



COALITION OF SCHOOLS EDUCATING BOYS OF COLOR

STANDARDS & PROMISING PRACTICES

for Schools Educating Boys of Color



executive summary



C O S E B O C

COALITION OF SCHOOLS EDUCATING BOYS OF COLOR

Executive Summary designed by Jeanine Reed • jeanine@jreeddesign.com

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR . . .

The Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC) was founded in 2007. Its mission is to connect, inspire, support, and strengthen school leaders dedicated to the social, emotional, and academic development of boys and young men of color. COSEBOC is now the only network of school leaders focused on educating boys and young men of color. In addition to the *COSEBOC Standards* that provide a framework for success, COSEBOC is the leading resource of innovative, “real-world” tested practices and research that enable boys and young men of color to succeed academically. Every child deserves to succeed and COSEBOC has demonstrated that given the right tools, boys and young men of color can achieve academic success. COSEBOC is working with educators to change how adults educate boys and young men of color.

In partnership with the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education (Metro Center), COSEBOC developed the first edition of the *COSEBOC Standards and Promising Practices for Schools Educating Boys of Color* in 2009. This publication would not have happened without the partnership of the Metro Center and the leadership of Dr. Edward Fergus, then of the Metro Center. They continue to be dedicated partners. This tool was designed to serve as an educator-friendly set of guidelines to assist school districts and educational leaders who passionately seek to build positive school and learning environments for all students and in particular boys and young men of color. Since its inception, the *COSEBOC Standards* has served as a foundational document; a framework that COSEBOC uses to support and empower school leaders and educators. COSEBOC recognizes that the *Standards* must be an evolving document, incorporating current research and effective models and strategies. In 2012, the *COSEBOC Standards* were revised to include more criteria relevant to early learning.

We are now pleased to offer this third edition of the *COSEBOC Standards*. Once again the leadership of Dr. Edward Fergus, now of New York University, has been critical. In addition, our work was enriched by a network of new relationships with scholars, researchers, and practitioners who made significant contributions. They include Dr. Alfred Tatum of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Oleta Fitzgerald of the Children’s Defense Fund, Rhea Williams-Bishop and Kristin McMillin of the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation, Dr. Olga Price of George Washington University, Dr. Larry Leverett of the Panasonic Foundation, Dr. Frank Davis of TERC, John Belcher of TERC, Estelle Archibold of Prospect Hill Academy, Dr. Karen Mapp of the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, the team at the Sankofa Passages Program of COSEBOC, Dr. Wayne Beckles, LSWC-C, Dr. David Heiber of Concentric Educational Solutions, Gene Thompson-Grove of Transformational Learning for Equity and Excellence, and Dr. Deidre Farmbry, Educational Consultant and Coach.

The *COSEBOC Standards* are designed to strengthen a positive new narrative on behalf of boys and young men of color. In this revised version, you will see an enhanced menu of important topics, indicators, and resources that reflect current and future realities. Critical topics such as the Common Core, STEM, family involvement, gifted and talented students, and early childhood education are represented in greater detail in a culturally responsive format across the Core Areas of the *Standards*. The original *COSEBOC Standards* were vetted by participants at the third Gathering of Leaders hosted by Dillard University in New Orleans. We are proud to follow that tradition by introducing this new edition at the eighth Gathering of Leaders hosted by Jackson State University and the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation in Jackson, Mississippi. It is our hope that this resource will provide the inspiration, confidence, and resolve to create powerful and affirmative learning environments for boys and young men of color amongst caring educators.

Ron Walker

Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

In today's educational context, most indicators of academic achievement and social outcomes for Black and Latino male students suggest that these students are facing severe hardships. Available data shows that there is a significant gap in achievement between males of color and all other groups (NCES, 2011). Moreover, on every indicator associated with success males of color are under-represented, while on most indicators associated with failure and distress they are over-represented (Ahram, Fergus, and Noguera, 2012; College Board, 2005; Noguera, 2008; Orfield, 2003). It is particularly disturbing that the problems experienced by boys of color in school parallel those experienced by males of color in adulthood (Noguera, Hurtado, and Fergus, 2011). We believe that unless concerted action is taken to intervene effectively during childhood, another generation of adult males will be consigned to a life of hardship and despair.

