

SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program Executive Summary 2019-20



This Executive Summary Report contains an overview and history of the program to give the reader context for the progress described in the SAM LPLP 2019-20 Executive Summary section below. Please contact Kirk Miller, SAM Executive Director (samkm@sammt.org), if you have questions about this report or the SAM LPLP.

Collaboration, relationship building and networking have created an outstanding opportunity for Montana education administrators to support their professional learning. School Administrators of Montana, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, Governor, Montana University System Ed Leadership Programs, Department of Administration, and individual Montana business partners, working together, launched the SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program (LPLP) in 2013-14! Now in its sixth year, the program for 2019-20 combined the research on successes of the SAM 21st Century Leadership Institute and the SAM Mentor Program to provide a unique opportunity for Montana administrators to receive one-on-one coaching/mentoring; innovative, focused, personalized, blended professional learning including a rich online resource center; and collaboration through collegial learning networks focused on specific topics of study. Since inception, the SAM LPLP has served to improve professional learning for more than 400 district and school administrators in our state!

Overview and History

What is the SAM LPLP?

- An innovative approach to professional learning for new, experienced, and aspiring Montana education administrators.
- A combination of personalized learning networks through coaching/mentoring, rich online resource center, and collaboration through collegial learning networks; the SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program is unlike any program available today.
- SAM, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, Montana University System Ed Leadership Programs, the Department of Administration and individual Montana business partners have worked together to support a cost effective model for Montana's school administrators to participate in this innovative professional learning opportunity.
- You can review the program details at <http://www.sammt.org/leaders-professional-learning-program>

Why do we need the SAM LPLP?

- Montana has had over 100 administrative positions open each spring of 2014 - 2019, so there are nearly 600 administrators new to their positions in our schools over the past 6 years.
- Research and common sense reveal that mentoring is a major key to building leadership capacity and those who are mentored exhibit greater success and retention than those who are not.
- Montana administrators are committed to their school and community and there are ever increasing demands on their time to meet the needs. Professional learning is an area that gets placed on the back burner when it should be up front for effective problem solving.
- Research and common sense show that the most powerful professional learning is inquiry-based, aligned to real-world applications, and embedded in the work environment.

So how did the SAM LPLP happen?

- SAM strategic plan goals for professional development led to seeking innovative ways to meet the professional learning needs of Montana administrators.
- Seeking innovation led to great people working in this environment –
 - Godfrey Saunders for mentoring
 - Tom Unwin for innovative, project-based learning

- A year of research and project development led to launching a pilot Mentor Program and 21st Century Leadership Institute (21 CLI) in 2013-14.
- Those administrators participating in the pilot programs provided great insight for creating the LPLP.
- Lessons learned from the LPLP 2013-14 were incorporated into the SAM LPLP 2014-15, and this improvement process has continued each subsequent year. During these program years, Providers successfully worked with 47 Montana school administrators (14 Mentees and 33 21 CLI Members), 72 Montana school administrators (34 Mentees and 38 21 CLI Members) in 2014-15, 54 Montana school administrators (37 Mentees and 18 21 CLI Members) in 2015-16, 34 Montana school administrators (26 Mentees and 8 21 CLI Members) in 2016-17, 69 Montana school administrators in 2017-18, 54 Montana school administrators in 2018-19, and 90 Montana school administrators in the current 2019-20 year. Review the success of these program years in the following summaries: [SAM LPLP 2014-15 Executive Summary](#), [SAM LPLP 2015-16 Executive Summary](#), [SAM LPLP 2016-17 Executive Summary](#), [SAM LPLP 2017-18 Executive Summary](#), and [SAM LPLP 2018-19 Executive Summary](#).

Putting Lessons Learned into Action

- Seek highly qualified Montana administrators who can serve a region of the state as an LPLP Provider. All Providers from 2018-19 continued their service to the program in 2019-20. Rick Duncan, Jon Konen, and Sue Sweeney joined the program as Providers for the 2019-20 program year. Program Director, Tom Unwin, also served as a Provider.
- Partner with resource providers to gain access to the best resources. All previous partners continued with the program.
- Train the LPLP Providers so they can connect LPLP Members to necessary resources in the most effective, efficient ways. Provider trainings took place in July 2019 at the [LPLP Provider Symposium](#) and continue on a regular basis with LPLP Provider web meetings and trainings.
- Build relationships for effective communication so that all involved can learn from each other. A key to the success of the LPLP is the relationship built between the Members and their Provider.
- Create an opportunity for LPLP Members to collaborate with like-minded Montana administrators around specific education topics through the development of Collegial Learning Networks.
- Promote the ideas so that Montana administrators will seek to enhance their professional learning.

