
Administrative Procedure 515

PURCHASING

1. Purpose

In accordance with its obligations under the School Act, the District is required to procure goods, services, and construction necessary for the fulfillment of its mandate. To ensure that such procurement activities are conducted with the highest standards of economy, efficiency, and integrity, the District has adopted a set of core principles that govern its procurement practices.

This Administrative Procedure is intended to guide District staff and to inform prospective vendors and other stakeholders of the District's procurement framework. It is designed to:

- Ensure the efficient and cost-effective acquisition of goods, services, and construction;
- Encourage broad and appropriate participation by vendors in procurement opportunities;
- Promote open and fair competition among vendors;
- Guarantee equitable and impartial treatment of all vendors;
- Uphold the integrity and credibility of the procurement process; and
- Foster transparency and accountability in all procurement-related activities.

Procedures

1. The following are objectives for procurement of goods, services and construction:
 - 1.1. Procurements are managed consistent with, Board policy, administrative procedures, applicable trade and intergovernmental agreements, and procurement law.
 - 1.2. Procurements attain value for money.
 - 1.3. Vendors have fair access to information on procurement opportunities, processes and results.
 - 1.4. Fair and equitable treatment of all suppliers and contractors is provided.
 - 1.5. Acquisition and disposal opportunities are competed, wherever practical.
 - 1.6. The District engages in a procurement process as required with the full intent to award a contract at the end of that process.
 - 1.7. All budget sponsors including schools and departments are accountable for the results of their procurement decisions.
 - 1.8. District buying power is leveraged through contractual arrangements and demand aggregation, wherever practical.

1.9. The cost of the procurement process, to both vendors and the District is appropriate in relation to the value and complexity of each procurement.

1.10. Procurements made by the District consider the health and safety of students and staff.

1.11. Procurements made by the District consider environmental sustainability.

2. Core Procurement Principles

2.1. It is the practice of the District to procure based on the principles of: fair and open competition, demand aggregation, transparency and accountability, health and safety of staff and students; and so to seek the best value for money consistent with the District's objective while giving consideration to environmental sustainability.

2.2. All District department and school purchases regardless of the source of funding must be under the direction of the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services. Within their authority, all District schools, departments and programs must identify opportunities for demand aggregation that provide best value for money consistent with the District's objectives, and all District schools and departments must participate in contracts established by the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services and advise the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services of their procurement plans and requirements for common goods, services and construction in advance of program needs.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The Secretary-Treasurer shall be responsible, through and to the Superintendent, for all purchases required by the District within the scope of this Administrative Procedure. To carry out the duties involved, a Purchasing Department has been set up within the Secretary-Treasurer's Office, with a Manager, Purchasing and Material Services as the department head who reports to the Secretary Treasurer.

3.2. The Manager, Purchasing and Material Services is to provide procurement discretion and flexibility for the District, schools and departments within the granted authority and subject to optimizing best value for money for the District as a whole.

3.3. The Manager, Purchasing and Material Services is responsible for:

3.3.1. Developing and revising corporate procurement procedures and providing official communications and interpretations of this Administrative Procedure;

3.3.2. Providing support and advice on corporate procurement procedures, including development and management of a Procurement Procedural Manual ;

3.3.3. Providing operational advice to the District Management Team (DMT);

3.3.4. Providing advice on all transactions involving Copyright and Intellectual Property;

3.3.5. Monitoring and reporting for compliance with this Administrative Procedure;

- 3.3.6. Establishing, managing and fully documenting the processes to acquire goods, services and construction that will provide best value for money to the District as required;
- 3.3.7. Establish and update procurement and contract documents as required;
- 3.3.8. Record and track all procurement related contracts;
- 3.3.9. Managing solicitation and contract award processes in a prudent and unbiased manner that fairly treats all potential proponents;
- 3.3.10. Ensuring that contracts for goods, services and construction are designed to provide the best value for money to the District;
- 3.3.11. Developing standards for goods and services in cooperation with District departments and schools;
- 3.3.12. Identifying and using existing cooperative and shared services goods and services arrangements when able to meet essential requirements;
- 3.3.13. Ensuring that all District acquisitions and disposals are consistent with this Administrative Procedure, applicable legislation, trade and intergovernmental agreements and procurement law;
- 3.3.14. Establishing and managing procedures for a formal vendor complaints resolution process;
- 3.3.15. Declaring goods surplus when their use to the District has ended;
- 3.3.16. Disposing of all tangible and intangible assets that are surplus to the District; and ensuring compliance with this Administrative Procedure.

