



# Brentwood Union Free School District



## CSE Manual for Parents and Families

## **What is Special Education?**

Special education is defined as specially designed individualized or group instruction, special services, and/or programs that are used to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. Special education services and programs are provided at no cost to the parent(s)/guardian(s). The Committee on Preschool Education (CPSE) oversees these supports for children from ages 3 to 5. The Committee on Special Education (CSE) oversees the needs of school age children until the child attains a High School Diploma or turns 21; whichever happens first.

## **What is the Committee on Special Education (CSE)?**

The CSE is a group of professionals, parents, and students (when appropriate) who meet to make decisions regarding the special education needs of a student. There are different purposes for meetings and therefore, different mandated members and different mandated responsibilities. CSEs meet for initial determinations, annual reviews, program reviews, manifestation determinations, consideration of de-classifications, amendments, and/or reevaluations. Decisions made by the CSE are legal mandates and must be followed by all school personnel.

## **What is the Committee of Pre-School Education (CPSE)?**

The CPSE is the conduit of Special Education Programs and Services that the County provides to eligible children between the ages of 3-5 years old. Any child residing in the Brentwood School District, and suspected of having a developmental delay, can be referred to the CPSE. The CPSE will arrange a comprehensive evaluation and appropriate services for children upon approval. The program is funded jointly between the Suffolk County Health Department and the New York State Education Department. Referrals can be made in writing to the Office of Special Services.

## **Committee Members:**

CSE (also referred to as a Full Committee) members include:

- The parent(s)/guardian(s)
- The student (when appropriate)
- The chairperson
- At least one general education teacher if the student participates in general education
- At least one special education teacher

- A school psychologist
- Other people having specific knowledge of the student such as a guidance counselor, a related service provider or medical personnel, if indicated
- A parent member (if requested by parent)

"Full" CSE Meetings are required for CPSE meetings, initial referral meetings, a meeting that is considering a special class program or out of district placement for the first time, and/or if requested by the parent or team.

CSE sub-committee members include:

- The parent(s)/guardian(s)
- The student (when appropriate)
- The chairperson
- At least one general education teacher if the student participates in general education
- At least one special education teacher
- A school psychologist, for specific circumstances
- Other people having specific knowledge of the student such as a guidance counselor, a related service provider or medical personnel, if indicated

Psychologists are required at meetings when reviewing evaluations and/or are considering a more restrictive program with a smaller student:teacher ratio.

## **Roles of CSE Members**

### **Chairperson:**

The chairperson presides over the meeting, takes attendance, and notes, and ensures the participation of all members of the committee. The chairperson is responsible for following the guidelines set forth for Committees on Special Education by federal and state government regulations.

### **Parent (and Student):**

The parent (and student) are integral members of the CSE. The parent provides information, expresses concerns, reports needs and goals of and for the student. The parent can request CSE meetings and can request mediation and/or an impartial hearing if necessary. It is imperative that the student attend the meetings when appropriate, particularly in secondary school. The student supplies the committee with ongoing information of his/her successes and needs from special education so he can participate in general education.

**General Education Teacher(s):**

At least one general education teacher that instructs the student is required to attend and participate in the CSE meeting. The input of the general education teacher is invaluable at the meeting as it helps in making sound recommendations for the student so that support can be put in place for the student to progress in the general education curriculum. Teacher evaluation forms are provided by all the student's teachers pertaining to the student's strengths, interests and needs which can be discussed at the meeting by the general education teacher.

**Special Education Teacher(s):**

At least one special education teacher is required to attend the CSE meeting. The special education teacher will provide specific information regarding evaluation and assessment results, present levels of performance, and student's strengths, interests, preferences and weaknesses, and the need for any related services or accommodations. He/she collaborates in the development of the IEP in terms of needs and goals.

**Psychologist:**

The psychologist provides evaluation, observational, and assessment information to the committee. The psychologist will address the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the student. The psychologist will also interpret evaluations and reports presented to/by committee members for consideration at the meeting.

**Parent Member:**

The parent member is a parent in the district of a student with a disability. The role of the parent member is to provide support to the parent at the meeting. Parents can request in writing that the parent member attend the CSE. As of August 2012, the Parent Member is no longer mandated in New York State. The Board of Education appoints trained Parent Members every year to serve in this volunteer capacity. The Brentwood School District is currently working to provide annual training for potential and current Parent Members so that more professionally trained parents are available if one is requested.

