UNFINISHED BUSINESS



Combating Hate and Racism: Student Learning Strategy Update, 2024

To: Program and School Services Committee

Date: 05 June, 2024

Report No.: 06-24-4705

Strategic Directions

- Commit to the Implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action
- Belong All students belong, are engaged, and valued in an inclusive environment
- Achieve All students reach high levels of achievement, success, and personal development
- Thrive All students graduate with the confidence, skills, and knowledge to thrive
- Revitalize All students and staff learn and work in inclusive, safe, and modern environments

Equity as a guiding principle: Equity is foundational to all TDSB work and will be embedded throughout the strategic directions.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Combatting Hate and Racism – Student Learning Strategy Update Report, 2024, be received.

Context

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has a long-standing commitment to addressing hate, racism, and all forms of discrimination. Since 2015, it has included the commitment to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commitment Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Over the past 26 years, as a Board, advancing human rights and promoting the principles of equity have guided the efforts to provide public education that meets everyone's needs.

Combatting hate and racism is a significant societal concern both within the TDSB and in institutions across Canada. The effort to combat these issues aligns with human rights principles outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code). The TDSB continues to take a strong stance against hate, bias and racism, particularly those directed at students and staff based on their race, religion, and other intersectional identities (TDSB, 2022). The Board's comprehensive Human Rights policy advances the need to proactively foster a culture of human rights to benefit all and respond to incidents and/or complaints (TDSB, 2023).

The TDSB strives to learn more about racism, bias and hate. The board acknowledges the importance of responding promptly and remains committed to creating equitable and inclusive environments for students and staff. The board has actively worked to respect the voices and experiences of students and families while meeting the needs of diverse school communities. The TDSB recognizes that individuals have multiple identities that shape their experiences of discrimination and thus acknowledges the need for a contextualized approach to addressing hate and racism in education (TDSB, 2022).

Combatting Hate and Racism (CHR)-Student Learning Strategy

In March 2022, the Combatting Hate and Racism (CHR) – Student Learning Strategy was introduced as a multifaceted approach to understanding and addressing the impact of hate and racism within the TDSB. This strategy encompasses six components and is the foundation of the approaches that guide the work undertaken by numerous departments and system leaders..

The six components of the Combatting Hate and Racism – Student Learning Strategy are:

- Classroom Instruction: Students learn collectively about historical and current day experiences of hate and racism so that they can recognize and develop the skills to confront them when they happen.
- Caregiver Engagement and Learning: Collaboration with caregivers to offer learning opportunities for caregivers, and where possible, students and their families. The content for the learning should focus on the areas represented in the data presented from the Racism, Bias and Hate portal.
- Cyber Safety and Digital Citizenship: Teaching of online safety and digital citizenship in the context of raising awareness about hate and racism.
- Tools for Response Taking Action: Provide students with the skills needed to identify an act of hate, bias, racism and discrimination and intervene with or on behalf of someone being attacked. Students are taught how to identify when and how to intervene when these situations occur.
- Student Leadership: Create safer, more inclusive and respectful learning and working environments in schools by raising awareness among their peers, planning student events, creating resources and influencing learning in the school.

 Educational Partnerships: Approved presentations that contribute to important topics from a community perspective and centres the lived experiences of individuals on issues of identity, discrimination and histories.



Please see Table 1 of this report for a synopsis and additional actions taken within the 2023-24 academic year and/or the next steps for the Combatting Hate and Racism-Student Learning Strategy (2022).