4. Application

This Administrative Procedure applies to procurement contracts (e.g. agreements to procure goods, services and construction) and to contract expenditures chargeable whether funded through Ministry provided funds, District revenues or school generated funds.

- 5. Adherence to a procedure of buying in the open market implies that vendors are given the opportunity to bid on items to be purchased. It carries the further implication that vendors are made aware of the needs of the District as they arise, either by direct notification or by some form of public announcement.
- 6. Bids are solicited in various ways, according to procedures outlined under Section 8 “Bid Processes”.
- 7. Purchasing on an economical basis depends on different factors, including quantity buying, price, and competence of the purchasing staff.
 - 7.1. Quantity Buying
 - 7.1.1. Certain economies are effected through quantity buying. Unit prices are generally lower when quoted on large quantities, rather than on small quantities, of the same product. As well, overhead costs are kept at a lower

level when a few large orders have to be processed rather than a large number of small orders or when covering orders / contracts are in place to draw upon as required.

- 7.1.2. To gain the advantages arising out of quantity buying, it is District practice, as far as is reasonably possible, to buy for its entire system on an annual basis; furthermore, in some cases, the District joins with certain other civic bodies in its purchase of materials in common demand. Under such circumstances, bids are invited by the District or by other interested civic agencies, depending on which body requires the largest quantity of the material involved. The most favourable bid determines the price for the different parties. Though bids are called on a joint basis, ordering and billing are done individually.

7.2. Price

- 7.2.1. Any consideration on price must centre on the lowest bid meeting specifications and all conditions of the bid document, if a bid document is issued. While the practice of the District, generally speaking, is to accept the lowest bid, this practice is not necessarily followed in all cases. Consideration must be given to such matters as listed below.

7.2.1.1. Specifications

- 7.2.1.1.1. Specifications are normally laid down for items on which bids are invited; however, the District is prepared at all times to consider bids on products that are an approved equal to, or better than, the specified items for the purposes they are to serve.
- 7.2.1.1.2. Some price differential may be regarded as justified in the case of a product that offers advantages over that specified; however, should an alternative bid appear more satisfactory than the original specification, further bidding is regarded as mandatory.
- 7.2.1.1.3. On the other hand, it may be desirable and highly practical from the standpoint of maintaining uniformity, with advantages accruing, to purchase products that conform with those already in the possession of the District, even though another product offered at a lower price might serve as well as that specified. It is clearly understood, however, that in any case in which the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services, to maintain uniformity, submits a recommendation involving a significant price differential, a full report shall be made to the Secretary Treasurer.

7.2.1.2. Quality

The question of quality may arise in cases in which bids are equal or

nearly equal. Under such conditions, it is expected that the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services will ordinarily be qualified to advise on the most economical purchase and that, if necessary, he/she will call for the assistance of other persons with specialized knowledge in the fields concerned. In the case of labour and material bid documents, the advice of the Director of Facilities will be sought as well as that of the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services.

7.2.1.3. Source of Supply

In any case in which tie bids or bids that are not significantly different are received on equally suitable materials, the source of supply will be taken into consideration. Generally speaking, under such circumstances, preference will be given to local, provincial, Canadian, or British Commonwealth products, in that order, over products from other countries. The District, however, will not lose sight of the fact that products fabricated elsewhere may be handled by vendors that conduct bona fide business establishments in the Vancouver area or in other Canadian centres.

7.2.1.4. Availability

Urgency of the need is an important factor in relation to all purchases. Should the vendor whose bid is lowest indicate a probable delay in delivery, higher bids from vendors who guarantee delivery as required will be taken into consideration.

7.2.1.5. Tie Low Bids

When tie low bids are received on any item or list of items with other things being equal, the District will take into consideration the nature of the service given by any or all of the bidders concerned in any previous dealings they may have had with the District. Under no circumstances will the District permit subdivision of orders to tie bidders.