**Additional Members:**

Additional members may attend CSE meetings. Guidance counselors often and should attend CSE meetings to provide input specific to graduation requirements, course/schedule selections, and transition plans and activities for secondary students. Professionals who provide related services and/or

have evaluated the student may also attend. Medical personnel may attend when appropriate. The parent(s) may invite any persons of their choosing to attend the CSE meeting. If parents bring an attorney, the district must be informed in advance as they will then have an attorney that represents the school district present.

If the student is identified as an ENL student (ESL) it is strongly recommended that an ENL/ESL teacher and/or a person knowledgeable of the ENL needs of the student attend the meeting.

If the native language of the parent(s) is not English, someone will attend the meeting to interpret; however, this person is not a member of the Committee.

**Referral Process to CSE:**

Referrals to CSE are made to the Special Services Department. Before making a referral to CSE, it is important to provide the student with every opportunity to receive support through general education. Students can only be classified as having an educational disability if or when the support available through general education has been unsuccessful. Parents need to be fully informed of concerns regarding their child. When such concerns arise, pre-referral interventions are first made by the teacher(s) and/or other building staff members. If such interventions are unsuccessful, students can be referred to the building IST/RTI/PPS for further strategies. If the general education and/or non-mandated supports, services, and programs are unsuccessful, students can be referred to the Committee for Special Education.

**Referrals\* to CSE can be made by:**

- a student's parent or guardian, in writing (to the building principal and/or to a Special Services Administrator)
- a designee of the school district or educational institution
- a professional staff member of the school district in which the student resides, or the public or private school the student legally attends or is eligible to attend
- a licensed physician
- a judicial officer
- a professional staff member of a public agency with responsibility for welfare, health, or education of children
- a student who is 18 years of age or older, or an emancipated minor, who is eligible to attend the public schools of the district

*\*A referral submitted by persons other than the parent, student or a judicial officer is really a "request for a referral" and must:*

- state the reasons for the referral and include any test results, records, or reports upon which the referral is based
- describe, in writing, intervention services, programs, or instructional methodologies used to remediate the student's performance prior to referral, including any supplementary aids or support services provided for this purpose, or state the reasons why no such attempts were made
- describe the extent of parental contact or involvement prior to the referral

### **Upon receipt of the written referral (or request for referral), the Educational Administrator who receives the referral will, within 10 days:**

Request a meeting with the parent and the student, if appropriate, to:

- determine whether the student would benefit from additional general education support services as an alternative to special education, and forward back to building IST/RTI/PPS for such intervention strategies, or
- request parent consent to initiate the evaluation.



### **Purpose of the CSE Meeting:**

The purpose of the (initial) CSE meeting is to determine eligibility for special education programs and services. Evaluations, observations, pre-intervention data, pertinent medical information, social history, and anecdotal information is presented and discussed to determine if the student has an educational disability and if that disability requires a special education program and/or related service for the student to progress in general education. If the student is receiving support through general education that is successful, in that the student is making progress, he/she may not need special education services or programs. Regulations require that CSE members ensure that students have equal access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) which is as close to general education as possible. Members of the CSE identify and discuss the student's abilities, strengths, interests, preferences, and weaknesses and come to a consensus for determination of decisions. These decisions are made based

upon needs and goals. The concerns and needs expressed by the parent must be considered. If the student is an ENL (ESL) student, the ENL needs must be considered by the Committee. The CSE cannot excuse students from the NYSESLAT when mandated at this time; however, the Committee will consider whether the student requires specific testing accommodations specific to the NYSESLAT.

### **Possible Outcomes of the (Initial) CSE Meeting:**

- The student is determined to have an educational disability and is deemed eligible for special education programs/ services for which an IEP will be developed
- Ineligibility due to limited or insufficient instruction in reading or math
- Ineligibility due to limited English Proficiency as a determining factor
- Ineligibility due to need for further information; reconvene as indicated if needed
- Ineligible under the guidelines set by state and federal regulations; possible IST/RTI/PPS re-referral for support through general education

### **What if a parent(s) disagrees with the decision(s) made?**

The Chairperson works hard to ensure a consensus is reached by eliciting information from the members, asking questions, restating information, suggesting compromises, informing members of regulations, etc. However, there are rare instances where a consensus cannot be reached. In such cases the Chairperson would make the decision. Parents can disagree with decisions and can request another meeting, mediation, or an impartial hearing. The Procedural Safeguards/Due Process Rights outline the required procedures for this process. Parents can also request, in writing, an Independent Educational Evaluation at District Expense. In the letter the parent should note which evaluation(s) they disagree with and what evaluation(s) they are requesting. This letter should be sent to the Assistant Superintendent for Special Services.

