CLASS™ :

<http://ecla.buzzsprout.com/>

Recorded at Erikson Institute's Early Childhood Leadership Academy in Chicago, IL:
Part 1 identifies the 2 most frequently used assessments of instructional quality and zones in on CLASS™

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Part 2: focuses on some limitations of CLASS™

Part 3: focuses on how to ensure culturally inclusive ECE assessment

The first podcast in this series was a follow up to a feature article by Anita Pandey that was published by Columbia University's *Teacher's College Record* on Aug. 25, titled:

Beyond Black 'n White: Addressing Cultural Bias in Word Gap Studies

http://schd.ws/hosted_files/cabe2016/ef/VocabCultBiasTCRecordPandey.pdf

Stephanie Reed:

8. Do you believe the HCPSS budget should have a lower level of increase, or be fully funded? **Fully funded.** If fully funded, where do you suggest the County budget cut elsewhere to accommodate? **For starters, high-end contracts, and salary raises for County Council and other officials who make over a certain amount could be eliminated. Additional sources of income could also be identified.** If lowered, where do you suggest the HCPSS budget be cut?

Click here to enter text.

9. Where do you think the next high school(s) should be built? Why? In what order?

Based on school attendance records and projections, I would say the next HS should be built in the Elkridge area, if the land is suitable and available on time. Now that the Mission Road site has been approved, we should all join hands and support its on-time completion.

10. How would you remediate overcrowding in schools?

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- I would renovate existing schools by expanding/building upwards if necessary. At nights and/or over the summers, we should begin to renovate to expand (i.e., building upwards if space constraints preclude horizontal reconfiguration) one school at a time. This is potentially less time-consuming than waiting until a brand new school is ready, and so that common areas (e.g., assembly, restrooms, hallways, and the cafeteria) are not as crowded.
- We could also change the class-switch times by grade or geographic space, so that shared spaces are not singularly congested at any one specific time. We could also have teachers come to designated classes as opposed to having students go to them. This might, in fact, be less time-consuming and is how many high schools function in many parts of the world, including Nigeria where I attended high school. We students never moved; different teachers came to our classroom for different periods.
- I would also recommend verifying student residency at our top three most overcrowded schools. We might discover for instance, “that some students who attend CHS, for instance, do not actually reside at Chatham Gardens” (HC resident, personal communication).

11. What time do you think Elementary, Middle and High Schools in the HCPSS should start the day? If any changes are proposed, how would you accommodate funding needs to implement?

Based on experience, of all the students we serve, high schoolers should start school the latest, based on their biological clocks. I would switch school start times if possible (option 1) with minimal budget changes, or raise funds from other avenues (see my response to areas we could ‘cut’ to save and grow our fund base).

12. Do you believe that local Boards of Education in MD should have the right to terminate their Superintendents for cause? **YES.** If the law changes, what procedures do you suggest for retaining due process?

Community input should be sought and Board members should get to vote on any changes, at the very least, as they did at a recent BOE meeting.

13. Do you believe the Board of Education members should be elected countywide or by district? **Countywide, to eliminate any and all bias. If we have district-specific representation, some BOE members are likely to think only of their designated school districts, muddying the inequitable waters further.** Why? If by district, which type of districting system is best? Do you believe concerns about accountability are more easily addressed with districting?

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14. What percentage of overcapacity do you think should close schools to development in the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance? The maximum number of years of halting development in an overcrowded school is 4, should that number be changed? If so, why?

Given differences in geographic space and layout at our schools, I believe a specific overage in student numbers alone might not be the most accurate capacity gauge or determinant. Input from students, educators, administrative staff, and support and custodial staff is in order.

15. What is your position on the burden of proof in Special Education litigation?

We are still learning about this vast and vastly diverse field and “proof” is subjective and likely to vary (on a case by case basis). I believe that what is “appropriate” under IDEA will differ from case to case; that’s precisely why it’s term “individualized” instruction and parents/guardian(s)/families are often more knowledgeable about the student’s learning style and much more. In my view, the party that brings action should have the burden of proof, as is currently the case in MD. Note: I was pleased to see that MABE opposed HB 1240.