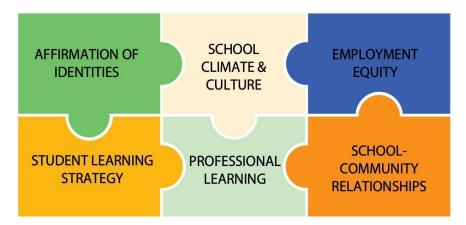
Please read the full report: Combatting Hate and Racism Board Report (March 2022)

TDSB's Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Strategy

In March 2023, the Board outlined an updated framework and a comprehensive plan to address Combatting Hate and Racism. This framework, "TDSB's Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Strategy," combined the work within the components of the Combatting Hate and Racism – Student Learning Strategy and the actions of the Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression department. This umbrella strategy not only showcased these diverse actions but also outlined a process whereby work plans would be created by distinct communities across the district. These work plans would include the following pillars:

- Affirmation of identities
- Student Learning Strategy
- Professional Learning
- School-Community Relationship

- Employment Equity
- School Climate and Culture



Each of these distinct communities' work plans would include strategies that will be shared with the district to address issues of injustice. For example:

- Anti-Indigenous Racism
- Anti-Black Racism
- Antisemitism
- Islamophobia
- Ableism
- Anti-Asian Racism
- Homophobia & Transphobia
- Anti-Palestinian Racism*

*Note: In response to student and community voices, an additional area of focus on addressing Anti-Palestinian Racism has been included.

TDSB has created a number of community-based working groups to create strategies tied to these issues (e.g., Antisemitism, Islamophobia). These strategies will be prepared for the upcoming school year.

For further details, please read the Update on Toronto District School Board's Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Strategy (March 2023).

Engaging in the Collective Work

Incidents related to hate and racism have seen a significant rise globally and nationally. To effectively address these issues, the TDSB acknowledges that communities play a critical role in the work of combating hate and racism. This is especially true when achieving equitable, quality education and fostering excellence for every student in TDSB schools (TDSB, 2023). As a result, the work within the Board to address issues of hate and racism does not only fall within the Equity, Anti-Racism, and Anti-Oppression Department, the Urban Indigenous Education Centre, the Human Rights Office and the

Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement alone, it requires a collaborative effort across all departments, roles, and learning centres.

Urban Indigenous Education Centre

The Urban Indigenous Education Centre's (UIEC) staff continue to engage various components of the Combatting Hate and Anti-Racism Strategy. The UIEC facilitates multiple system professional learning series and projects that embed a focus on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and addressing truths identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. The UIEC creates opportunities to affirm student voices and leadership through student sharing circles, the Toronto Indigenous Youth Council, and Indigenous Graduation Coach supported Indigenous Student Groups. The UIEC also continues to increase the number of Educational Partners that centre Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and culture and that support learning among students, staff and caregivers in Indigenous Education across the system. Furthermore, UIEC creates multiple opportunities for caregiver engagement through Caregiver Circles in schools with the highest numbers of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students and families and community socials such as Powwows and Drum Socials.

Please see the Annual Indigenous Education Report (April 2024) for further details.

Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

The Equity, Anti-Racism, and Anti-Oppression Department operationalizes the TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan by providing comprehensive support to schools and staff in developing and implementing equitable and inclusive educational programs, initiatives, and engagement opportunities. Through direct involvement and partnerships with individual school communities, the Department offers tailored support and shares innovative best practices across the Board, catering to each school's unique needs as identified through the equity referral or school improvement process.

The Department also facilitates identity-affirming affinity spaces for students, empowering them to confront and address hate, racism, and oppression. These student gatherings created brave spaces for critical conversations about students' experiences of bias, race, power, and privilege.

During the academic year, the Equity, Anti-Racism, and Anti-Oppression teams have welcomed over 2,500 students across all Learning Centres to affinity spaces to discuss the importance of identity, wellness and well-being, primarily as they work through global conflicts.

Staff leads supporting school-based affinity spaces were also provided opportunities to discuss their wellness and develop strategies for working with students.

The Equity team, including staff at the Centre of Excellence, supported the development of Affinity spaces by honouring intersectional identities through various initiatives. For

example, in collaboration with the TDSB Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Network and the Gender Diversity and Sexual Diversity Team, the Equity Team takes pride in organizing the annual EnVision Conference, a Board-wide gathering of over one thousand (1,000) 2SLGBTQIAP+ students and allies that celebrates queer identities, addresses issues related to homophobia and transphobia and fosters a sense of community and belonging.

