

# Community Engagement Committee (CEC) Handbook

*The purpose of this handbook is to provide clear guidelines that help the CEC, all reporting ministries, and newly developing ministries function effectively according to our ever-developing vision of community engagement ministry.*

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## 1. Vision and Mission Statements

### **Vision**

To foster opportunities for members of the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields (St. Martin's) and residents of the Northwest Philadelphia region to engage as agents of Christ's love in the world by developing mutual relationships at the local, regional, national, and international levels that advance the mission and values of St. Martin's as we discern God's will as a Church, together.

### **Mission**

The CEC provides support, oversight, and funding for the community engagement ministries of St. Martin's as they work in direct service, granting, advocacy, and organizing to advance a transformative agenda in their ministry area. The CEC also responds to emerging concerns and movements, helping to nurture new ministries aligned with the stated values of the church.

## 2. Guiding Principles

The framework for all community engagement activities sponsored by St. Martin's comprises two key supporting structures: *critical elements* and *core values*. The guiding principles that make up these two components are described below.

### **Critical Elements**

- *Fundamental Methods*. All community engagement ministries sponsored by St. Martin's should involve direct service, organizing, funding and/or granting to address current needs (e.g., food insecurity) or both; additionally, they should engage in advocacy to address root causes (e.g., poverty, food deserts).
- *Covenantal Relationships*. Each partner relationship between St. Martin's and a participating organization will be governed by a Covenant that sets forth responsibilities and expectations for the participating organization as well as for St. Martin's. Both partners governed by the Covenant will report annually on the status of the supported activity.

### **Core Values**

- *Importance of Relationship*. Whenever possible, outreach activities should provide volunteer opportunities for the parishioners of St. Martin's as well as other avenues for the development of a relationship between St. Martin's and the participating organization.

- *Subsidiarity*. Decisions should be made with the participation of those impacted by the issue. St. Martin's will take special care not to disrupt or disrespect the culture, practices, and integrity of the partner organizations.
- *Cultural Humility*. Activities should include a focus on self-examination of personal and cultural biases as well as awareness and sensitivity to significant cultural issues of others.
- *Solidarity*. Outreach teams should work *with* and *alongside* the people most affected by the injustice or need instead of *for* them or *without* them. Effective community engagement means working together because the partners involved share self-interest and a vision of justice that affects us all. "*If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together*" (Aboriginal activists' group, Queensland, 1970s).
- *Transparency*. Our Parish will know what the CEC is working on, and the CEC will practice clear expectations with our ministry partners. We will consult with the Parish when major changes are being considered. Communication will be planned and structured using our website to clearly publicize our ministry partners and the work we share with them. Our budget is available at each CEC meeting and upon request to the Rector.
- *Charity Linked with Justice*. Assistance in meeting basic human needs must be coupled with efforts to address the reasons the need exists. Advocacy is most powerful when it is informed by direct experience of the injustice or disparity at hand.
- *Organize, Don't Advertise*. We organize our turnout and participation through direct invitation. While we do advertise events, we know that the most powerful way to bring people to the work is through 1:1 invitation.

### 3. Methods of Engagement

The CEC envisions its outreach and ministries engaging with participating organizations through four connected methods: *direct service*, *granting*, *advocacy*, and *organizing*. The CEC values all four of these methods, not only for their independent impact, but also for the interplay and connectivity among them. For example, direct service builds relationships with organizations and community members; educates St. Martin's members about issues, challenges, and community needs; and provides a foundation for advocacy and organizing efforts. This interplay strengthens the impact of all outreach and ministries and broadens opportunities for engagement.

**Direct Service** is relationship building through ministrations. It is the "showing-up" and participating in behaviors that express our commitment to answer the Gospel call to respond and support missions of justice. Direct service establishes stronger relationships among St. Martin's members and the community. It enables greater awareness and is a building block for responding in thoughtful and educated ways to achieve impactful advocacy. Examples include empathic listening and supporting, tutoring, marching, and conducting events to raise awareness.