LPLP Directors and Providers

- Tom Unwin – Program Director/Resource Center Development. President/CEO of JK Thomas & Associates international professional learning provider for educators.
- Jeff Blessum - interim Superintendent at Manhattan Public Schools.
- Mark Brajcich - retired Superintendent at Red Lodge Public Schools.
- Jason Butcher – Assistant Deputy Superintendent at OPI and retired Superintendent of Lewistown Public Schools.
- Rick Duncan – Superintendent at Powell County High School District.
- Dr. Daniel Farr – Adjunct professor at Montana State University and retired Superintendent at Sidney Public Schools
- Jon Konen – Principal at Lincoln Elementary School in Great Falls.
- Brad Moore – Superintendent at Sweet Grass County High School District.
- Dr. Gerry Nolan – retired Superintendent of Anaconda Public Schools.
- Dr. Darlene Schottle – Chairperson of the Montana Board of Public Education and retired Superintendent of Kalispell Public Schools.
- Sue Sweeney – retired Principal at Broadwater Elementary School in Helena.

Great educators, experienced administrators, trained with the best research by our program directors, OPI partners, and the MUS Education Leadership program partners.

Investments Made by Partners Who Believe in the SAM LPLP!

- Leaders in the Governor’s office, OPI, and the department of administration have supported education leaders and the critical role they play in Montana communities; saw the vision of the SAM LPLP, and committed to investing in the professional learning of Montana’s administrators.
- Montana University System: Educational Leadership Programs and Departments of Education support the SAM LPLP lending their expertise and resources. Montana GEAR UP partnership connects Administrators in GEAR UP schools with leadership training through the SAM LPLP.
- Montana businesses and private donors support the program because of the impact the LPLP has on their community. NorthWestern Energy Community Works is a business sponsor of the SAM LPLP.
- In 2017-18, Blue Cross Blue Shield was added as a SAM LPLP business sponsor.
- In 2017-18, a US Department of Education Title II Grant through the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) was awarded to support the SAM LPLP. The Principle Partner in the grant is the Montana State University College of Education and Department of Educational Leadership.
- In 2018-19, the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation was added as a SAM LPLP business sponsor.

LPLP by the Numbers

- 14 is the number of partners who have assisted SAM in funding the program to make it possible for school districts to support the program and allow their administrators to participate in the program. The SAM LPLP Partners are – OPI and the Governor’s office assisted in receiving a Department of Administration grant that allowed the SAM LPLP to launch in 2014-15 and continue in 2015-16. Support from OPI Special Education Department, Montana GEAR UP, Educational Leadership Programs at MSU, UM and Rocky Mountain College, NorthWestern Energy Community Works, and an anonymous donor have continued. 2017-18 brought additional contributions from a US Department of Education Title II Grant, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and OPI Accreditation Department (Educator Performance Appraisal System - EPAS) and 2018-19 brought additional contributions from the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation and MREA/MCS.
- \$500 is the investment for a participant to be in the LPLP Program.
- 200+ administrators and education leaders across Montana participated in the [SAM Administrators Institute 2019](#). A focus on the LPLP program included the LPLP Summit (July 31) where nearly 50 new and experienced leaders from across the state participated in the launch of the SAM LPLP Program and induction to resources available for education leaders.
- 1 Program Director coordinated the work with Providers and program participants (members) –Tom Unwin – Program Director/Resource Center Development/Provider.
- 11 LPLP Providers provided services to program members by MASS Region throughout the state.
- 90 Administrators in the LPLP Program. Click [HERE](#) to view a roster of 2019-20 LPLP Members.
- 11 Collegial Learning Networks (CLNs) were established for the 2019-20 program year. Each CLN has a Manager and a Lead Provider who coordinate efforts to maintain momentum for each CLN. Click [HERE](#) to view the roster of CLN Members. The following CLNs are currently operating within the SAM LPLP:
 - Trusted Learning Environment (TLE) – a group of Montana IT directors interested in completing a successful application to be accepted as a TLE before the end of this school year – June, 2020. The overall objective of the group is to share resources and learning around information security in the educational environment and the process to make an application for their district to be approved as a TLE, however the focus during the first half of the 2019-20 program year has been on developing a process to help Montana school districts meet the requirements of [House Bill 745](#) passed by the 2019 Montana Legislature. Through this effort, the Montana Student Privacy Alliance (MTSPA) was formed. The MTSPA provides professional development to help teachers and administrators make informed decisions about the technology being used in the classroom to comply with HB 745 and to help ensure student online data privacy is protected. 8 Members have continued their work in the LPLP TLE CLN from the 2018-19 program year and 8 Members are new participants in the LPLP TLE CLN.
 - Social Emotional Learning (SEL) – a group of district and school leaders dedicated to implementing effective social and emotional learning practices in their schools. The common purpose they all share is to improve student learning through the application of social & emotional learning strategies in their classrooms. 28 Members are participating in the LPLP SEL CLN.