Additional initiatives include, but are not limited to:

- Creating affinity space opportunities for diverse students (e.g. Black Students Association (BSA), Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), Jewish Student Associations (JSA), Muslim Student Associations (MSA), Palestinian Student Associations (PSA) and Tamil Student Associations (TSA);
- Facilitating affinity spaces for Jewish Student Association (JSA) staff leads that support coping and wellness strategies;
- Partnership with the University of Windsor's African Diaspora Youth Conference;
 and
- Collaboration with the Muslim Student Associations' Conference.

To build system-wide capacity, the Department has actively facilitated in-depth learning and understanding, enabling staff to navigate policy, curriculum, resources, and current world events through an informed, innovative, and inclusive approach. This commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression is bolstered through the Department's advocacy and engagement efforts, ensuring students feel seen, heard, and valued.

For further details, please visit Appendix A on the actions of the Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Team and Department.

Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement (Centre of Excellence) continues to be committed to dismantling anti-Black racism and improving both experiences and outcomes for Black students. The Centre of Excellence offers many programs, initiatives, and engagement opportunities to students across the TDSB. This includes intentional opportunities for students to honour Black students' passions, pathway aspirations, strengths and experiences. As a result of the ongoing cultivation of affirming and collaborative partnerships with community organizations and service providers, the Centre of Excellence has offered, over the year, thirteen (13) multiple week-long student programming opportunities along with scholarship and internship-based experiences. Alongside these opportunities, the Centre of Excellence proudly hosted its second annual student-led Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) Conference: *Using Student Voice to Inform School Policies and Practices*. During this conference, seventeen (17) presentations were shared, focusing on themes such as the Long Term Program and Accommodation Strategy, Creating a Culture for Black Student Well-being, and equitable learning opportunities for Black students.

In addition, the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement continues to commit to building the capacity of educators to deepen their understanding of anti-Black racism, addressing the use of the N-word, and enhancing instructional programming grounded in identity-affirming and racially literate pedagogical practices. This commitment indicates the over twenty-five (25) sessions honouring the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, supporting the Black Student Success and Excellence initiative, and advancing African-centred approaches that build positive racial identity development within children. Furthermore, in response to the nine (9) mandates guiding our collective work to support Black families in meaningful advocacy and engagement, the Centre of Excellence has facilitated multiple community learning and connection opportunities. These opportunities have ranged from community-based healing experiences to curricular understandings and system navigation.

Please read the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Report (June 2024) for further details.

Impact of Combatting Hate and Racism Strategy Components

Classroom Instruction

The collective efforts on the Classroom Instruction component of the Combatting Hate and Racism —Student Learning Strategy have resulted in over 4,150 students enrolling in at least one of the courses aligned with CHR. This significant achievement is a testament to the dedication and commitment of nearly every secondary school, including secondary alternative schools, congregated sites, and Adult High Schools, that offered at least one of these courses in 2023-2024.

Last year, school Principals worked collaboratively with school staff and the community to identify which course(s) the school would offer. For example, some schools provided alternate courses yearly, supporting schools with smaller student populations and increased course offerings. These courses are:

- Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity (CHG381)
- Canada: History, Identity, and Culture (CHI4U)
- Politics in Action (CPC3O1)
- World Cultures (HSC4M)
- Equity & Social Justice: From Theory to Practice (HSE4M1)
- Deconstructing Anti-Black Racism (IDC4U)

These courses are not just about academic learning; they also play a crucial role in affirming students' identities and equipping them with the knowledge and skills to combat racism, hate, and oppression. These courses are shaping a more inclusive and understanding generation by focusing on equity and human rights.

Central Staff worked collaboratively across departments to support teachers with curriculum and instruction and assist principals in delivering the Combatting Hate and Racism courses in the schools. Professional learning was differentiated based on the staff's experiences teaching the classes.

Teachers new to teaching the Combatting Hate and Racism courses were offered a 4-part Foundation series, which began in September and took place regularly over several months. The series focused on building a solid foundation in human rights, equity, trauma-informed healing, learning to set classroom conditions, and course-specific strategies.