This tool is based upon a set of assumptions about the problems experienced by boys of color and the assets they maintain. Our research on and review of the relevant scholarly literature has led us to conclude that there is nothing inherently wrong with boys of color despite the preponderance of evidence that many face hardships both within and outside of school. Rather, the problems confronting many boys of color are a byproduct of the social, economic, political, and educational forces that operate within American society.

Therefore, practitioners must embrace the paradigm of school environments buffering boys of color from the risks and vulnerabilities that are generally present within their neighborhoods and society (Spencer et al., 1997). In addition, practitioners must develop an awareness of threats emanating from cultural and structural conditions that are reproduced in the school environment such as stereotype threat and racial/ethnic and gender micro-aggressions that are counterintuitive to schools' attempt to implement youth development principles. In order to mitigate the effect of harsh external conditions and prevent the development of threats within schools, practitioners must operate under a common set of assumptions about the kind of school environment necessary to provide a shield that protects their students from harmful community and societal conditions. For example, Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) provide a backdrop for the knowledge and analytical skills necessary for postsecondary education and career readiness. However, CCLS does not shield or provide the social and emotional compass for boys of color to handle "stop and frisk" police behavior, harsh prison sentencing, inadequate healthcare providers, high teacher turnover rates in urban school systems, etc.

These *COSEBOC Standards* are organized to encourage practitioners to consider how their pedagogical beliefs and understandings of race, ethnicity, and gender can appear in educational practice. The consideration and implementation of any educational reform (e.g., PBIS, CCLS, RTI, Restorative Justice, etc.) must be accompanied by a healthy understanding of race, ethnicity, and gender.

We have created this tool drawing from several bodies of research and practice. First we utilize what is known about promising practices for boys of color outlined in the research on effective schools (e.g., the work of James Comer, Ron Edmonds, Howard Gardner, Edmund Gordon, and Ted Sizer). There is a vast body of research on effective schools and successful educational strategies for serving the needs of disadvantaged students that shows that under the right conditions, all types of students, including males of color, can be successful. We have drawn heavily from this research to develop this tool. Put most simply, we feel it is important for educators who are interested in finding solutions to the challenges facing young males of

color **to do more of what works and less of what doesn't**. This sounds like common sense, but in our experience of working with and studying schools throughout the country we have found that common sense is not always practiced. In order to assist in the explanations of these practices, throughout this document we identify research-based “best practices” in curriculum, instruction, school design, and out-of-school support programs. While we do not claim that these are the only methods that work, we do contend that unlike other strategies that may be in use in some schools or programs, empirical research documents the efficacy of these approaches, particularly in relation to boys of color.

Secondly, we utilize a child development view of each practice. That is, the *COSEBOC Standards* are specifically designed to be inclusive of children from birth to age 18, in recognition of the continuum of child development that occurs across the early years, preadolescence, adolescence, and late adolescence. These *COSEBOC Standards* also recognize the importance of all the domains of development and learning including physical, social, emotional, moral, and cognitive. Included in this child development perspective is an understanding of how the social constructions surrounding being male and Black or Latino influence the domains of development. For example, the social and emotional identity work that happens for preadolescent and adolescent boys of color includes making sense of what race is, understanding how he is racialized, and managing the internal and external expectations of developing and identifying with a racial grouping. We placed this understanding in the center of determining developmentally appropriate practices.

Overall, to the extent that some of what we describe is seen as constructive and promising, we encourage readers to make further inquiries to find ways to adapt these strategies to their schools and programs. Our hope is that this document will prove helpful to those who want to ensure that more and more young men of color can be spared from the harm that is presently destroying so many lives and depriving so many communities and families of young men who might otherwise be a source of strength and hope.