7.2.1.6. Rejection of Bids

The District reserves the right at all times to reject bids on any item or items, whether because of price consideration or any other reason that would appear to make it inadvisable to buy under the terms of the bids submitted or to conclude any agreement without going out to re- bid.

7.3. Competence Of Purchasing Staff

- 7.3.1. Economy in purchasing is dependent to a considerable degree on the competence of the purchasing staff. A capable Manager, Purchasing and Material Services, with the assistance of a well-trained staff, will develop an effective routine in the matter of buying materials. Equally important, he/she will keep informed on developments in purchasing techniques, price

changes, and market conditions, and he/she will bring to his/her position a knowledge of new products, as well as of tests, standards, and research findings relating to products in use or products that might be used by the District.

- 7.3.2. While it is the practice of the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services to maintain a record of vendors or products, the District, in order that it may at all times obtain bids from as many sources as possible, considers it the responsibility of the Secretary-Treasurer:
 - 7.3.2.1. To cause to be inserted in the local daily papers and in the *Journal of Commerce*, from time to time, general advertisements inviting business firms to bid on products as listed or to request that they be registered in the District Office as vendors of products in certain general fields;
 - 7.3.2.2. To keep a register of vendors or products, such register to be under constant review so that it may include all potential vendors considered to be responsible bidders; consistent failure to meet specifications or promised delivery dates shall be regarded as sufficient reason to regard a particular supplier as an irresponsible bidder.

8. Bid Processes

8.1. Calls for Quotations and Tenders

Quotations and tenders shall be obtained on prospective purchases in accordance with the following rules:

- 8.1.1. Up to \$5,000: at the discretion of Manager, Purchasing and Material Services.
- 8.1.2. Between \$5,000 to \$15,000: quotations, oral or written, at discretion of the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services from the previously accepted vendor or the previous satisfactory low bidder, plus two other vendors, in rotation, who are registered with the District for the commodity concerned, such quotations to be recorded on or attached to the requisition;
- 8.1.3. Between \$15,000 to \$25,000: written quotations from all registered vendors concerned; quotations to be attached to or recorded on the requisition;
- 8.1.4. Over \$25,000: sealed tenders to be obtained from all registered vendors concerned, and tenders to be tabulated and submitted to the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services together with a recommendation for awarding the tender.

8.2. Special Rulings on Bidding

Notwithstanding the rulings laid down in the above clause 8.1 pertaining to "Bid Processes", it is further ruled that:

- 8.2.1. Variations in the bid procedures may be authorized by the Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer, if time is an important factor or where the interest of the District would be adequately protected without following the

normal bid procedure;

- 8.2.2. Permission is granted to the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services to authorize an extension to an original contract under circumstances where the full extent of the work required could not have been ascertained when the contract was awarded.

8.3. Bonds

- 8.3.1. The District reserves the right to require bid bonds be posted by bidders on any item or items.
- 8.3.2. A performance bond may be requested from the successful bidder in any contract where, in the opinion of the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services and the Secretary-Treasurer, it may be required to ensure contract completion.

8.4. Submission and Receipt of Bids

- 8.4.1. Each quotation shall be submitted in a specially marked envelope provided by the District, except that confirmation of telephone quotations, when necessary, or written quotations urgently sought by telephone may be submitted on ordinary stationery.
- 8.4.2. Each tender shall be submitted on a tender form and in a specially marked envelope provided by the District, and the envelope shall be sealed. The use of the form shall be mandatory in every case in which a sealed tender is submitted.
- 8.4.3. A locked mailing box for receipt of sealed tenders shall be kept in a convenient place in the District's Education Centre, and the box shall be opened by two designated members of the staff of the Secretary-Treasurer's Office at the closing time for each group of tenders.
- 8.4.4. Bid documents must be received in the location and at the time specified in the bid document. Any bid document received after the specified closing time shall be returned to the bidder unopened.
- 8.4.5. Sealed tenders shall be opened in the Education Centre by the Secretary-Treasurer in the presence of one of the staff.
- 8.4.6. The tenders will be initialled by the Secretary-Treasurer, date-stamped, and forwarded to the proper department for tabulation and recommendation pertaining to the awarding of the tenders.