- Transformational Learning (TL) formerly Personalized Learning (PL) – a group of district and school leaders dedicated to implementing transformational learning practices and the leadership of these practices in their schools. The common purpose they all share is to improve student learning through the application of personalized learning strategies in classrooms and schools. During the fall of 2019, TL CLN Members worked on preparing applications to receive grant monies made possible through the passage of [House Bill 351](#): a bill providing incentives for school districts to implement transformational learning. 23 Members are participating in the LPLP TL CLN.
- Special Education (SPED) – a group of Montana Special Education Directors new to their position interested in networking with other new and experienced directors and dedicated to advancing the success of all children. The common purpose they all share is to improve student learning through the application of policies, procedures, and strategies learned through their networking. 9 Members are participating in the LPLP SPED CLN.
- New Leaders (NL) – a group of district and school leaders new to their positions. The common purpose they all share is to improve student learning through effective leadership practices provided through implementation of an induction model along with mentor support services. 42 Members are participating in the NL CLN.
- AASA Aspiring Superintendents (AS) – a group of administrators aspiring to become superintendents or superintendents in their first year of practice for the purpose of implementing an induction model, along with mentor support services, to develop a deep understanding of the leadership role of a successful superintendent. This CLN was developed in partnership with the American Association of School Administrators – The School Superintendents Association (AASA) and includes a curriculum that aimed to develop the administrator’s knowledge and strengths and prepare them to lead teams of people effectively. 14 Members are participating in the LPLP AS CLN.
- Gaining Early Awareness of Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP) – a group of Montana school leaders serving in one of the 18 GEAR UP schools, 13 of which are located on or near Montana’s seven American Indian reservations, to improve high school graduation and college enrollment rates. 8 Members are participating in the LPLP GEARUP CLN.
- ESSA Comprehensive Schools (CS) CLN – a group of administrators leading schools that have been designated as needing additional support. This CLN was developed in partnership with the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) with the goal of providing the administrator with the support and resources necessary to complete and implement their district’s comprehensive continuous education improvement plan. 12 Members are participating in the LPLP CS CLN.
- New Superintendents (NS) – a group of district leaders new to their positions. The NS CLN was created due to the fact that the members of Montana Association of School Superintendents (MASS) believe strongly in the effectiveness of SAM LPLP and want to invest financially in the success of their members. They have elected to pay the 2019-20 program fee for all superintendents new to their positions. The common purpose they all share is to improve student learning through effective leadership practices provided through implementation of an induction model along with mentor support services. 14 Members are participating in the NS CLN.
- Tier II/Tier III Behavior Project (BP) - The Tier II/Tier III Behavior Project CLN was created at the urging of Montana school leaders with a common purpose of sharing strategies for appropriate and effective interventions for students with Tier II/Tier III behaviors. The ultimate goal is to provide a “tool box” of strategies that can be customized to fit the climate and culture of each school district across the state of Montana. 23 Members are participating in the BP CLN.
- Indian Leadership Education and Development Project (I LEAD) - The ILEAD CLN was created at the request of Montana State University’s Department of Education. The purpose of the I LEAD project is to recruit, educate, certify and place American Indian educators into administrative positions in schools with high populations of Native American students. The common purpose they all share is to improve student learning through effective leadership practices provided through implementation of an induction model along with mentor support services. 4 Members are participating in the ILEAD CLN.