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COMMON CORE

The Common Core State Standards Initiative has emerged as the leading effort to deepen the knowledge, skills, and understanding of all students. It is defined as a rigorous set of standards for English language arts and mathematics curriculum based on the best practices of schools and organizations around the nation and the world. These standards are designed to help our students to become career and college ready and globally competitive. COSEBOC believes that the Common Core presents a great opportunity to advance the potential of all students. In particular, we believe that *COSEBOC Standards and Promising Practices for Schools Educating Boys of Color* are a complement to the Common Core. If implemented properly, COSEBOC Standards serve as a culturally responsive lens through which to create and deepen an authentic integration of Common Core Standards in teaching and educating boys and young men of color. We encourage you to review the *COSEBOC Standards* to see the myriad connections that can be made with the Common Core.

STEM

Since the first edition the *COSEBOC Standards*, important developments have taken place in the education landscape. Five years ago, though discussion and focus on STEM were rising in importance, the discourse was not nearly as robust as it is today. The national education agenda has placed a bright spotlight on the necessity for every one of the nation's 16,000 school districts to have a strong STEM initiative in place. To that end, professional development, curriculum, and instruction are being molded to meet this goal. STEM proficiency is the passport to a bright future of opportunities for boys and young men of color. It is an essential skill set if the nation intends to be fully competitive in the global economic community. Therefore it is important that we give attention to STEM and illuminate its importance to the education of boys and young men of color. The reader will see how we reference STEM within the context of the Standards and Indicators. COSEBOC views STEM as critically important in affirmative development and education. The quality of the contributions made in this area reflects our strong support and endorsement of STEM initiatives and practices for boys and young men of color.

The recommended action steps are not intended to be exhaustive or comprehensive. At the same time, we do not expect a school to implement every single recommendation simultaneously and immediately. Instead, the intent is to provide guidelines for taking thoughtful, strategic steps towards building the capacity required to support the affirmative STEM development of boys and young men of color. Further, consideration of the suggested action steps will prompt deeper reflection on a school's existing practices and capacity and will meaningfully inform the identification of short-, middle-, and long-term goals and desired outcomes. Fundamentally, the recommendations support the establishment of a dynamic learning community that fosters STEM learning for boys and young men of color with continuity and relevance to their various life contexts. In full flourish, this community must extend beyond a school's walls, so strategic collaborations and partnerships are critical.

PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Schools are expected to work towards achieving, at minimum, a Satisfactory Performance Level in all quality indicators within each of the seven Core Areas of the *COSEBOC Standards*. Over time, schools must continue to strive to achieve a level of excellence that responds to the population they serve. The four Performance Levels are:

- 4:** Excellent/Exceeds Standard— Organization is **Prepared** to help and work with others in this area
- 3:** Satisfactory/Meets Standard— Organization is **Consistently** demonstrates standards but needs help to prepare staff to work with others in this area
- 2:** Some Progress Made/Approaching Standard— Organization **Could** use additional focused assistance in this area
- 1:** Must Address and Improve/Standard not Met— Organization **Needs** significant support in this area

IMPROVEMENT PLANNING GUIDANCE

After assessing the Performance Level for each of the quality indicators, schools should develop a timeline for improvement using the “Plan to Improve” section for each quality indicators, prepare staff to work with others in this area on affirmative STEM deliver priority in the improvement plan, as those are most critical to schools working with boys of color. In devising an improvement plan, schools should begin to establish benchmarks and develop an action plan to reach or exceed those benchmarks that will be assessed periodically during the school year. The Plan to Improve levels are:

Right Now — Area will be addressed in the next several months

This Year — Area will be addressed during the school year

Next Year — Area will be re-evaluated prior to the start of the next school year

The goal of the self-assessment tool is to assist schools in their pursuit of ongoing improvement. It is not to be used simply as a checklist to highlight school strengths and deficiencies; nor is its use meant to overwhelm practitioners such that they are unable to discharge daily school responsibilities. The Plan to Improve section is a guide to help schools develop both short- and long-term plans for addressing needs.