8.4.6.1. Tabulation of Bids

- 8.4.6.1.1. Bids pertaining to building and grounds maintenance and involving labour and materials shall be tabulated by the Director of Facilities.
- 8.4.6.1.2. All other bids will be tabulated by the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services; it will be noted that some of these bids will include labour, such as in the installation of equipment.

8.4.6.1.3. The above segregation of bids is to serve as a guide to assist in distribution to the proper department for tabulation and recommendation to award.

8.4.6.2. Recommendations for Award

8.4.6.2.1. Low Bid

- Contracts shall be awarded to the low bidder meeting all District specifications on the recommendation of the Division Head responsible for the tabulation.
- It will be noted that the term "low bid" includes the situation where the difference in price does not justify the additional clerical cost of splitting an order.
- The purchasing procedure allows authority to the senior management to accept other than low bid where they feel better value is obtained, subject to a report being made to the Secretary Treasurer with the details.

8.4.6.2.2. Other Than Low Bid

- A tabulation of all tenders, received together with a recommendation by the appropriate Division Head, shall be referred to the Secretary Treasurer for approval to award the contract.

8.4.6.2.3. Safety of Students

- Where contracts for services or supplies have a direct impact on the safety of students, the recommendation for award must be forwarded to the Secretary Treasurer for approval.
- For ease of reference and for audit purposes, bid document references shall be documented on the related requisitions.

9. Requisitions

- 9.1. Most purchases made by the District stem from requisitions or from annual supply lists and annual estimates submitted in accordance with District requirements.
- 9.2. All requisitions, irrespective of their nature, shall be addressed and forwarded to the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services who shall delegate to a member of his/her staff responsibility for recording the date of receipt of each requisition and for

distributing the various copies.

9.3. Requisitions from Schools

All requisitions, approved by the Principal, must be submitted to either the Purchasing and Material Services Division, Operations Division, or the Maintenance and Construction Division, as indicated below. The requisition may be marked to the attention of a specific individual; however, it is still to be sent first to either the Purchasing and Material Service Division, Operations Division, or Maintenance and Construction Division.

9.3.1. Purchasing

- 9.3.1.1. Supplies (principals may also purchase supply items and pay vendors directly using their purchasing card or flexible purchasing funds);
- 9.3.1.2. Furniture and equipment (all requests are to be submitted on requisitions directly to the Purchasing and Materials Services Division);
- 9.3.1.3. Services (includes rental of supplies or equipment and repairs not covered on the "Procedures for Repair of Various Equipment", telephone changes, etc.)
- 9.3.1.4. As much detail as possible must be provided on the requisition - school work order number (if applicable), quantity, complete description, supplier, date goods required.

9.3.2. Operations

- 9.3.2.1. Custodial supplies: requests would include general cleaning supplies such as mops, cleaning chemicals, waxes, etc.;
- 9.3.2.2. Minor repair supplies: requests would include general items such as lamps, ballasts, fasteners, small hand tools, etc.;
- 9.3.2.3. Repairs: requests would include repairs and/or deficiencies in walls, doors, windows, floors, etc.

9.3.3. Maintenance Workshop

- 9.3.3.1. Minor alterations: most requests would be generated on the Master List, determined and reviewed annually by the Space Review Sub- committee, which accepts input from schools through the administrators (additional special requirements on requisitions will be considered by Director of Facilities, subject to availability of funds);
- 9.3.3.2. Maintenance: routine requirements may be brought to the attention of maintenance staff members when they make their maintenance surveys in each school during the school year; maintenance requests may also be submitted on a requisition);

- 9.3.3.3. When emergency maintenance situations occur that could be hazardous to staff or students, or lead to serious damage to building and equipment, school administrators are requested to contact the workshop immediately;
- 9.3.3.4. District-wide painting, roofing, asphaltting, and other cyclical programs are established for all schools by the Maintenance and Construction Division ; if further information is required (for example, when the interior of a school will be painted), the Maintenance Support Supervisor for the area is to be contacted at the Maintenance and Construction Division at the District Workshop.
- 9.3.4. Principals are not to include more than one type of request per requisition; for example, a minor alteration item and a supply item is to be requested on separate requisitions.