**Granting** is the financial strategy to fund the resources needed to build a sustainable ministry. It includes short- and long-term plans for expenditures and revenues and ways to achieve the financial commitments needed to work toward advocating for justice and improved welfare of the people impacted by the ministry. Increasing the scale of community benefit may also result from receiving financial grants. However, the CEC recognizes that some ministries may have limited opportunities for direct service or advocacy (e.g., international ministries) but remain important because of special needs, such as extreme poverty and lack of resources. This method is important to our faith because as we ask God for specific ways to serve and share our gifts with others, we are reminded of his grace and mercy in our lives.

**Advocacy** is the way we speak in favor of, recommend, argue for a cause, support, defend and plead on the behalf of others to influence decisions and actions toward justice. We are reminded of Jesus' teachings to love our neighbors as ourselves. To illustrate how each of these areas is linked, for example, we are reminded that through direct service we may be informed and better prepared to advocate for those who are vulnerable. Using the relationships and knowledge developed through direct service, the CEC seeks advocacy opportunities to expand the scale of benefit to meet community needs and challenges. We express our Christian faith by actively working with and amplifying the voices of those who are marginalized and are often not considered in shaping the way we live together in God's world.

**Organizing** is the nuts and bolts of the actions needed to achieve justice. It is a spirit-led plan. We ask God to lead us, and we pray for discernment to see, hear, and think clearly for the steps to accomplish what God wishes. We seek to partner, not dictate solutions to community challenges, by working with other congregations organized to build power and take action on issues that arise from grassroots listening and relationships. Organizing seeks to develop people power for long-term, sustained changemaking that addresses structural injustice and root causes of suffering that affect most vulnerable neighbors. Peaceful, purposeful actions gain attention and have the power to bring political might to remedy injustice.

#### 4. Evaluation Criteria for Granting

Ministry Partner grants are three-year commitments that may be renewed no more than two times for a total of nine years. Ministry Partner grants will be staggered to avoid renewals of multiple grants within a given calendar year. A Ministry Partner-level grant is \$5000 up to \$10,000 per year for the three-year cycle.

##### **Initial Criteria**

To meet minimum standards for a Partner-level grant, the organization must:

1. provide clear evidence of a racial justice lens.

2. focus on at least one of the Parish's priority areas of Hunger, Education, Climate Justice, Refugee Care, and Racial Justice.
3. demonstrate participation from persons affected by the cause addressed and feeling the pain.
4. inspire strong engagement from within the Parish to further the goals of the organization.
5. be working to promote self-sustaining and satisfying lives in strong community by means of advocacy, direct service, or both.
6. be a non-profit with 501c3 established or a faith-based organization or a collaboration.
7. **not** be incorporated as or be affiliated with 501c4 status.

### **Sustainability**

To demonstrate the ability to continue, a Ministry Partner must:

1. provide evidence to the CEC of an annual (or longer) plan with strategic goals, timeline, financial plan and budget.
2. have a track record of achievement of at least one year.
3. provide evidence of financial and personnel sustainability including leadership succession plan, using but not completely depending on a contribution from St. Martin's.
4. reveal any other funding streams for the organization.

### **Values**

To demonstrate that the Ministry Partner's values conform to the ministry and mission of St. Martin's, the organization must:

1. offer and invite opportunities for mutual engagement, such that St. Martin's volunteers would gain as much or more than they contribute.
2. provide evidence of fair treatment of staff and beneficiaries (clients).

### **Outcomes/Metrics**

As a measure of the Ministry Partner's capacity to meet its own and St. Martin's requirements, the organization must be willing to:

1. sign a Covenant containing measurable goals and objectives, with a clear timeline to meet them and to accept St. Martin's support.
2. submit an annual report on progress made toward meeting the goals and objectives.

### **Other Considerations**

When considering candidate organizations for Partner-level grants, the CEC:

1. looks for an organizational approach that includes a concern for systemic change or fostering self-sufficiency in the community served or both.
2. prioritizes programs that work for long-term change in the conditions and prospects of the people served.

### **Smaller Grants**

For grants below \$5000, the CEC has the discretion to fund organizations outside the scope of the concerns identified by the Congregation and may apply less scrutiny than that applied to candidates for Partner-level grants.

## **5. Ministry Leadership Skills**

All ministries go through cycles from inception to flourishing to decline. This is to be expected. Planning and energized leadership can recover a ministry from decline and return it to flourishing.