- 29 LPLP Members, 8 Providers, and 1 Director attended the 2019-20 LPLP Symposium following the Montana Principals Conference at Fairmont Hot Springs and Resort on January 28, 2020. Members had the opportunity to share successes, challenges, and needs during a Role-a-Like Dialogue Session, connect with their Providers, and network with fellow LPLP Members.

82 Administrators are participating in at least one CLN.

90 Administrators in the LPLP 2019-20 brings the cumulative participation to 420 Montana school and district leaders who have enhanced their professional learning through the SAM LPLP since its inception in 2013-14.

SAM LPLP 2019-20 Year End Executive Summary

Services and Participation Summary

This summary is prepared to indicate the participation of Administrators in the SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program (LPLP) 2019-20. The Report includes:

- Administrators who participated in the LPLP program
- Dates of services i.e. webinars, meetings etc.... between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.
- Hours (to the nearest .25 hour) of service per session
- A brief description of each service

The SAM LPLP Program 2019-20 had 90 Montana Administrators (Members) participating in the program. Eleven experienced Montana administrators served as Providers (mentor/coaches) working with Members in the MASS regions of the state. A breakdown of the participants looks like this ...

SAM LPLP Participants by Position and Region 2018-19							
Region	Supt	Prin	AP	SPED Dir	IT Dir	Other	Total
4R	4	7	0	2	2	0	15
C	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
HL	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
NC	3	9	2	0	1	1	16
NE	7	3	1	0	0	0	11
NW	1	4	2	1	2	1	11
SC	4	7	1	1	2	0	15
SE	1	4	0	1	0	1	7
W	3	1	3	0	1	1	9
Total	25	38	9	6	8	4	90

The services provided with date and description, include:

- [SAM Administrators Institute 2019, LPLP Summit](#), July 31, 2019, 3.5 hours. All Montana school administrators were invited to this afternoon orientation, introduced to the resources and program benefits available to them, introduced to the SAM LPLP program and CLN overview, and met with the SAM LPLP Providers and experienced administrators.
- [SAM Administrators Institute 2019, Instructional Leadership Summit](#), July 30-31, 2019, 12 hours. The Summit (*The Montana HOW*) featured Sean Covell (*The Word that Shapes our World*) - Film and Television Producer, Garret Garrels (*Finding the Rhythm*) – Writer, Speaker, Poet, and founder of Pink Gloves Boxing, Dan Kimzey (*The Power of Hope*) – Retired Administrator, and 15 breakout sessions on a variety of topics of interest to school and district administrators.

- [MCEL](#) (Montana Conference on Educational Leadership) 2019, October 16-18, 2019, 18 hours. MCEL includes opportunities for professional learning for Montana administrators, school board members and business managers. Throughout the conference were sessions dedicated to the SAM LPLP where Members could meet with their Provider, discuss progress, receive content in areas they are working on, and network to find common strategies for implementation. Clinic Sessions were also scheduled to introduce MCEL attendees to LPLP CLNs and for CLN Members wishing to meet with Managers and Lead Providers.
- [SAM Affiliate Conferences](#), various dates in 2019-20, generally 9-12 hours. Conferences are an opportunity for SAM LPLP Members to meet with their Provider, CLN Members to meet as a group, and for all Members to continue progress on their work and network with others while having access to conference presentations and breakout sessions.
- [Member Application of Elements](#), discussed with Provider, happens throughout the year, can be as little as 15 minutes up to as much time both Member and Provider find necessary. Providers are using multiple means of communication to meet the needs of their Members. Each situation and communication is unique. The Providers are logging this data to determine common opportunities and challenges.
- [LPLP Collegial Learning Network \(CLN\) Work](#), happens throughout the year, face to face and digitally. Meetings range from as little as 15 minutes up to as much time Members and Lead Provider find necessary. CLN Members work productively with the CLN Manager, CLN Lead Provider, and their own Provider on specific topics to improve student learning.
- [SAM LPLP Symposium](#), January 28, 2020, 4 hours. Intended for all LPLP Members to share successes, challenges, and needs during a Role-a-Like Dialogue Session, connect with their Providers, and network with fellow LPLP Members.

