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# CONTEXTUALIZING PRINCIPAL STANDARDS: APPROACHES TO PSEL

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MAKING  
RESEARCH  
RELEVANT

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# Who we are



Matthew Clifford, principal researcher at American Institutes for Research



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# School Leadership: Research on influence



Research confirms what we know:

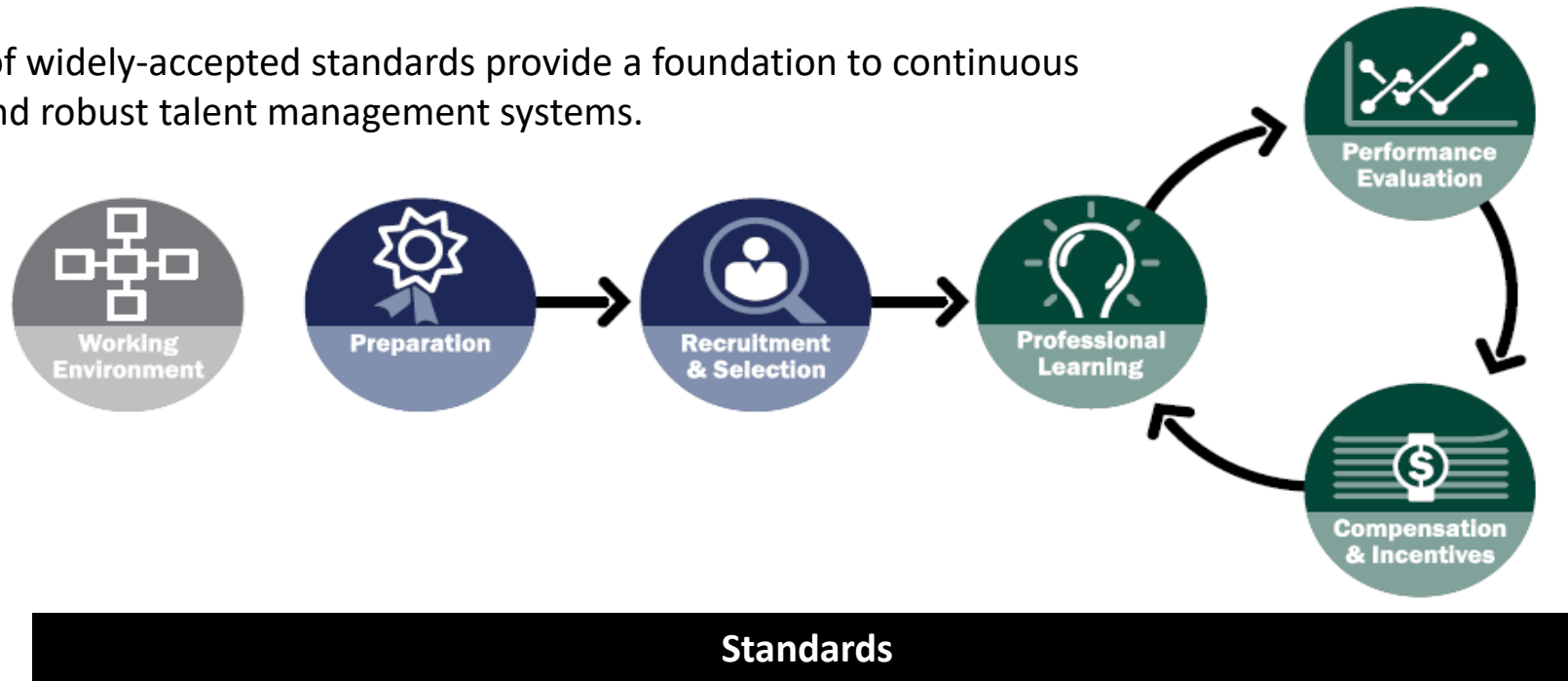
- Principals influence student achievement
- Principals influence teacher decisions
- Principals influence policy and program implementation
- Principals roles have changed, with more responsibilities for instructional oversight layered upon responsibilities for school management.