9.4. Vandalism, Theft, Breaking and Entering

- 9.4.1. Requisitions for replacement of stolen or lost equipment are the exception to the above procedures. These requisitions must be attached to the white copy of the "Vandalism, Theft, Breaking and Entering Report Form" and submitted to the Secretary-Treasurer. In some cases, the equipment is found elsewhere in the school after a period of time; therefore, these requisitions may be held between 30 and 60 days before being processed.

10. Purchase Orders

- 10.1. All District orders for goods and services shall be transmitted by the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services, to the vendors concerned through the District's purchase order forms; such forms shall bear the signature of the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services or such other staff member as may be designated by the Secretary-Treasurer. Purchase orders are, in effect, District contracts on which are listed the conditions of purchase. Any exception to the above must relate directly to contracts approved by the District, the employment of consulting engineers, and the obtaining of other services required in connection with the design of school buildings or to supplementary items of a minor nature associated with goods or services already ordered in the normal way.
- 10.2. When the Purchasing and Material Services Division orders equipment, supplies, or services for a school, a receiving copy of the purchase order will be forwarded to the Principal.
 - 10.2.1. The white receiving copy of the same order must be completed as follows:
 - 10.2.1.1. Date and quantities received are recorded;
 - 10.2.1.2. Signatures of actual receiver and Principal are obtained;
 - 10.2.1.3. Copy is forwarded to the Accounting Division;
 - 10.2.1.4. A copy is retained as a permanent school office copy.

10.3. Partial delivery of an order

- 10.3.1. If the majority of items on the purchase order are received, the white copy must be completed as above.
- 10.3.2. If a minority of items on the purchase order are received, a receiving report must be prepared for the items received; and the white copy of the receiving report must be forwarded to the Accounting Division.
- 10.3.3. The white receiving copy of the purchase order is retained until such time as delivery of most items on the purchase order is received.
- 10.3.4. The white receiving copy must be completed for the current delivery only and forwarded to the Accounting Division; in this instance, the receipt is not claimed again for items previously covered by a receiving report.

10.4. Delivery prior to receiving purchase order copy

A receiving report must be prepared for the delivery and the white copy forwarded to the Accounting Division.

10.5. Returning supplies

- 10.5.1. When supplies are returned directly to the supplier or to the District Education Centre for return to the supplier, the white receiving copy of the purchase order or receiving report must indicate that the supplies have been received and returned. The buyer listed on the purchase order must be advised. A subsequent delivery of replacement supplies is to be reported on a receiving report.

- 10.6. Prompt attention must be given to white receiving copies. Payment for supplies or services is withheld until evidence of delivery is received from the Principal. It is essential that prompt attention be given to forwarding the white receiving copies of purchase orders and receiving reports.

Remember: Suppliers need their money.

- 10.7. The District also offers the flexibility to principals to purchase, on their own, supply items below a predetermined unit cost limit, using a Purchasing Card. The Manager, Purchasing and Material Services will have the responsibility for the District's Purchasing Card program.

11. Purchasing Cards

- 11.1. A purchasing card program has been introduced into the District. The program is designed to enable individuals to make direct purchases. Monthly approved payments will be issued by schools for any cardholder who is assigned to a specific school; i.e. principal, vice-principal, secretary, etc. In the case of individuals who are assigned to Division or satellite offices, payments will be made through the Accounting Division.
- 11.2. The purchasing card program is not intended to avoid or bypass other appropriate procedures. It is intended to provide flexibility and autonomy to the cardholder while complementing current existing purchasing and payment guidelines.
- 11.3. Controls ensure that the program can be used only with specific types of merchants

and within specific dollar limits.

12. Standardization of Equipment and Supplies

- 12.1. In connection with the provision and replacement of equipment for new schools or schools already in operation and, also, the provision of the necessary supplies for the educational program, it is highly desirable and, in some cases, essential that the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services have the advice and assistance of members of the educational staff; such advice and assistance may pertain to the nature and quantity of equipment or supplies required not only for schools of different sizes and types but also for classrooms in which varied educational programs are conducted.
- 12.2. To prevent charges of favouritism or discrimination in matters of equipment and supplies as they relate to school programs, the District considers it desirable that there is to be a high degree of standardization and that standardized lists of equipment and supplies are to be approved by a representative group from the educational staff working with the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services.
- 12.3. In all possible cases, it is required that complete specifications be prepared and kept as relating to items of equipment to be purchased from outside vendors or be fabricated in the District workshop.