Effective ministries at St. Martin's have excellent lay leaders. Effective long-term ministries at St. Martin's engage in leadership development and succession planning, looking ahead to pass leadership to the next excellent lay leader. When new leaders cannot be located, this may be a sign that the ministry has run its course and needs to sundown.

### **Qualities of Excellent Lay Leaders**

St. Martin's lay leaders are persons whom other parishioners are willing to follow into the commitment and work of ministry. The most effective lay leaders:

- are vocational; their joy, motivation, and skills fit the needs of the ministry they are called and equipped to lead by God and sustained by the Holy Spirit.
- are relational; they actively nurture trusting relationships with their team members and they seek to meet new people in the Congregation to build the network of supporters around the ministry.
- are collaborative with their ministry team by actively engaging the team in decision making and direction setting. They delegate tasks and roles as appropriate.
- are faithful; they are active in the worship life of the church, they frame meetings in prayer, they are voting members of the Congregation who pledge, and they actively nurture their personal connection with God.

- understand alignment and accountability; they understand that they minister on behalf of the Congregation and strive to direct their ministry in alignment with the mission, methods, and objectives of the Parish and in concert with other ministries.
- are collaborative with staff and clergy, working in partnership with them to shape and direct ministry in alignment with the mission, methods, and objectives of the church.

We realize that all leaders are evolving and growing, so we do not expect complete fulfillment of these skills, capacities, and characteristics. However, we do hold out these key qualities of effective lay leaders as aspirational guides for our work.

### **Effective Ministry Management**

Implementation of best practices in the following areas gives a ministry the greatest chance for successful work, a long life, and a graceful end.

*Relational Meetings.* The One-to-One or “relational meeting” is the building block of all ministry at St. Martin’s. Ministry team members should take the time to visit for 30 minutes to an hour with other members, newcomers, and neighbors to listen to their life stories, paying special attention to hurts, hopes, dreams, and frustrations. Intentional connection opens up trust and can lead to engagement in ministry now or later. This is not an interview or a recruiting conversation. Training is available from the clergy or the Local Organizing Committee.

*Communication.* Ministry leaders or a team member need to form a relationship with the Associate for Communications and Administration to advance effective communications of their ministry area. Remembering our guiding principle at all times: “Organize, don’t advertise!” groups are encouraged to cultivate relationships to involve members and neighbors in the work. Personal invitation in person, by phone, or by email are the strongest ways to engage!

*Leading a Meeting/Setting an Agenda.* Quality meetings help members form meaningful relationships with each other and the work at hand. Meetings should be planned ahead and a TIMED agenda established to respect the time commitment members are making when they attend a meeting. Meetings at St. Martin’s begin and end with prayer, and intercessory prayer is encouraged at the beginning of the meeting to gather up the group’s thanking and asking prayers. Meetings should be planned for 1½ hours max. If a meeting must exceed that limit, then a break should be taken at the 1-hour mark. Minutes should be taken and circulated to the group to help everyone stay on track. Action items must be clearly assigned to team members and deadlines established.

*Strategic Planning.* We strongly recommend that each ministry schedule an extended meeting on a Saturday or Sunday each year to review the work of the past year and plan the work of the next 12 months. This time can also be spent discerning any shifts in the mission of Ministry, taking in some spiritual nurture, and reflecting on how the group is functioning as a team. Strategic plans are for the team, but they can also be shared with the CEC.

*Succession Planning.* Leadership change is a normal part of ongoing ministries at St. Martin's and marks a crucial moment in sustainability of a ministry. Ministry teams should identify the next leader for the ministry at least six months to a year before a leadership change is predicted, when possible. The emerging leader can function as a co-chair to learn the role and should be identified to the clergy and vestry. Clergy should be consulted on the discernment of new leaders.

*Sunsetting.* Sometimes ministries come to an end. The Congregation may lose interest, a committee might dwindle, a new leader may not arise. When a ministry team discerns that the path forward is not clear, they should engage the CEC Chair and the Rector for conversation and planning. If a new leader cannot be found and we discern together that the Spirit is no longer sustaining the work, then we may need to put the ministry to bed with great gratitude for all that was given and achieved.