TDSB staff from the Human Rights Office, Centre of Excellence for Black Students, Mental Health and Professional Support Services, and central Program staff led professional learning sessions. The interactive sessions provided opportunities for teachers to engage in critical reflection, dialogue, and skill-building exercises. Through these sessions, educators gained a deeper understanding of the dynamics of hate and racism. They developed the necessary skills to create positive change.

Learning In Action (TDSB Classroom and School Stories)

As part of the work to address the Combatting Hate and Racism – Student Learning Strategy, classroom and school stories are being identified as possibilities for others. These stories will be shared on the new page of the Combatting Hate and Racism website. Here are some examples of the work taking place in schools:

The Importance of Student Voice

Over the past two years, the school community engaged students in strategic and intentional learning opportunities to build student, educator, and family/community capacity in disrupting and dismantling bias, hate, and racism in the learning environment. The learning began with Student Leadership through "Open Space for Student Voice," a Learning Network collaboration that welcomed student leadership. Student feedback was shared with administrators to drive School Improvement goals in their respective schools.

The key to the student leaders' learning was the development of an educational partnership with Elder Dr. Robert A. Phillips (Elder Dr. Bob) for monthly sessions to centre Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. Under Elder Dr. Bob's guidance, students and staff built awareness and understanding of Seven Grandfather Teachings, Medicine Wheel, Identity, and living a good life in a good way. The school continues to develop relationships with Indigenous knowledge-holders and storytellers.

Stemming from the learning, the school has created the Student Leadership Council and Changemakers groups, which work on initiatives to address and combat hate and racism. The school has partnered with STRIDES Toronto to provide student workshops to support student well-being. The STRIDES workshops focus on Healthy Relationships, Addressing Racism and Discrimination, Boundaries and Consent, and Social Media Awareness. STRIDES introduced the students to Cyber Safety and Digital

Citizenship, and teacher capacity is being supported through the Digital Lead Learner "Tech Tuesday" series.

Also, the school has created monthly Parent/Caregiver/Community connections with "SIP & Chat." The "SIP & Chat" empowers parents and caregivers to be heard throughout the school improvement process by inviting parent/community voices and building an understanding of school improvement goals to combat hate/bias/racism better.

Peace, Justice and Allyship Club

In collaboration with educators and Equity K-12 learning coaches, learning opportunities were developed to support students' understanding of identity, inclusion and allyship. For example, the school starts each day with an allyship pledge. This year, the school-based Equity Committee and the K-12 Equity, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Coach developed a school-wide plan to intentionally integrate the theme of allyship into student learning in every classroom.

I AM BIG Literacy Themes

Using Itah Sadu's book, *I AM BIG*, students engaged in lessons to unpack and discuss themes such as stereotypes, bias, microaggressions, identity, and joy.

While revisiting the book several times to explore each theme, the students engaged in valuable discussions to learn about, identify and highlight the impact of stereotypes, hate and racism and ways to address and intervene. They also shared their own experiences within their school and community while making connections to the main character. This allowed the students to reflect on their responsibility, power and the actions they could take in creating a class and school environment free of hate and racism.

The students also engaged in various identity-affirming arts-based, reflection, and group activities to explore their identities and learn about others while celebrating each other. Learning about each other was an essential part of building the classroom and school community, and it promoted recognizing the value of each student.

Extending the Learning - Community Educators and Partners

Collaboration with community educators and partners is essential when extending the learning for students within the TDSB. Numerous opportunities were provided to students and staff as they learned to address the issues of hate and racism. These opportunities include:

- variety of professional learning series to understand Jewish identities and antisemitism, including:
 - facilitated professional learning for all Grade 6 educators at the Toronto Holocaust Museum to support the implementation of the new Grade 6 curriculum expectations addressing the Holocaust