Clifford, Sherratt & Feters, 2012; Hallinger, P., & Heck, R., 1998; Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D., 1999; Leithwood, K., Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K., 2004; Wallace Foundation, 2011; May & Supovitz, 2011; Fuller & Hollingsworth, 2014; Branch, Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Grissom, Kalogrides & Loeb, 2012; Branch, G., Hanushek, E. and Rivkin, S., 2012; Hallinger, P., & Heck, R., 1998; Goldring, E., Huff, J., May, H., & Camburn, E., 2007; Hallinger, P., & Heck, R., 1998; Herman, R., Dawson, P., Dee, T., Fuller, E. J., Greene, J., Maynard, R., Redding, S., 2008; Grissom, J., Kalogrides, D., & Loeb, S., 2012; Grissom, J. A., & Loeb, S., 2011; Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D., 2008; Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D., 1999; Leithwood, K., Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K., 2004; Nettles, S. M., & Herrington, C., 2007; Wahlstrom, K., Seashore-Louis, K., Leithwood, K., & Anderson, S., 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2007; Herman, R., Dawson, P., Dee, T., Fuller, E. J., 2014; Center for Great Teachers and Leaders, 2016; Murphy, Louis & Smylie, 2017; National Policy Board for Education Administration, 2015; Prociw & Ederle, 2016; Young & Perrone, 2016; The Wallace Foundation (undated); The Wallace Foundation, 2013; Mendels, 2012; Burrell, 2017; Goldring & Taie, 2014; Li, 2015; Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Guarino, Ghosh-Dastidar & Brown, 2006; Loeb, Kalogrides & Horng, 2010; Branch, Hanushek & Rivkin, 2008; Clifford, Condon, Greenberg, Williams, Gerdeman, Feters & Baker, 2012; Snodgrass, 2018

# School Leadership: The Role of Standards in Support Systems

More robust, aligned talent management systems are important for providing principal support, through all stages of career advancement.

A common set of widely-accepted standards provide a foundation to continuous improvement and robust talent management systems.



Graphic from George W. Bush Institute, 2016. (<http://www.bushcenter.org/publications/resources-reports/reports/framework-principal-talent-management.html>)

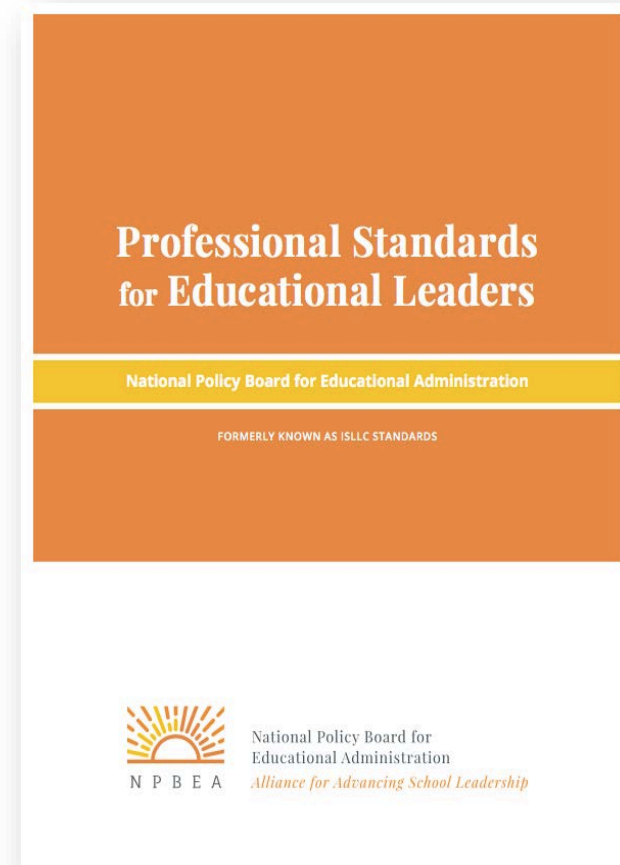
# Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

Refreshes the Inter-State School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards from 2008.

Provides states and districts policy guidance on the direction for the educational leadership field.

Addresses the expanding roles and technical skills of educational leaders, regardless of their place on the career continuum, with particular emphasis on:

- Working deeply with teachers on curriculum, instruction and assessment; and
- Creating conditions for equity and equitable distribution of teachers.