HOW TO BEGIN THE SELF-ASSESSMENT

The process of examining school practices is time-consuming and difficult. To assist in this process we suggest the following:

1. Define the process of examination. The tool can be used by a school team that includes administrators, teachers, students, parents, and support staff or could involve an outside evaluator. Using a school team or an outside evaluator will still involve defining what period of time will be spent on examining the practices, planning for improvements, implementing improvements, and evaluating improvements. A team approach is used to conduct the self-assessment, multiple formats would work for the self-assessment with school staff, students and parents, for example, professional development days, committee meetings, grade- or content-level meetings, parent meetings, etc.
2. Decide which core areas to examine for this school year. Think about which core areas necessitate close attention and improvement. Bear in mind that the process of examining a core area also entails the planning, implementation, and evaluation of new practices.
3. Identify a lead facilitator for the examination process. The facilitator must be able to engage all participants, actively listen and connect ideas from multiple constituents, avoid personalizing feedback, remain non-judgmental, and elicit consensus.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The results of the self-assessment will have many important implications enabling schools to address the areas in need of support by providing staff development. COSEBOC also uses this instrument as the framework for its ongoing professional development training and consulting services. Feedback from users will continue to inform COSEBOC Standards content. Provided in this revision of the Standards, we have provided an appendix which contains a chart with suggested Action Steps and examples of some of the core areas, with a primary focus on STEM. Staff should brainstorm their own actions steps reflective of the specific needs of their context after reviewing each core area in this

CORE AREAS

CORE AREA 1: **ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is the set of protocols used to ascertain the academic and behavioral level of youth.

CATEGORIES:

1. Standardized Assessment Preparation
2. Alternate or Authentic Assessment
3. Special Education Assessment and Process
4. Talented/Gifted, Honors/AP Program and Assessment (*when applicable*)

CORE AREA 2: **PARENT/FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

Parent/Family/Community Partnership is the external support system surrounding youth that operates to provide, protect, and nurture academic, social, emotional, moral, and physical development.

CATEGORIES:

1. Teacher-Family or School-Family Communication
2. Parent Involvement
3. Community Involvement
4. Parent Collaborations
5. Schools Provide Learning at Home
6. School Provides Decision Making Opportunities



CORE AREAS

CORE AREA 3: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Curriculum and Instruction is the scope and sequence, materials, and developmentally appropriate pedagogical strategies used by practitioners.

CATEGORIES:

1. Culturally Relevant Instruction
2. Multicultural Education
3. Gender Relevant Instruction
4. Student-Centered Instruction
5. Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction
6. Character Education
7. Professional Development
8. Teacher Self-Awareness

CORE AREA 4: SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

School Climate is the social atmosphere of a setting or learning environment in which students have different experiences, depending upon the protocols set up by the teachers and administrators.

CATEGORIES:

1. Physical Environment
2. Student Leadership & Voice
3. Inclusive Policies and Practices
4. School Culture Activities

CORE AREA 5: SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

School leadership is the process of enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of teachers, pupils, and parents toward achieving common educational aims.

CATEGORIES:

1. Instructional Leadership
2. Community Leadership
3. Visionary Leadership
4. School Leaders' Self-Awareness
5. Leadership Qualifications

CORE AREAS

CORE AREA 6: SCHOOL COUNSELING

School Counseling and Guidance refers to the work of school counselors. A school counselor is a counselor and educator who works in elementary, middle, and high schools to provide academic, career, college readiness, and personal/social competencies to all students through advocacy, leadership, systemic change, and teaming and collaborating with other stakeholders as part of a comprehensive developmental school counseling program.

CATEGORIES:

1. Counseling Program
2. Social and Health Services in the Community
3. School Counselors' Self-Awareness

CORE AREA 7: SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

School Organization – the social and/or structural arrangement of an educational institution that includes (but may or may not be limited to) course schedule, leadership structure, staffing arrangements, etc.

CATEGORIES:

1. Core Mission/Vision Statements
2. Tracks That are Not Academically Rigorous are Eliminated
3. High School Curricula Aligned with College Enrollment Requirements
4. Early Childhood infrastructure
5. A Common Core Curriculum that Includes Requirements for Students to Complete Advanced Work in Mathematics, Science, and Literacy
6. Small Learning Communities (MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL ONLY)

APPENDIX

ASSESSMENT

ACTION STEPS

Staff provided with time to examine school performance data on standardized (high-stakes) tests, to identify items students typically find challenging, and to develop coordinated strategies to equip students for success in these areas.