Progress Summary

The [SAM LPLP 2019-20 Year End Data Collection Report](#) consists of **2161** entries and **25,932** data elements. The report indicates the estimated application time in hours (to the nearest quarter hour) by the 90 Members as of June 30, 2020 at **1447.50** hours and total collaboration time between Provider and Member estimated at **2747.75** hours. The Provider's assessment of those contacts indicated a **4.52** on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest. Note that the commitment of the 90 SAM LPLP participants is an average of more than **30** hours for each LPLP Member during the 2019-20 year to improve student learning through participation in the SAM LPLP.

Review of the [SAM LPLP 2019-20 Year End Provider Reflection Report](#) provides a description of the progress the Providers made with their LPLP Members during the year. The Providers assessed their progress for the year at **4.45** on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest. They also indicate a total of **1237.25** hours of collaborative work with their Members during the year in making over **2000** total contacts.

With the assistance of the HELPS (Human Ecology Learning and Problem Solving) Lab at Montana State University, new SAM LPLP Member and Provider surveys were implemented for the 2017-18 program year. The surveys were adapted to serve the current needs and implemented for the 2019-20 program year.

Provider Survey

Based on the [Provider Survey results](#) (11 of 11 or 100% response rate) all Providers understood their responsibilities, found their Member/Provider relationship to be positive, felt their time spent with Members to be beneficial, saw improvement in their Members, and rated their Members to be engaged in the program.

Member Survey

Members (45 of 90 Members; a 50% response rate) rated their satisfaction with the program overall, their work with a Provider, the use of the Resource Center, and their work with Collegial Learning Networks.

Based on the [Member Survey results](#), a significant majority of respondents found that due to their participation in SAM LPLP their professional network expanded (84%), communication with staff improved (82%), understanding of Montana school policies and procedures increased (82%), their ability to implement collaborative strategies improved (73%), their ability to complete projects has improved (73%), and progress was made on their personalized

professional learning plan (73%). The following are responses provided by Members when asked about their experience participating in SAM LPLP:

“This is an amazing program...I enjoyed participating in the program and would like to continue as I find the providers and leaders extremely helpful. I believe it keeps all of us going in the same direction with current information that pertains to our professions and schools. It is also a way to keep us all connected within the state and moving together toward the goal of a better educational system for our students.”

“This program is amazing. As a first year principal, I was just too overwhelmed to be able to ask for help effectively. I look forward to another year where I have the ability to grow by being able to find the brain power to ask questions and get feedback!”

“Thank you and I look forward to being a part of SAM next year.”

Work with a Provider

77 of the 90 (86%) LPLP Members chose to work with a Provider during the 2019-20 program year. 87% of Members who completed the survey worked with a Provider and 93% enjoyed the experience. The vast majority felt that working with a Provider was beneficial (92%), they learned from their Provider (90%), developed a sense of trust with their Provider (87%), grew as a professional because of their Provider (87%), and received meaningful feedback from their Provider (90%).

By choosing to participate in SAM LPLP and to work with a Provider, Members have the opportunity to confide in, ask questions of, and collaborate with an experienced administrator when faced with issues that affect the Member’s school, district, and/or community. Compelling evidence of the positive outcome possible through the Mentor/Provider relationship is apparent in the Member testimonials ([Member Survey Written Feedback](#)). Members described their experience with their Provider as invaluable, personable, helpful, resourceful, knowledgeable, accessible, professional. The following responses provided by Members when asked what they like best about working with a SAM LPLP Provider present additional confirmation of the importance of such a relationship:

“My provider had a depth of knowledge of Montana rules and regulations. My provider also had a wonderful sense of rural communities and how to work with all personality types of staff, parents, and citizens.”