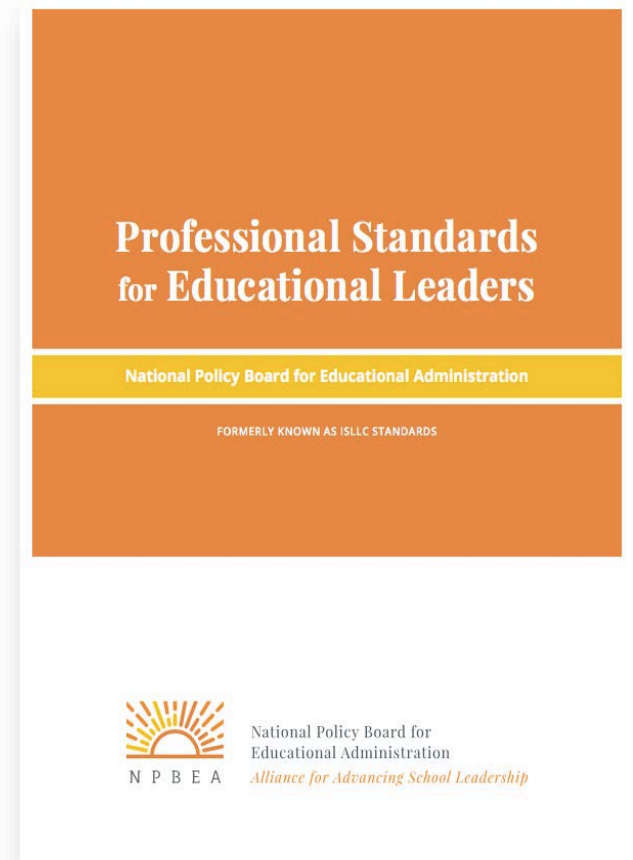


National Policy Board of Education  
Administration, 2015

# Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

## The PSEL Standards

1. Mission, vision and core values
2. Ethics and professional values
3. Equity and cultural responsiveness
4. Curriculum, instruction and assessment
5. Community of care and support of students
6. Professional capacity of school personnel
7. Professional community for teachers and staff
8. Meaningful engagement of families and community
9. Operations and management
10. School improvement



National Policy Board of Education  
Administration, 2015

# PSEL and ISLLC alignment

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at AIR (GTL) conducted an alignment activity and produced tools to assist states in conducting alignment efforts.

ISLLC standards (2008)	PSEL standards (2015)
Vision and mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mission, vision and core values</li><li>• School implementation</li></ul>
School culture and instructional program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Curriculum, instruction and assessment</li><li>• Community of care for students</li><li>• Professional capacity of school personnel</li><li>• Professional community for teachers and staff</li></ul>
Operations and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community of care for students</li><li>• Professional capacity of school personnel</li><li>• Operations and management</li></ul>
Collaboration with community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engagement of families and community</li></ul>
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ethics and professional norms</li><li>• Equity and cultural responsiveness</li></ul>
Advocacy to improve contexts of schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equity and cultural responsiveness</li><li>• Engagement of families and community</li></ul>

([https://gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/PSEL\\_ISLLC\\_Crosswalk.pdf](https://gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/PSEL_ISLLC_Crosswalk.pdf))

# School Turnaround Leaders: Competencies for Success

**Public Impact identified four clusters of school turnaround leader competency**

## **Driving for results cluster**

- Achievement: Setting high performance goals for the team or organization, prioritizing collective actions, and working to meet goals
- Initiative and persistence: Taking personal responsibility and doing more to accomplish challenging tasks.
- Monitoring and directiveness: Choosing the best managers to distribute responsibility and achieve goals.
- Planning ahead: A press toward planning for future benefit.

## **Influencing for results cluster**

- Impact and influence: Acting with purpose to affect others' perceptions, thinking and actions.
- Team leadership: Assuming authoritative leadership of a group for the benefit of the organization.
- Developing others: Supporting others to develop as leaders while achieving short- and long-term goals.

## **Problem-solving cluster**

- Analytical thinking: Breaking problems into smaller parts or logical order in order to solve them.
- Conceptual thinking: Understanding how seemingly unrelated things are related, seeing the big picture.

## **Showing confidence to lead cluster**

- Self-confidence: A personal belief in one's own capabilities to accomplish tasks

Steiner, Hassel, Hassel and Ellison, 2008

See [http://publicimpact.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Turnaround\\_Leader\\_Competencies.pdf](http://publicimpact.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Turnaround_Leader_Competencies.pdf)



# Leadership Standards: Eleven states have changed standards

We are beginning to see a new wave of leadership standards adoption in states. The following have recently updated their standards:

- Arkansas,
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Maryland
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- New York
- Utah
- Vermont
- West Virginia
- Wyoming

See Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2018 for more information and an interactive map

# “Contextualizing” Leadership Standards

*Contextualizing* means that districts, states and other organizations adapt the standards and indicators or enhance the standards and indicators *to increase the utility and fit to the local context.*

In our work, we have engaged with researchers and practitioners to contextualize the PSEL and School Turnaround Leaders: Competencies for Success for the following reasons:

1. Increase specificity for the principal (or assistant principal) position, based upon district/state priorities, leader authority or communications structures.
2. Use language with historical or cultural significance to principals, their supervisors, teachers, and coaches.
3. Integrate the PSEL standards with School Turnaround Leadership standards, providing for a single list.
4. Increase measurability within the standards or indicators, based on preferred approaches.
5. Build *frameworks* or *rubrics* that increase specificity and describe performance levels, to improve evaluation, reflection, and planning.
6. Develop guidance documents that explain the appropriate use of standards for district or state contexts.