Professional development provided around the Common Core Math and Next Generation Science Standards, as well as engineering and technology standards.

Students understand how their performance data from high-stakes tests are used.

Staff uses expanded definitions of STEM success to identify and/or design rubrics to create lessons and assess student work.

EXAMPLES

Based on item analysis, staff identifies interdisciplinary opportunities to address issues of challenge (e.g., reading strategies, vocabulary, problem-solving strategies, unfamiliar contexts). As one way of addressing test bias, staff varies challenging test items so that they are placed in familiar contexts; students practice re-stating (reframing) problems using familiar situations.

Teachers familiarize themselves with assessment practices based upon Common Core and Next Generation, as, increasingly, standardized tests will reflect these standards (e.g., *the newer versions of AP science exams will emphasize demonstrating a deeper understanding of content and science practices*).

International Society for Technology Education—Standards for Teaching and Learning in the Digital World: www.iste.org/STANDARDS

As real-world examples of data and statistics, grade-level appropriate activities are designed so that students analyze performance data from past tests.

Safe environments are created in which Black and Latino males discuss test data disaggregated by race and gender and talk about the implications (*for them as a group, for their schools, for their communities, for their individual trajectories, etc.*).

Identify and/or design rubrics based upon 21st Century Learning Skills, e.g.: pilnetwork.blob.core.windows.net/public/21CLD%20Learning%20Activity%20Rubrics%202012.pdf

Great Lakes Equity Center: A Lesson Rubric Equity Considerations in Effective STEM Instruction: lgdata.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/docs/1765/764154/STEM-Equity_Lesson_Rubric.pdf

APPENDIX

ASSESSMENT - *continued*

ACTION STEPS

Assess students' STEM interest and attitudes.

STEM college readiness benchmarks used to assess students' academic progress and to determine the supports they need along their learning trajectories.

EXAMPLES

Massachusetts STEM Pipeline Fund—Tools for Assessing STEM interest:

www.mass.edu/forinstitutions/prek16/documents/Student%20Interest%20Summary%20Report.pdf

Young People's Project Survey Packet (which takes into account issues of relationships, family, community and race):

www.typp.org

Staff, students, family, and school partners are engaged in a process of identifying, determining, and/or communicating STEM benchmarks leading to college readiness.

Students develop portfolios that reflect their STEM learning progress with respect to agreed-upon benchmarks.

PARENT/FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

ACTION STEPS

Parents, families, and community partners are considered to be a part of the learning community.

EXAMPLES

Parents, families, and community resources are invited to be a part of discussions about STEM performance data, curriculum, and instruction.

Workshops are provided to parents and families about STEM – what it is, how it is a part of their lives, why STEM competency is important for them as well as the students, what culturally responsive STEM teaching and learning looks like, how they can access and use data to be advocates for STEM education tailored to the needs and assets of young men of color, and finding STEM afterschool and summer programs, among other possibilities.

Schools work with community partners to provide STEM content opportunities, such as math circles, using technology.

Parents and families are surveyed to learn about their STEM backgrounds, as well as other assets that they might bring to the school.

School residencies with artists and other cultural resources are organized around interdisciplinary investigations involving STEM.

APPENDIX

PARENT/FAMILY/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP - *continued*

ACTION STEPS

Parents, families, and community partners are considered to be a part of the learning community.

STEM activities organized for parents, families, and community partners.

EXAMPLES

STEM Ecosystems Report:
www.noycefdn.org/documents/STEM_ECOSYSTEMS_REPORT_140128.pdf

Math nights; STEM exhibitions.

Parents, families, and community partners are invited to student presentations of their work.

Parents and families participate in visits to science museums.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

ACTION STEPS

Staff provided with professional development supporting their content understanding—ideally, linked to pedagogy. Deep content understanding is critical to making meaningful connections to students' cultural backgrounds, interests, passions, etc. and to recognizing the complexity and sophistication of students' thinking, which is often missed if a teacher doesn't possess depth of content understanding.