## 6. Budgeting

The Community Engagement budget is 10% of the annual operating budget of St. Martin's. Some ministries also have Fund Balances saved up from fundraising and grant writing that persist from year to year until used, unlike the operating budget, which is zeroed out at the end of each fiscal year (12/31). The CEC can request that the Vestry move unused operating funds to the Fund Balance for CEC at the end of the year.

The operating budget is divided up into three categories:

- 70% goes to grants and dues. Ministry Partner grants of \$10,000 each, [POWERInterfaith](#) dues, our ECS contribution, the Guatemala grant, and other international giving fall into this category.
- 15% is unassigned for arising granting needs.
- 5% is set aside for "equipping the Saints," that is, money to train members for effective community engagement work.

(NB: 10% of the budget reserved for the Diocesan Mission Grant.)

Ministry Partner grants are three-year commitments that will be reviewed annually and may be renewed no more than two times for a total of nine years. Ministry Partner grants will be staggered to avoid renewals of multiple grants within a given calendar year.

## 7. Concerns Testing with the Congregation

Every five years, the CEC will review our ministry priorities by asking the Congregation to name the social concerns that they care about. The first "name your concerns" effort polled the



Congregation over a two-Sunday period in 2019 and determined that the Congregation cared most about Hunger, Education, and Climate Justice. These results have focused our granting, funding, direct service, organizing, and advocacy ever since, with the addition of Racial Justice and Refugee Care in response to member initiatives. The method of polling the Congregation may vary but the key question is: “What areas of need and injustice in our community, nation, or world are most concerning to you?” Polling will include causes, not organizations or institutions (e.g. Education as opposed to [school name]).

The next polling for social concerns discernment will take place in 2024.

## **8. Pathways to Ministry Partnership**

Our commitment to relational ministry leads us to invest heavily in how we enter a collaboration and how we sustain and promote that partnership in a way that knits a particular community engagement activity into the common life of the Congregation. A successful Ministry Partnership will grow in congregational engagement across time and equip our members in tools for growing effectiveness in ministry.

Three paths are described below: *organic*, *external*, and *vision*. We make room for all three because sometimes the Congregation needs to stretch outside its comfort level to include ministries that are completely new to us.

### **Organic Path**

“Organic” describes community engagement ministries at St. Martin’s that have developed under the impetus of lay leadership and general membership enthusiasm. An organic ministry is one that is in progress and seeking more congregational support to advance its mission. An organic candidate for Ministry Partnership can be a ministry incubated at St. Martin’s (e.g., SUPPER), a collaboration with an external agency (e.g., the Climate Action Team/PA-IPL or Refugee Resettlement/Bethany Services), or a volunteer-led relationship with an external institution (e.g., St. James School). To be considered for Ministry Partnership, these ministries must demonstrate:

- broad engagement among membership.
- a ministry development plan for the next three years.
- coherence with Parish priorities.

An organically arising Community Engagement project that becomes a Ministry Partner will collaborate with the CEC, starting with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a Covenant (or both) that spells out resources, expectations, communications, and financial commitment. Expectations will include:

- clearly identified leadership in the Parish for the Ministry Partner and a succession plan.
- a three-year plan for increasing Parish engagement in the ministry of the Partner.
- participation in leadership and organizing training at St. Martin's, including Becoming Beloved Community Training, Sacred Conversation Training (One-to-Ones), and "Organize, Don't Advertise."
- vestry approval.
- annual progress reports to the CEC.

### **External Path**

"External" describes community engagement ministries at St. Martin's that have no or minimal existing roots at St. Martin's. Such ministries may arise based on feeling moved by our priorities or our discernment of the Spirit in light of current realities. An externally arising ministry will need much more leadership attention and effort to bring it into a relational position in the Congregation. For example, we have struggled to engage meaningfully with gun violence advocacy. To identify a new external partner, the CEC must first:

- achieve clarity about how we can have the most impact in a given priority area.
- narrow down the scope, objective, and goals of our work.
- enter into conversation with potential external partners to explore the potential for partnership and begin to discuss sharing financial and human resources.
- identify congregational leadership with motivation and gifts to take responsibility for developing an external partner toward Ministry Partnership.
- assist the identified leadership to build a sponsoring committee in the Parish.
- provide the members of the sponsoring committee with appropriate training (including Becoming Beloved Community Training, Sacred Conversation Training [One-to-Ones], and "Organize Don't Advertise").
- coach the sponsoring committee in the creation of a Covenant with the external partner, including:
  - a ministry development plan for the next three years.
  - a plan to widen congregational engagement for the next three years with clearly identified goals and responsible parties.
- obtain vestry approval.
- sign the Covenant between St. Martin's and the external Ministry Partner.

### **Vision Path**

We envision our own future ministry, such as an after-school choir program, and build it from within the Parish by identifying motivated and gifted leadership, building a sponsoring

committee, training that committee as above, and martialing funding resources, human resources, partnerships, and other resources as needed.

## **9. Calendar**

The following is the calendar cycle for Ministry Partner review, renewal and addition of new partners:

- Ministry Partner Reviews: Annually during May and June
- Covenant Renewal Reviews for Ministry Partners: Every three years, staggered
- Application for new Ministry Partner Grants: Due July 15
- Decision on New Ministry Partner for the next calendar year: November 15

## **Appendix A: Guidelines for Advocacy**

Here are the underlying principles and step-by-step process for the practice of advocacy at St. Martin's, including the process for rapid mobilization when an urgent need for advocacy arises.

### **Principles**

1. We believe that our faith in Jesus Christ provides a moral perspective and voice that needs to be heard to promote the just and peaceful ordering of social and economic relationships. We will frame our work from a Gospel perspective.
2. We will apply a racial justice lens to each concern we address.
3. The CEC will pursue an Advocacy Agenda transparently and collaboratively with the Congregation. We will seek and encourage broad buy-in and participation.
4. We will pursue our Advocacy Agenda in partnerships; that is, we will collaborate with organizations and communities that inform, correct, and amplify our action for change. Adhering to our core value of subsidiarity, we will listen to and learn from the people closest to the issue.
5. We will pursue our Advocacy Agenda relationally, by forming relationships over time with decision makers, people in positions of power, and among communities most affected by injustice as fellow citizens. We will continue to nurture those relationships in fallow periods, active periods, times of polarization, and times of collaboration. We will speak from our faith in Jesus Christ in these relationships.

6. We will approach advocacy with an intention to act effectively for change while also opting at times to act in *faithful witness* when change may be unlikely but our faith calls us to speak up.

### **Process**

1. Our Advocacy Agenda will primarily address our four areas of concern while remaining alert to rising concerns (see #5 below):
  - a. Hunger
  - b. Education
  - c. Climate Justice
  - d. Refugee Care
  - e. Racial Justice
2. Our areas of concern will be reviewed and possibly replaced every five years, beginning in 2024 through the Nominate Your Causes process.
3. Where a committee or group internal to St. Martin's exists to address the concern, the advocacy item(s) will arise from that group.
4. Where a group or committee does not explicitly exist, the CEC can add the advocacy function to that area. For example, in dialogue with SUPPER leadership, we could be ready to advocate for SNAP benefits whenever they are under threat.
5. When an advocacy position is identified, CEC will decide what level of Parish dialogue is needed to prepare to act on it and will seek out dialogue partners close to the issue, especially in communities of color. Invitations for Parish dialogue may include:
  - a. an article in Field Notes.
  - b. a letter to the Congregation.
  - c. listening session(s).
  - d. Parish consultation during Parish Forum(s).
  - e. a vote at the Annual Meeting.
6. Whatever advocacy positions are affirmed, they should be communicated to the Vestry for approval. (We want broad community support!)
7. Our de facto Advocacy Agenda with congregational support is the following:
  - a. hunger,
  - b. education,
  - c. climate justice,
  - d. refugee care,
  - e. racial justice.

### **Rapid Mobilization**

1. What do we do when a concern develops rapidly, for example:
  - a. Our nation goes to war.
  - b. We are invited to host a family in Sanctuary.
  - c. A local mosque or synagogue is attacked.
  - d. An unarmed Black person is shot by police.
  