## “Contextualizing” Leadership Standards

*The design process of adopting/adapting standards or building tools matters.* Because the standards are new to many, the design process appears to make a difference in educator support and use of the standards. The design process can engender a sense of “ownership” for the standards and support additional tool development. Based on our experience, a four step design process is generally useful.

**Step 1: Prepare and engage.** Identify key stakeholders to form a design team facilitated by a neutral party, and clearly communicate the design team’s work to others within the state/district to raise awareness. Identify “communication liaisons” to talk with others and receive input.

**Step 2: Select and customize.** Stakeholders engage with the standards and indicators, working together to adapt or adopt that standards and indicators to local uses, priorities, values and needs. This step may include outreach to other stakeholders to pilot new ideas and tools, prior to their finalization, and review of pertinent law/rule on the use of tools.

**Step 3: Launch.** The design team typically pilot tests the standards and tools, first, in order to gather information about their design utility, reliability and validity across contexts. Then, the tools are moved to scale.

**Step 4: Assess and advance.** The design committee continues to gather information about standards use, revisiting the standards routinely, and checks to assess impact of the standards on practice.

# “Contextualizing” Leadership Standards

Contextualizing leadership standards can have a downside! We’ve noticed the following, which should be avoided.

1. Significantly changing the meaning of the standards.
2. Creating tools for compliance, rather than professional reflection, learning, and career support.
3. Duplication or repetition within the standards and indicators.
4. Creating balance within frameworks or rubrics.
5. Increasing jargon within the standards.
6. Building standards without a communications or use strategy.

# The Case of Delaware's Standards

# The Case of Delaware's Standards: The first state to address PSEL

Delaware was the first state to adopt the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership in 2015.

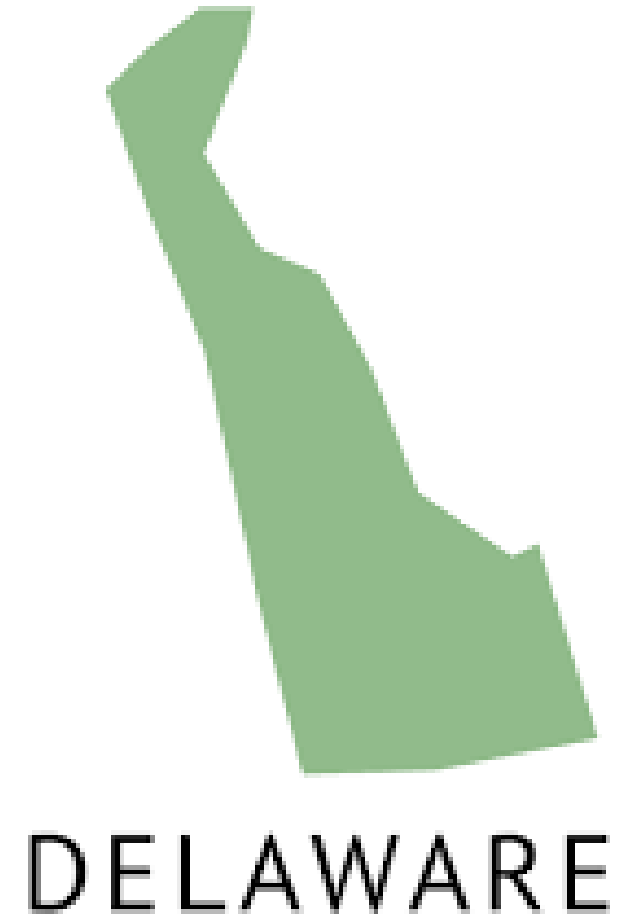
The Delaware Administrator Standards (14 Del.Admin.Code 1590) are identical to the PSEL standards.



# The Case of Delaware's Standards: Why adopt the standards into administrative rule?

Delaware adopted the PSEL Standards with no adaptation for two reasons:

- The standards were informed by research (600 empirical studies)
- The standards were informed by practitioners (over 1000 interviews and survey responses)