“I always knew that I could rely on him for answers to my many questions along the way. Sometimes it is hard knowing who to ask questions to and I enjoyed the fact that I always had someone to shoot questions and ideas to.”

“(My Provider) did a great job of reaching out and offering support and materials that I needed or she knew I would benefit from.”

“She was personable and listened to my concerns. Whenever I had a question, she worked at getting the resources to me that fit my need. Her advice throughout the year was crucial to a successful year”.

Resource Center

More than half of the LPLP Members who completed the survey accessed the Resource Center regularly. The Standards Members cited to be most helpful to their current position include Mission, Vision, and Core Values; Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; Operations and Management; and School Improvement. A significant majority of Members found the Resource Center to be accessible (95%), comprehensive (97%), easy to navigate (87%), number of resources available (95%), and useful to their position (100%).

Collegial Learning Network

82 of 90 LPLP Members participated in at least one Collegial Learning Network. Of the members who completed the survey the majority agreed that because of their work with a CLN they met personal objectives, shared and received resources, learned and applied new strategies to their current position, found the network helpful to their current position, and improved student learning.

Research Questions

Considering the goal of SAM LPLP - to provide intentional, personalized professional learning to Montana educators through research-based strategies resulting in improvements in job satisfaction, administrator longevity, and ultimately to increased student achievement and quality of instruction - data was gathered around the following research questions:

Due to my participation in SAM LPLP...

- my satisfaction with my current position has increased. (49% of respondents agree)
- I am likely to continue serving in my current position. (56% of respondents agree)
- student learning has been positively impacted. (64% of respondents agree)
- the collaborative capacity of my school or district has been positively impacted. (71% of respondents agree)

Where Do We Go from Here?

The SAM Board of Directors committed support to continue the [SAM LPLP in 2020-21](#) and to assess providing the program in the future. The goal of providing high quality, embedded, professional learning meeting the needs of Montana's district and school leaders is the focus of this effort. Expanding the dialogue to enhance the SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program to serve the needs of new, experienced, and aspiring Montana administrators with educational partners in our state and across the nation, SAM LPLP 2020-21 will incorporate all that has been learned about effective professional learning and personalizing learning to impact the administrator's ability to improve student learning.

Changes (enhancements) incorporated into the SAM LPLP 2020-21 include:

- Continue to seek highly qualified Montana administrators who can serve a region of the state as an LPLP Provider. Continue to provide additional training to equip LPLP Providers with the necessary tools for coaching/mentoring and continuing to strengthen the Provider's knowledge of contemporary issues in education so they can connect LPLP Members to necessary resources in the most effective, efficient ways.
- Continue to enhance the SAM LPLP Resource Center that is based on the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) with thousands of readily accessible modules (10 standards of PSEL), recommended books, articles, videos, activities, website references, SAM resource people, collegial networks, and learning teams and to continue to enhance the SAM LPLP Personal Mastery Toolkit.
- Continue to create additional Collegial Learning Networks to meet the needs and interests of SAM LPLP Members.
- Continue to implement strategies for SAM affiliates to provide professional learning for their members. The New Superintendent (NS) CLN will continue based on the fact that the members of Montana Association of School Superintendents (MASS) believe strongly in the effectiveness of SAM LPLP and want to invest financially in the success of their members by electing to continue to pay the 2020-21 program fee for all superintendents new to their positions.
- Continue to support Montana school administrators in their chosen areas of focus that may result in effecting state legislation and ultimately in positively impacting student learning for all Montana children.
- Continue to be cognizant of and research methods to assist SAM LPLP Members with the challenge of dedicating time to focus on their professional learning. Use the goals set by each Member in their Personalized Professional Learning Plan as a guide to provide structure to the Member's learning process.
- Continue to schedule times for Members to connect both face to face and virtually with their Providers and their learning networks to continue to strengthen the learning relationships and to develop regularly scheduled virtual thought leader sessions in which members may join in real time and also have access to after each session.
- Continue to investigate the compelling evidence around educator retention discovered through the research questions.

This Executive Summary provides important professional learning information and insight for Montana education. Support of high quality professional learning for educational leaders in Montana is critical to the success of our schools

and the students served. Thank you for the support and commitment to the SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program!

Respectfully Submitted,



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