- tracing the past and present manifestations of antisemitism for classroom educators and School leaders
- exploring specific strategies and learning tools that educators can use in classrooms and school spaces to respond to antisemitic incidents.
- examining the ethnic diversity within Jewish communities through the film Periphery
- survivor testimony and the sharing of family histories by children and/or grandchildren of Holocaust survivors
- variety of professional learning series to understand Muslim identities, Islamophobia, and Anti-Palestinian Racism, series includes:
 - professional learning sessions centring on the experiences and identities
 of Muslim communities across Canada. Some of these sessions included:
 - Legacy and Excellence of Black Muslims
 - Culturally Responsive Healing for Black Muslims
 - Building an Understanding of Anti-Black Islamophobia
 - Say Salaam: Dealing with Islamophobia and Bystander Intervention
 - Storytelling, Reclaiming Your Narrative
- variety of professional learning to understand the diverse Black communities, community sessions include:
 - professional learning to honour Black Mental Health Week entitled "Breaking Down Barriers to Mental Health in Black Communities"
 - additional sessions are included in the Centre of Excellence for Black Students Achievement report.

For more examples, please visit Appendix B, which identifies the actions of the Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Team.

Community-based educators and partners have been an integral part of the Combatting Hate and Racism – Student Learning Strategy, and through the work of Education and Business Partnership, intentional work is taking place to deepen these relationships.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Table 1: Synopsis of 2023-2024 Additional Actions and/or Next Steps

Component	Action
Classroom Instruction	Actions:
Engage in ongoing professional learning with staff to build understanding, develop critical consciousness, and implement strategies through curriculum. This will better support students and families in confronting hate, racism, and discrimination.	Professional learning sessions with 30 selected educators to build their capacity and understanding as they engage in curriculum mapping over the summer.
	The curriculum mapping actions are tied to developing strategies to confront hate, racism and discrimination.
	Next steps:
	Selection of a new cohort of CHR educators to serve as school leads for the 2024-25 academic year.
	The cohort will participate in ongoing professional learning and be the school's point of contact to support the mobilization of the CHR strategy across the school, including disseminating information and building student leadership.
Student Leadership	Actions:
The development of a student equity leadership collective that will make positive changes systemwide and at the school level to address racism, hate and discrimination in the TDSB.	The Student Equity Collective was made up of 24 students chosen by a group of board leaders. 15 of these students will serve as mentors for the new cohort, which will start next school year.
	The Student Equity Collective created numerous resources that were shared within the District. Please visit the Student Equity Collective webpage for information about the cohort's actions.
	Next Steps:
	Formation of a new Student Equity Collective to be launched in Fall 2024.
	TTC Ambassadors Pilot

Component	Action
	In response to incidents of youth unrest on the TTC, a pilot program is being developed to create the TTC Student Ambassador Program. In collaboration with the TTC and the City of Toronto, these ambassadors would liaise with their staff advisors to share concerns about student conduct on the TTC.
	TTC Ambassadors will support efforts at their local school to further shape environments that accentuate student strengths and affirm identity
Tools For Response Taking Action	Actions:
The creation of school-based student equity collectives in each school committed to addressing and combatting hate and racism.	Data was gathered from schools across all four Learning Centres through LN leadership to collate specific actions schools were engaging in to address and combat hate and racism. Some of the stories from these schools will be featured in Learning in Action.
	Next Steps:
	The collected data will be analyzed to identify gaps and support schools.
Educational Partnership for Learning	Actions:
Building partnerships with community agencies and educators whose voices are often not heard to support extending learning opportunities in dismantling hate and racism	In September 2024, the Educational and Business Partnership continued to engage in community outreach and collaborative work with TDSB's departments to promote educational partnerships within the Combatting Hate and Racism strategy. These partnerships aim to increase the number of under-represented groups on the TDSB-approved partnership list that can enhance and extend the curriculum for the diverse students in our board. The following represents the partnerships that are currently within the TDSB. These partnerships have approved program descriptions that align with the goals of the CHR Strategy. These numbers do not include excursions, permits or learning resources.