### **The IEP:**

The Individualized Educational Program is a written document which describes the specific information of the student's individual special education program, services, goals, and needs for the student to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education. The IEP is a legal document that can only be changed by the CSE. It is required by law that all school personnel follow the programs and services outlined in the IEP.

If it is determined or there is concern that aspects of the IEP are no longer appropriate, CSE (or sub-Committee) must reconvene to address the issue(s). In certain cases, the IEP can be amended by an Amendment/No Meeting agreement. Please direct these questions to the building psychologists and/or the Special Services Administrators. The CSE meets at least annually to re-address eligibility, classification, needs, least restrictive environment, present levels of performance, and goals and objectives. The IEP is developed at the meeting and the document reflects the discussions, concerns, and recommendations made at the meeting. The IEP is written in the order of the discussion at the meeting, so that we see the student's levels, needs, goals/supports, programs and related services. The student's needs drive the goals/supports. The programs are recommended appropriately to deliver the services/supports and implement the goals in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

The IEP is sent home and the parent receives the Prior Written Notice (PWN) every time an IEP is developed or changed so they can be fully informed before the new IEP is implemented. Parents are encouraged to reach out to the building Psychologist or to Special Services Administrators if they disagree with or find an error in the IEP.

Teachers must provide the **Program Modifications**, if any, in all of the student's classes. These include aspects of the delivery of instruction or instructional setting that must be modified for the student. These include things like preferential seating, copy of class notes, and refocusing and redirection required.

The IEP may also mandate that the student receive **Testing Accommodations**, which apply to all examinations the student takes, except for those NYS examinations which preclude specific accommodations as indicated in the administrators manual for testing administration. These may include but are not limited to the need for additional time, a separate location to take tests, and/or tests read aloud to the student. If students require extra time, a separate location and/or other testing accommodations that cannot be provided in the regular classroom, students are sent to a designated testing room/location in the school. Children must receive all testing accommodations as they are listed in the IEP.

The IEP also includes sections describing the student's specific academic, social-emotional, physical, and management strengths and needs. Information provided in these sections can be extremely helpful in both understanding what type of learner the student is and how to assist him/her in being most successful in the classroom. This information is gathered during the CSE meetings with

input from teachers, staff members, parents, and students when appropriate.

If a student has behaviors that significantly interfere with his/her learning or the learning of others he/she may have a **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)** which is indicated on the IEP. This is developed after a **Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)** is conducted which looks at the student's behavior in a variety of settings. The goal of the BIP is to ensure everyone is using common language and strategies to provide positive alternatives and consequences for behaviors.

Questions regarding a particular student's IEP should be directed to the special education teacher designated as the "case manager" or the building psychologist. Other Special Education members may serve as resources as well, including all psychologists and social workers. Case Manager names/lists can be made available by the Office of Special Services. At the elementary level, it would be the student's special education teacher or related service provider if the student only receives related services.

### **Declassified Students with Support Services and/or Accommodations:**

If a student is no longer eligible for the special education program and/or services, the CSE will "declassify" the student. The student may be afforded transition services, program modification, and/or testing accommodations. These accommodations are sent to the building principal and are indicated in the Declassification IEP.

### **Transfer Students/New Entrants:**

Upon registering in the district, parents who indicate that their child had received a special education program or services in their previous district, indicate such on the registration forms. That information is forwarded to the appropriate personnel for the intake process to be carried out. An appointment to meet with family will be made for the purpose of attaining a copy of current IEP and documentation of services. Intake personnel will obtain consent from the parent/guardian to make a placement in the appropriate setting providing a comparable program and services with the agreement that CSE will convene for an Intake CSE meeting. This will give the staff sufficient time to get to know the student before CSE convenes to decide what programs and/or services the student will receive through the Brentwood School District.

### **Transition Services and Supports**

A key role of the CSE is to develop a road map for the student and his/her family in preparation for moving to life

post-high school including, but not limited to, post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and/or community participation. These plans are based on the student's goals, strengths, preferences, interests, and needs including input from students, families, teachers, guidance counselors, and relevant staff members. For all students 15+ years old, the CSE process will include assessment of, discussion of, and documentation of in the IEP of: Post-Secondary Goals, Coordinated Sets of Activities, Present Levels of Performance and Needs, as well as Diploma/Credential options. When exiting High School, a document called A Student Exit Summary is prepared to summarize levels of performance, needs and recommendations for the future.

