



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF
Acting Commissioner

April 12, 2012

Cami Anderson
State District Superintendent
Newark Public Schools
2 Cedar Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102

RECEIVED

MAY 16 2012

THE NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Ms. Anderson:

Attached is the internal audit report on alleged irregularities in the Career and Technical Education Department. In accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-5.6 the Newark Public Schools are required to publicly review and discuss the findings in the report at the next regularly scheduled public board meeting. Within 30 days of the public meeting the district board of education shall adopt a resolution certifying that the findings were discussed in a public meeting and approving a corrective action plan to address the issues raised in the findings. The resolution shall be submitted to the Internal Audit Unit within 10 days of adoption. The findings of the audit and the board of education's corrective action plan shall be posted on the district's web site.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Steven Hoffmann
Coordinating Auditor
NJ Department of Education
(973) 621-2750

c: Robert Cicchino

Handwritten notes: 2/10, 2/16, 487, 901

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWARK INTERNAL AUDIT UNIT

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES REVIEW

2009-2010 and 2010-2011 FISCAL YEARS

APRIL 2012

Confidential: This report is solely for management purposes and is not intended for any other use.

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES REVIEW
2009-2010 and 2010-2011 FISCAL YEAR**

Distribution List of Final Audit Report

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New Jersey Department of Education

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES REVIEW
2009-2010 and 2010-2011 FISCAL YEAR**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to a district request the Newark Internal Audit Unit conducted a review of the Carl D. Perkins Grant and other related issues for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 and Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

As a result of the review, the more significant findings are summarized below:

- Purchase Orders (PO) totaling \$43,800 were issued to a vendor without a competitive process. (Page 4)
- A PO was issued approximately two months after the contract period began. Work began prior to the vendor receiving the PO. (Page 5)
- A PO was issued to Hewlett Packard to purchase a computer and other components without being submitted to Information Services for their required approval. (Page 6)
- Twelve mini laptop computers costing \$6,144 were inappropriately given to students as prizes. (Page 6)
- Twelve notebook computers given to School to Career (STC) Coordinators were not returned to the Career and Technical Education Department (CTED). (Pages 6-7)
- Three laptops could not be accounted for. (Pages 6-7)
- Siddeeq Riggs was improperly hired as a Future Business Leader (FBL) in the summer of 2010. (Page 8)
- The contract with Certiport expired on January 27, 2011 leaving five months of the school year without a contract. The company unilaterally extended the contract three months and the CTED Director and the vendor agreed to extend the license until the end of the school year. (Page 9)
- Two items (Whiteboard 77", Yamaha Vibraphone) purchased with grant funds could not be found in the Carl D. Perkins Grant Application for 2010-2011. (Page 9)
- The Fixed Asset Management Group (FAMG) attempts to do a physical inventory of fixed assets annually but not all district schools, private schools and central office departments respond, respond promptly or respond without doing the inventory. (Pages 9-10)
- Equipment totaling \$64,466 was listed on the Fiscal Year 2011 Carl D. Perkins Grant Final Report – Federal/State Equipment Inventory submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education. However, these items were not ordered until June, 2011 and not received until July, 2011. (Page 10)

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES REVIEW
2009-2010 and 2010-2011 FISCAL YEAR**

BACKGROUND:

The Newark Internal Audit Unit was requested by the Newark Public Schools (NPS) School Business Administrator (SBA) to address the concerns presented to her by the new Director of the CTED who took office January 18, 2011. The concerns centered around the activities of CTED Supervisor Sandra DeGeneste. The auditors decided to address the concerns by reviewing the spending of Carl D. Perkins Grant funds during the period the Supervisor was in charge of the office and the prior school year. The expenses during Fiscal Year 2009-2010 totaled \$598,855 and Fiscal Year 2010-2011 totaled \$588,484. The Carl D. Perkins Grant for Fiscal Year 2010-2011 was submitted July 14, 2010 but was not approved by the New Jersey Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education until May 12, 2011.

The remainder of the report details each of the concerns and the results of our corresponding investigation. See the attachment for a copy of the request.

CONCERN 1:

Ms. DeGeneste (Supervisor) hired no-show consultants with a contract for over \$43,000 dollars, with a start date of January 3, 2011

FINDINGS:

A PO for \$16,800 was issued to Consulting Services Associates (CSA) for professional services to work directly with CTED staff to complete tasks related to Vocational Education Data System (VEDS) and CTED students' information from Power School for submitting accurate VEDS data. A Request for a Quote (RFQ) was not prepared for these services. CSA was the suggested vendor on the requisition. CSA is referenced in the districts' approved application in the amount of \$16,800. There were no payments made on this PO and it was cancelled on May 9, 2011 by CTED.