2. We confer with an ad hoc group that can gather virtually or in person and prayerfully discern appropriate responses and appropriate partners in response.
  - a. Proposed Group (at least five people, including the Rector and one Warden):
    - i. Chair or several members of CEC
    - ii. Deacon
    - iii. Executive Committee members
    - iv. Rector
    - v. Relevant Parish Leaders (e.g., BBC leaders when an unarmed African American person has been shot by police)
    - vi. Representatives of those most affected by the issue
  - b. The Parish clergy will also consult with the Clergy Caucus of POWER on emerging concerns.
  
3. Decisions to take action need to be clearly articulated, shared as widely as possible, transparently match our core and aspirational values, and include feedback opportunities as the situation develops. As a sample process:
  - a. War is declared on Tuesday; on the following Sunday, Parish Forum creates a space for dialogue, processing, and possible position taking.
  - b. We will follow up with the Parish (e.g., through Field Notes, preaching, prayers, and dialogue) as situations develop, actions are taken, and so on.

## **Appendix B: Example of Ministry Covenant**

### **Ministry Partner Covenant**

Between St. James School and the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields

**The Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields will:**

1. Provide regularly scheduled grant payments totaling \$10,000 for 2017.
2. Communicate questions and concerns directly to David Kasievich, Head of School, and Maggie Sanborn, Assistant Director of Advancement and Volunteer Services.
3. Commit to a mutual relationship where we are available, open and responsive to all the school community has to teach us about how to be in this relationship justly.
4. Recruit and support volunteers from St. Martins as they engage in work helpful to the school. Ensure that volunteers are an appropriate fit for the service required (e.g. working w/ children, yard work, etc.)
5. Be clear and timely about required reports and deadlines for reports

**St. James School:**

1. Will collaborate with the Church to engage and support volunteers at the school.
2. Will provide all volunteers with the appropriate clearances and training as per the school's policies for adult volunteers.
3. Will communicate with Laura Sibson – our relationship manager – on a regular basis to assess progress and address concerns.
4. Will offer Laura Sibson opportunities to engage in a formal way with school related events, workshops, etc.
5. Will collaborate with St. Martins to track the engagement of our volunteers.
6. Will send the School's every-other-month "Church Insider" newsletter which contains updates and activities at the school to keep our membership informed.
7. Will provide required reports in a timely manner through the School's advancement office
  - A. Year-end Financial Reports in a Profit/Loss format for most recent complete year and then at the end of fiscal year going forward.
  - B. Annual Enrollment Statistics for 2017 -2018 school year.
  - C. Annual report on which schools admitted the members of the graduating class and progress of past graduates as well.

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The Rev. Sean E. Mullen, Board Chair

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David J. Kasievich, Head of School

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Community Engagement Chair

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The Rev. Jarrett Kerbel, Rector

### **Appendix C: First Year of New Partner Granting Pattern**

Transition Year: Stagger start

- 2023: one 3-year grant application
- 2024: one 3-year grant application (Congregational Priorities Refreshed)
- 2025: one 3-year grant application

Vote on Stagger: Beginning in January 2023

- 1 year: Jubilee
- 2 year: PA/IPL
- 3 year: St. James

### **Appendix D: Composition of the Community Engagement Committee**

The Community Engagement Committee is constituted of a minimum of seven members of St. Martin's in the Fields. Members are invited by the rector and can be recommended to the rector by CEC members or self-nominated. There will be a Chairperson who leads the committee; a five-year term is recommended. An Assistant Chair will work with the chair and succeed the chair. The Chairperson and Assistant Chair will be appointed by the rector. The committee will ideally include at least one vestry member. The Deacon and Rector are ex-officio members of the committee.

Membership on the committee includes the following:

- Ministry Partner liaisons
- POWERInterfaith liaison
- Guatemala liaison
- at-large members (goal of three)
- under-eighteen-year-old members may be included with voice, but not vote

### **Handbook Review**

This Handbook was approved by the Community Engagement Committee on: March 26, 2022;

and by the Vestry of the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields on \_\_\_\_\_ ; and will be reviewed every three years.

Submitted by  
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Laura Sibson, Secretary  
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