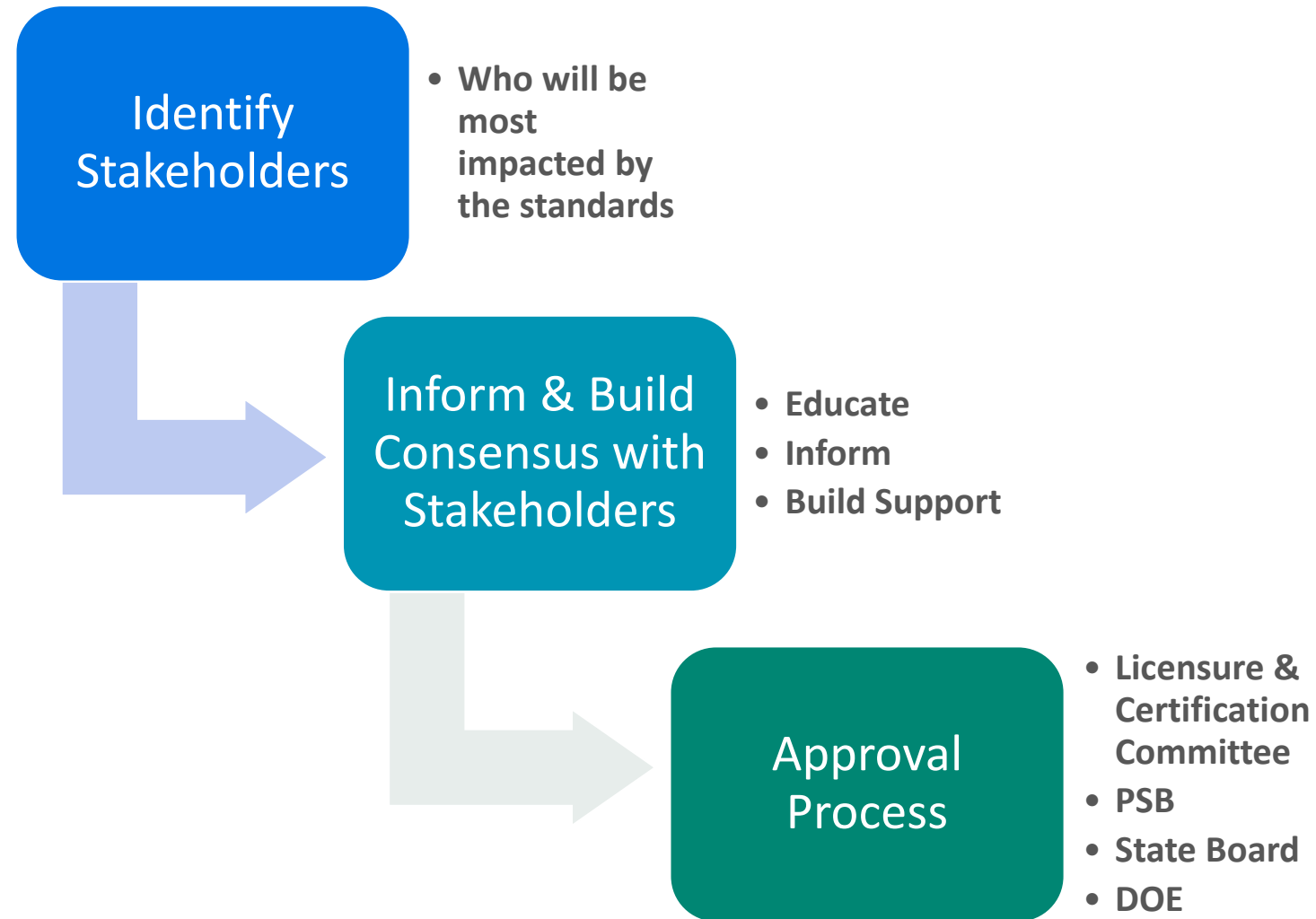
# The Case of Delaware's Standards: Engaged many stakeholders

Delaware engaged a broad group of stakeholders to build support for the PSEL Standards

- Delaware Association for School Administrators
- Delaware Academy for School Leadership—University of Delaware
- Key education leaders from districts and schools
- Policy leaders
  - Professional Standards Board
  - Delaware State Board of Education
  - Delaware DOE



# The Case of Delaware's Standards: Adoption Process



# The Case of Delaware's Standards: LEAs can adapt standards

## Adaptation of the Standards

Delaware left adaptation of the PSEL Standards to LEAs based on context (rural, urban, size, demographics, school performance, identified growth need of the educator

Example: During the Goal Setting Conference with a principal, the principal supervisor may emphasize one standard and 2-3 criteria more than another based on school performance, demographics or an identified area of need.

# The Case of Delaware's Standards

## Next Steps: Alignment

- Preparation Programs
- Hiring & Placement
- Professional Development
- Coaching and Mentoring Programs
- Performance Evaluation System

# Questions and Answers

# Thank you!

The webinar slide deck and webinar recording are available through the ELLC Basecamp portal or from the speakers.

Please contact:

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