A PO for \$27,000 was issued on December 15, 2010 to CSA to provide an independent evaluation of the districts' CTED programs and the use of Carl D. Perkins funds in 12 high schools with CTED programs at \$250 per day for 108 days. A requisition was issued to the Purchasing Department (Purchasing) requesting consulting services from CSA. The Director of Purchasing realized an RFP was required since it was over the bid threshold of \$17,500. The Director should have cancelled the purchase order and notified CSA that an RFP was being done. The RFP was advertised in the Newark Star Ledger on February 22, 2011. Proposal requests were sent out to three vendors; Rutgers University-Heldrich Center of Workforce Development, CSA and Gibson Consulting Group. The PO was issued approximately two months prior to when the proposal requests were advertised. The consulting services were approved in the district's application in the amount of \$27,000. Neither the requisition nor the PO indicated when the work was to begin. No payments were made against this PO. The Director of CTED notified Purchasing to cancel the RFP. The above PO's approved in the Carl D. Perkins Grant

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES REVIEW
2009-2010 and 2010-2011 FISCAL YEAR

application were both cancelled on May 11, 2011 without any consulting services being provided by the vendor.

RECOMMENDATION:

The auditors recommend that Purchasing not award contracts to vendors prior to completion of the RFQ or RFP process. Purchasing should document the reason for selecting the chosen vendor. The recommended vendor noted on the requisition should not automatically be selected (18A:18A-4).

CONCERN 2:

Ms. DeGeneste wrote a proposal for a school (American History High School) that did not have any CTE/Perkins Funded Pathways. In addition, the proposal was never approved for funding support by NPS, which would have resulted in the return of \$60,000 to the State and a loss of funding for other CTE necessities such as reactivation of Certiport contract.

FINDINGS:

The auditors reviewed the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Carl D. Perkins Grant application and did not see a program scheduled for American History High School; however, a requisition was issued to Sylken-Solutions for consulting work to be done on two occupational program approvals for Electronic Medical Records and Medical Sciences at a cost of \$16,375. A PO was issued on October 20, 2010 (subsequent to the start of the contract period) to Sylken-Solutions for \$16,375 for contracted days from September 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011.

The district paid \$3,000 to Sylken-Solutions for services on the above PO for six days (October 12, 18, 20, 21, 25 and 26, 2010) of work. Two of the work days (\$1,000) were prior to the issue date of the PO. Expenses related to these services were charged to Fund 10 and had no affect on the Carl D. Perkin Grant for Certiport contract funding.

RECOMMENDATION:

The auditors recommend that Purchasing issue PO's prior to the start of the contracted period. Purchasing should remind the vendors not to begin work prior to receiving a PO and that they would not be paid for that work. If the vendor had been notified, the district should attempt recovery of the \$1,000.

CONCERN 3:

Ms. DeGeneste ordered an expensive computer with extra speakers under the name of (Riggs) and circumvented Paul Mailloux's (Information Services) procedure for authorization.

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES REVIEW
2009-2010 and 2010-2011 FISCAL YEAR**

FINDINGS:

A request was made of Purchasing to buy one Compaq 6000 Pro Computer, one LCD Monitor, one Microsoft Office Professional Software, one Flat Panel Speaker Bar and one Hewlett Packard Scan Jet N6350 Color Scanner. This requisition was not routed through Information Services for their approval as required by district procedures.

A PO was issued to Hewlett Packard for all of the above mentioned equipment but the order was cancelled by Information Services after being contacted by Hewlett Packard as per an agreement between them. Information Services reordered all items that were on the original PO with the exception of the flat panel speaker bar.

RECOMMENDATION:

The auditors recommend that Purchasing follow proper procedures and submit all requests of this type to Information Services as required by district procedures.

CONCERN 4:

Ms. DeGeneste gave away over twenty electronic notebooks, and created a fictitious July/2010 inventory listing the Career and Technical Department as the storage location.