Component	Action
	September 20, 2022 - 284 partnersJanuary 28, 2024 - 407 partners
	This represents a 143% increase since 2022.
	Next Steps:
	TDSB's Educational and Business Partnerships continued collaboration with community programs.
Cybersafety and Digital	Actions:
Cultivate strategies that support cyber safety, digital citizenship and critical awareness of hate and racism in social media and other online environments.	As a response to Digital Citizenship Week 2023, during the Week of October 16, schools and classrooms engaged students in developing a positive digital footprint and what it means to be a responsible digital citizen.
	Digital tools and resources were explored to support the goals of the CHR Strategy. This included presentations by prospective vendors to the EDuTECH Committee. For example, Cyber Legends presented a K-Grade 8 Digital Tool, including Cyber Safety and Digital Citizenship modules.
	In conjunction with MediaSmarts, through the Anti-Racism Directorate of Ontario, the TDSB offered four sessions of <u>Facing Online Hate</u> workshops for educators and administrators to help them learn how the internet is used to radicalize youth and what they can do to combat it.
	Next Steps:
	A pilot with Smart Social will be launched with 20 schools to support educators and parents/ caregivers in building their understanding of navigating social media and combating hate that is spread online.
Caregiver Engagement and	Actions:
Learning Establish a district and local school learning plan to	Supported parents/caregivers in developing specific strategies to recognize "deep fakes" and the spread of hateful and harmful online content.

Component	Action
support combatting hate and racism with parent/caregiver communities utilizing system and school-based data.	For example, the TDSB partnered with Civix to develop learning sessions for parents/caregivers on artificial intelligence (AI) and how to recognize the misuse of AI tools, which have contributed to an amplification of online hate. Over 900 parents/caregivers and 300 educators registered for these sessions.
	In collaboration with the City of Toronto, the TDSB operates 7 Safety Tables across the district. These Safety Tables have worked to enhance relationships with city agencies such as the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Toronto Transit Commission, grassroots community agencies, and local schools.
	Outcomes from these Safety Tables have been community service fairs, community walks, and town hall sessions, all focusing on improving safety and well-being for youth and families across the city. Integral to these Safety Tables are discussions around systemic racism and oppression that require coordination from all multisector partners to confront and collaborate for improved outcomes grounded in affirming Human Rights.
	Next steps:
	We will continue to collaborate with the TDSB Parent and Community Engagement Office to support district-wide sessions that schools can participate in to affirm the identities of students and families in the efforts to eliminate hate.
	Continue to update on the actions of the Safety Tables.

Please read Appendix C for the Executive Summary of the Combatting Hate and Racism – Student Learning Strategy Update Report. For more information on the Combatting Hate and Racism Strategy Workplan please read Appendix D. For more information on the Combatting Hate and Racism Student Learning Strategy please read Appendix E.

Resource Implications

A funding proposal will be included in the 2024-25 Budget, including funding or resources (e.g. staffing) where needed.

External Websites:

Combatting Hate and Racism – Student Learning Strategy

www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Equity-Anti-Racism-and-Anti-Oppression/StudentLearning-Strategy

Urban Indigenous Education Centre

www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/IndigenousEducation

Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Equity-Anti-Racism-and-Anti-Oppression

Addressing Hate

www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Equity-Anti-Racism-and-Anti-Oppression/AddressingHate

Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement

www.tdsb.on.ca/CEBSA

Communications Considerations

A communication plan to update the website related to the Combatting Hate and Racism—Student Learning Strategy is underway. This section will highlight good news stories about the strategy's key actions.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

P037 Equity

P031 Human Rights

PR515 Workplace Harassment Prevention and Human Rights

PR728 Reporting and Responding to Racism and Hate Incidents Involving or Impacting Students in School

Appendices

Appendix A: Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Update

Appendix B: Professional Learning Menu from the Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Team

Appendix C: Executive Summary of the Combating Hate and Racism – Student Learning Strategy Update Report

Appendix D: Combatting Hate and Racism Strategy Workplan Poster

Appendix E: Combatting Hate and Racism Student Learning Strategy Poster

References

TDSB's Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Strategy (TDSB, 2023)

Combatting Hate and Racism Report - Student Learning Strategy (TDSB, 2022)

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