EXAMPLES

Teachers deeply investigate the content they teach with the aim of bringing similar learning practices to their classrooms.

Boston University PROMYS for Teachers:
www.promys.org/pft/about

University of Chicago SESAME program: www.math.uchicago.edu/sesame/overview.html

Siemens STEM Institute: www.siemensstemacademy.com/index.cfm?event=showcontent&c=36

Engineering is Elementary (Curriculum and Professional Development), Boston Museum of Science:
www.eie.org/eie-curriculum/what-professional-development

American Museum of Natural History (NYC):
www.nsbe.org/default.aspx

APPENDIX

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION - *continued*

ACTION STEPS

Staff familiar with professional STEM organizations, focused on students of color, and the programs they offer for pre-k through 12 students and teachers.

Staff provided with time and support to modify STEM lessons and activities so that they are culturally relevant (responsive, resonant, attuned), as well as to develop new lessons and activities.

EXAMPLES

National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE):
www.nsbe.org

National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME):
www.nacme.org

Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS):
www.sacnas.org

Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE):
www.shpe.org

Conference for African American Researchers in Mathematical Sciences (CAARMS):
www.caarms.net

Teachers use “lesson study” approach to develop and/or modify culturally responsive STEM lessons:
www.tc.columbia.edu/lessonstudy/tools.html

Teachers become familiar with STEAM (STEM + Arts):
www.steam-notstem.com
www.bridgesmathart.org
www.rapgenius.com/Gza-science-genius-121212-speech-lyrics

Teachers collaborate with STEM professionals and artists to develop STEAM lessons based upon Black and/or Latino arts/cultural traditions.

Staff uses rubrics for culturally responsive STEM lesson development and reflection:
mrospendasocialstudies215.wikispaces.com/file/view/55lessonplans.pdf

STEM teaching and learning connected to traditions such as Rites of Passage and Griot (for example, via Hip-Hop).

Resources and time provided to support project-based STEM learning using “real-world” investigations:
www.gk12.org/resources/stem-activities-and-resources-for-k-12-teachers-and-students
www.mathforamerica.org/teacher-resources/classroom/lessons

APPENDIX

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION - *continued*

ACTION STEPS

Students have access to advanced mathematics and science courses – Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) or University of Cambridge International Examinations.

Staff and students provided with opportunities to learn about and/or interact with contemporary STEM professionals of color.

Students provided with and/or made aware of opportunities to participate in afterschool, extended-day and/or summer STEM learning programs.

Students encouraged to achieve at the highest levels and provided with the needed supports.

EXAMPLES

Students are able to take courses onsite or at local colleges/universities.

Staff makes use of databases and resources.

HistoryMakers: www.thehistorymakers.com/sciencemakers

National Visionary Leadership Project: www.visionaryproject.org/videos

Mathematicians of the African Diaspora: www.math.buffalo.edu/mad

Yes, We Code: www.yeswecode.org

STEAM + Computer Science: www.upliftdc.org

Math Circles: www.mathcircles.org

Young People's Project: www.typp.org

Lego League: www.harlemjfirstlegoleague.com

Destination Imagination: www.destinationimagination.org

Youth Digital Network: www.digitalyouthnetwork.org

Programs targeting girls of color:

Black Girls Code: www.blackgirlscode.com

Girls Who Code: www.girlswhocode.com

Staff and students made aware of competitions, such as:

Lemelson-MIT InventTeams: web.mit.edu/inventteams/about.html

Mathematics Association of America's American Mathematics Competitions: web.mit.edu/inventteams/about.html

Siemens Competition: www.siemens-foundation.org/en/about.htm

For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST): www.usfirst.org

Boosting Engineering Science and Technology (BEST): best.eng.auburn.edu



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281 Summer Street • Boston, MA 02210

Phone: 855-267-3262 • **Email:** Info@coseboc.org • **Web:** www.coseboc.org

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