16. What is your position regarding cell phone usage by students in school?

I believe students should be taught responsible cell phone use by all educators—parents, too. While they should be permitted to bring their phones to school—for emergencies primarily, as I would prefer for them to use larger devices for school work (e.g., pcs, laptops, Chromebooks/notebooks—better for their eyes and fingers), they should be urged to minimize at-school cell use—for their overall wellbeing. I shared my thoughts on this subject at great length on the HoCo School Interest Group, and will be happy to locate and share my posts (I appear to be out of space).

17. Describe positions you have taken, or votes you have made which you feel are the most important with regard to the position you seek. Describe how you championed these causes or how you publicized your position. Please also include information on any position or vote you made that you regret, or about which you feel differently.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

18. What specific actions have you taken that benefited the community, either as an elected official or as a county resident? Have you ever testified before the Howard County Board of Education? **YES.** If so, describe positions you have taken. **I proposed a later start time for high schoolers, based on my daughter’s and family’s firsthand experience.**

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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19. If you had to make School Budget cuts, what are the top three things you would NOT cut and the top three things you would? Why?

I wouldn't cut World Languages (in either the model elementary schools nor in Middle School; nor any teachers (these two are tied), and I wouldn't cut offerings that have been known to benefit special needs students (including art and music/band.chorus). In my view, there is no simple or single solution to the budget challenges and at all costs, the last place we should take funding away from is the classroom—by way of programs and or increases to class size, for instance. We could attempt a number of things simultaneously. First, I propose that the BOE take a close look at approved contracts and bids and avoid or cut off high-cost contracts (contingency clauses are usually written into school contracts). We could attempt to renegotiate with selected contractors to cut costs by locating one or more community partners willing to match a portion of the estimated cost, and/or eliminate the costliest contracts, and/or those that are not absolutely necessary. For example, I read the following post on FB that suggested that some contracts have been awarded to contractors that either monopolize or overcharge for services that NGOs, Foundations and/or corporate sponsors might be willing to provide at little to no cost--providing some relief to our already bursting-at-the-seams budget:

“District Administration is District Management Council who authored the Special Ed report that hcpss did not want to share. They received over 400k in contracts. Often the companies who award (i.e., a plaque) also receive” (Vicky Cutroneo, March 7).

HCPSS is entitled and advised to include contingency clauses in all contracts.

Second, I propose actively reaching out to the wider community to secure needed services at no added cost as well as additional sources of income. We could invite partial or full sponsorships for specific HCPSS projects (e.g. architectural designs, one or more tech sponsors, health and wellness sponsors; transport sponsors, and so on). Perhaps we could move to a more efficient tiered transport system (as BOE members did in Carroll County, saving \$1.6 million.

Third, I propose inviting the top five percent of the BOE's highest paid employees and asking if they would mind donating a percentage of their allowances, bonuses and/or time to HCPSS. Some of us are familiar with the success of this in neighboring Counties. In Carroll County, for example, a Superintendent donated his \$10K raise to the school Board. We could request just enough to save the programs that were just cut and/or enough to do more, while preventing an increase in class size

20. How would you improve detection and response to bullying?

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I would institute a comprehensive identification and intervention program for (cyber)bullying--with input from students, staff, teachers, parents/guardians/family members, experts in bullying, and community advocates to arrive at the most inclusive and efficient response. I would also measure our responsiveness through semi-focused interviews and/or questionnaires.

I would also recommend offering wellness sessions such as yoga, healthier, culturally diverse and hot meal options at all schools, conflict mediation and mood- and overall happiness-enhancing sessions, following the example of Bhutan. Students and teachers could be invited to rate their own and peers' PH (personal happiness), FH (family happiness), and SH (school happiness) on any given day and time. This might also help strengthen ties at all levels.

By Authority, The People's Voice PAC, Lisa Markovitz, Treasurer