NYSED (New York State Education Department) provides safety nets for Students with Disabilities in attaining a High School Diploma or Exiting Credential with multiple pathways to attaining either a Regents Diploma, a Local Diploma, a Career Development and Occupational Studies (stand alone or supplementary) Credential (CDOS), or a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC).

Parents and students with questions about Transition Services and Supports and/or Diploma/Credential Options should direct their questions to their Case Manager, Guidance Counselor, or Special Services Administration. Up to date information regarding these options can be found at the following link:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/gradrequirements>

## **How Parents Can Prepare for CSE Meetings:**

It is a clever idea for parents to maintain a file, notebook, or binder to keep all your child's Special Education records including IEPs (Individualized Education Programs), Medical Information, Evaluations, and Correspondences. You may want to create a section for work samples and space to jot down questions, information, concerns, and observations so this information will be handy when it is time to go to the meeting. Parents are encouraged to prepare written notes in advance to ensure all their concerns and questions are discussed and addressed. Bring some paper as well to write things down during the meeting. If a parent finds it necessary to record the meeting, they must let the district know, as they will prepare and record the meeting as well. Some parents like to bring a photo of their child if their child is not attending the meeting, which is a great idea.

### ***No one knows your child better than you, so...***

- Do bring your notes, questions, and paper/pen
- Do share your child's interests, preferences, and strengths from your perspective with the Committee
- Do try to remain calm; everyone in the room is there to help your child
- Do look for opportunities to express gratitude to teachers and staff
- Do express your concerns to the Committee
- Do ask questions; asking for information or clarification if there is something you do not understand
- Do ask for examples, work samples and/or test results
- Do bring someone for support if it makes you more comfortable
- Do clearly state what you agree with and what you do not agree with
- Do keep an open mind to hear what the professionals have to say and ask questions about why recommendations are made if you do not understand or if you do not agree
- Do write down the recommendations made at the meeting for future reference

When you receive the IEP and the Prior Written Notice in the mail, be sure to read it promptly to ensure it reflects what you recall and have written down. If you have questions or disagree with the recommendations, you must let the Chairperson and/or Special Services Administration know as soon as possible so we can rectify the problem. If that does not happen to your satisfaction, you have a right to request another CSE meeting in writing at any time.

### ***Have more questions?***

Feel free to call the building psychologists, your child's teachers, related service provider(s), or the Assistant Superintendent for Special Services or the Coordinator of Special Services for assistance. Come to SEPTA and share concerns with the members and Executive Board. Go to the Special Services page on the District Website where we are continually updating our Links and Resources pages.



## **Brentwood Continuum of Special Education Programs and Services**

**Related Services Only:** These students attend general education classes and receive related services including but not limited to; speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, or counseling. Students may also receive related services in addition to any of the special education programs listed below.

**Consultant Teacher Services:** These students attend general education classes and receive support services from a special education teacher either in their classroom or in collaboration with general education teacher(s).

**Resource Room:** These students attend general education classes, and attend small-group support classes daily, taught by a special education teacher, designed to address their individual needs and goals as determined on the IEP.

**Integrated Co-Teacher (ICT):** At the secondary school level, these are general education classes for major subjects that are co-taught by both a special education teacher and a general education teacher.

At the elementary level, students receive instruction by both a special education teacher and a general education teacher as indicated on the IEP. Special education programs and services are provided directly to the students in his/her classroom so they can progress in the general education curriculum.

**Special (Self-Contained) Classes:** These are special education classes designed to include the higher standards set forth by the NYS Education Department through specially designed instruction in a smaller class setting. All major subjects necessary for graduation requirements are offered in the self-contained program at the secondary level. At the elementary level, special class instruction is designed to provide special education programs and services in a smaller student:teacher ratio consistent with the content and curriculum as outlined in the Next Generation Learning Standards set forth by New York State. Children in Special Classes have similar academic, management and/or social-emotional needs.



## Definitions of Educational Disabilities:

A student with a disability is defined as a student with a disability because of mental, physical, or emotional reasons, who has been identified as having a disability and who requires special approved services and programs, as per the State Department of Education. The terms used in this definition are defined as follows:

(1) **Autism** is defined as a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that adversely affects a student's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a student's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the student has an emotional disturbance. A student who manifests the characteristics of autism after age 3 could be diagnosed as having autism if the criteria in this paragraph are otherwise satisfied.