13. Furniture and Equipment Purchase, Repair and Replacement

- 13.1. Equipment is defined as “an approved standard item that is determined to have a tangible asset value”. To be considered as a tangible asset, equipment must meet all three of the following criteria:
 - a value over \$500 net before taxes;
 - a useful service life longer than five years; and
 - a piece of equipment with a serial number.
- 13.1.1. Furniture meeting approved District standards, no matter what the value, will continue to be considered a tangible asset.
- 13.1.2. As such, all approved standard furniture (i.e., desks, cupboards, posture chairs, side chairs, individual student tables, standard tables, etc.) will continue to be included on any inventory records kept by the District.
- 13.2. For many years, the policy of the Ministry of Education has placed strict limitations on the approval of capital funding to Districts for additional furniture and equipment. As a result of this policy, only top priority items have been approved for schools, and many schools have purchased furniture and equipment out of school-raised funds. It is important for schools to carry out the appropriate procedures prior to obtaining a furniture or equipment item to ensure that it may be placed on the District inventory. It will be the responsibility of the school to pay the cost of repairs and/or replacement of items deemed non-standard that have been listed on the District inventory for recording purposes only. This includes the replacement of stolen equipment and furniture.
- 13.3. Funds transferred to a school's flexible purchasing account cannot be directly

used to purchase furniture or equipment. Funds can be transferred to a capital item account by forwarding a request to the Accounting Division requesting that funds be transferred. When a Principal and staff are considering the purchase of equipment from school-raised funds or when a donation of equipment is made to the school, the Principal must contact the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services in advance to determine whether the item meets District standards of quality and safety, in order that the equipment may be placed on District inventory for repair and/or replacement. When principals order directly from a vendor, all equipment received at the school must be engraved by the school, and a copy of the invoice sent to the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services to be added to the inventory.

13.3.1. The school's "Operation Provident" Property Identification Code Number is to be upgraded on all current and new equipment. Misunderstandings have occurred in the past when schools assumed that an existing internal school inventory had been recorded on the District central inventory. A complete listing of furniture and equipment in schools has not been done for many years, and the only means of placing an item on the District inventory is to submit a written request to the Manager, Purchasing and Material Services.

13.3.2. Furniture and equipment items, meeting approved standards and purchased for schools with District funds, are automatically added to the District inventory.

13.3.3. Used furniture or equipment would not normally be considered for addition to the District inventory. Used band instruments are an exception to this practice and will be evaluated upon request for possible placement on the inventory.

13.3.4. Some equipment, such as a stove, refrigerator, or built-in dishwasher, may require additional installation costs. Principals are to contact the Director of Facilities, if part of a renovation, in advance of obtaining the item, and an estimate will be prepared to ensure that installation costs are not excessive.

13.4. Replacement of Furniture and Equipment

A furniture and equipment item is to be replaced when it is worn out or obsolete or the repair costs are excessive. Schools have been allocated funds for this purpose.

13.5. Repair of Furniture

Principals are to complete a school requisition form to request repair of furniture. Please ensure the requisition shows quantity, description, location and, if possible, type of repair required. Items considered dangerous are to be removed from the classroom immediately.

13.6. Repair of Equipment

When equipment is in need of repair, the Principal is to place a telephone call to the Repair Line in the Purchasing and Material Services Division. Please refer to "Procedures for Repair for Various Equipment" that is available in all school offices. All curriculum microcomputer equipment is repaired through Information Technology (call

the Help Desk 713-4444 for information).

14. Changes or Introduction of Guidelines

- 14.1. Changes or introduction of guidelines affecting significant bids must be approved by the Secretary-Treasurer.

Legal Reference:	British Columbia School Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 412 - Sections 22, 23, 65, 85 Financial Information Act
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Adopted:	February 8, 1980
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