(2) **Deafness** is defined as a hearing impairment that is so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

(3) **Deaf-Blindness** is defined as concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or students with blindness.

(4) **Emotional Disturbance** (currently under a proposal to be changed to *Emotional Disability*) is defined as a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over an extended period of time, to a marked degree that adversely affects a student's educational performance. This term does not apply to students who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.

- A pattern of inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
- This term does not apply to students who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

(5) **Hearing impairment** is defined as an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects the child's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness.

(6) **Learning disability** is defined as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken, or written, which manifests itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

(7) **Intellectual Disability** is defined as significantly sub average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

(8) **Multiple disabilities** is defined as concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which cause such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

(9) **Orthopedic impairment** is defined as a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (*e.g.*, poliomyelitis,





bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (cerebral palsy, amputation, and fractures or burns which cause contractures).

**(10) Other health-impairment** is defined as having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems, including but not limited to a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, diabetes, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or Tourette Syndrome, which adversely affects a student's educational performance.

**(11) Speech or language impairment** means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

**(12) Traumatic Brain Injury** is defined as an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force or by certain medical conditions such as stroke, encephalitis, aneurysm, anoxia, or brain tumors with resulting impairments that adversely affect educational performance. The term includes open or closed head injuries or brain injuries from certain medical conditions resulting in mild, moderate, or severe impairments in one or more areas, including cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech. The term does not include injuries that are congenital or caused by birth trauma.

**(13) Visual Impairment Including Blindness** is defined as an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

## **IEP Translations:**

Upon parent request, The Office of Special Services will provide families with a translated copy of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) in any language at no cost.

Eligible families must have a child with an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) who is currently school-aged (K-12) or is turning 5 years old in the current calendar year.

Please visit the BUFSD web site or call the Office of Special Services at 631-434-2401 for more information.

## **Transportation:**

In accordance with New York State Department of Education regulations and prior voter approval by the residents of the community, the Board of Education has adopted the following Transportation Policy:

- Kindergarten - All children are transported.
- First through eighth grade - All students living more than ½ mile from the closest designated gate of school assigned are transported.
- Ninth through twelfth grade - All students living more than one mile from the closest designated gate of school assigned are transported.
- Out-of-district private or parochial school students are transported up to fifteen miles from their home.

## **Latchkey Status:**

For students in grade 6-12 that have minibus transportation with a matron, if you would like your child to be allowed to get off the bus and enter the home using his/her key without an adult being present in the house, please submit a Latchkey Request Form to the Office of Special Service.

**SPECIAL SERVICES DIRECTORY**

Rhonda Young, Assistant Superintendent for Special Services	631-434-2143
April Seneus, Coordinator of Special Services	631-434-2142
TBD, Coordinator of Special Services, Department Head of Speech and Hearing	631-434-2215
Sean Coffin, Coordinator of Psychological & Health Services	631-434-2583
Dr. Marlene Ramos-Velita, Coordinator of Attendance & Registration	631-434-2301
Elizabeth Sheehan, Assistant Coordinator to the Assistant Superintendent	631-434-2141
Denise Farrell, Assistant Coordinator to the Assistant Superintendent	631-434-2141
Kimberly Clarke, Assistant Coordinator to the Assistant Superintendent	631-434-2145
Ingrid Citrin, High School Special Education Department Head	631-434-2423
Karen Gross, District Transition Coordinator	631-434-2423
Assistive Technology Equipment	631-434-2401
BOCES & OOD Students	631-434-2141
CPSE Meetings	631-434-2145
CSE Meetings	631-434-2307
Health Concerns & Medical Home Teaching	631-434-2583
Home Teaching	631-434-2223
Intakes	631-434-2224
Medicaid	631-434-2402
New Referrals	631-434-2141
Program Reviews - Pre-school	631-434-2145
Program Reviews - Elementary	631-434-2215
Program Reviews - Secondary	631-434-2142
Records	631-434-2222
Registration	631-434-2301
Speech & Hearing	631-434-2215
Student Concerns - Pre-school	631-434-2145
Student Concerns - Elementary	631-434-2144
Student Concerns - Secondary	631-434-2142
Transportation Issues - BOCES & OOD	631-434-2146
Transportation Issues - Pre-school	631-434-2145
Transportation Issues - Elementary	631-434-2144
Transportation Issues - Secondary	631-434-2142
All Other Issues	631-434-2401

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