FINDINGS:

The auditors investigated and noted that in Fiscal Year 2009-2010, CTED purchased 16 HP mini laptops for \$8,192 on PO 10-001558. The Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Carl D. Perkins Grant application stated they were "for use in the Graphic and Print Production and for Computer-Aided Design students to design a capstone project and for student presentations". The PO was not created until June 22, 2010, the mini laptops weren't ordered until July 12, 2010 and the computers were shipped July 21, 2010. The mini laptops were not used for the stated purpose since they were not ordered until the subsequent school year. Ms. DeGeneste awarded 12 of the 16 mini laptop computers in the amount of (\$6,144) to students as prizes in the Summer Career Exploration contest. The auditors questioned Ms. DeGeneste if the Carl D. Perkins Grant guidelines allowed her to give away the laptops. She said she did not know. She felt as long as they were going to Newark Public Schools (NPS) students she did not see a problem. The students were given the mini laptops between August 2010 and November 2010. Two of the 12 students graduated in June 2011. The Fiscal Year 2009-2010 CTED fixed asset report showed the remaining four as unassigned. This report was subsequently (unknown date) adjusted by Ms. DeGeneste to show that she had one of the unassigned mini laptops and the director has another. However, when questioned, the director indicated she did not have one. The report was adjusted again to show the director didn't have one of the mini laptops and Ms. DeGeneste returned hers from home on September 6, 2011. The auditors requested the CTED to inventory the fixed assets on hand. Only three of the four unassigned on the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 fixed asset report, were listed on the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 master fixed asset report that the auditors received on September 6, 2011. The fourth mini laptop (CCNU0290Z39) is unaccounted for.

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES REVIEW
2009-2010 and 2010-2011 FISCAL YEAR**

The CTED purchased 10 notebook computers on PO 09-0018621 for \$8,630. On August 30, 2011, the auditors were given a list of 12 School to Career (STC) coordinators who were assigned the notebooks. The list only listed the serial numbers of nine of the 12 notebooks. Eight of the nine notebooks given to the STC coordinators were purchased on PO 09-0018621. One of the remaining two notebooks listed on this PO appears in the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 fixed assets report. Ms. DeGeneste was previously assigned this notebook (CNU9280WW6). The remaining notebook (CNU9280WVP) is unaccounted for. The coordinator position was eliminated September 1, 2010. The notebooks were not returned by the coordinators to the CTED.

The remaining coordinator was given a notebook (06144556869762). This former coordinator is a teacher at University High School. The auditor did not investigate what year it was purchased.

In addition to CNU9280WW6 noted above, Ms. DeGeneste indicated that she had brought CNU816160K from home to Information Services to reset the password. The auditors determined that this laptop was purchased on PO 08-1015242. The PO shows that two laptops (\$2,024) were purchased. The other laptop (CNU816160J) was not on the district inventory and is still unaccounted for.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The auditors recommend that the district reimburse the Carl D. Perkins Grant \$6,144 for the mini laptops inappropriately given to the students and in the future, refrain from giving away items purchased with Carl D. Perkins Grant funds. The auditors recommend that the CTED contact the 12 former coordinators to determine what happened to the laptops assigned to them. If they still have the laptops, they should be returned to the CTED. The auditors recommend that the CTED investigate what happened to the three unaccounted laptops and take appropriate action.

CONCERN 5:

Ms. DeGeneste placed my name (Director) on the July, 2010 inventory list as one of the recipients of the missing electronic notebooks, when I was not hired until January 18, 2011.

FINDING:

The auditors were provided multiple versions of the CTED fixed assets listing, one of which included the name of the current director being assigned computer Serial Number CNU0290Z3. On September 7, 2011, the auditors received an e mail stating that the director's name was removed because she never accepted the mini laptop. The computer in question is currently listed in the CTED inventory.

RECOMMENDATION:

No recommendation.

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES REVIEW
2009-2010 and 2010-2011 FISCAL YEAR**

CONCERN 6:

In the summer of 2010, Ms. DeGeneste hired her grandson, (Siddeeq H. Riggs 42753) who lived and attends school out of state, as Future Business Leader, using NPS funds earmarked for only NPS High School Students. Our records show that he received several checks throughout the summer.

FINDINGS:

The auditors investigated and determined that Siddeeq Riggs is the grandson of Ms. DeGeneste. His employee ID Number is 42789 not 42753. He was hired in the summer of 2010 as a Future Business Leader (FBL) by Kelly Lyons, the FBL coordinator. Ms. Lyons stated that she did not remember if Ms. DeGeneste recommended her grandson for the program. Mr. Riggs was paid \$1,312.25 as a FBL for the period July 6, 2010 through August 19, 2010. The Supplemental Time Sheets submitted to the Payroll Department were submitted by Kelly Lyons and approved by Ms. DeGeneste. Ms. Lyons stated she maintained time records to support the supplemental time sheets but CTED could not provide them to the auditors. The FBL application was not signed by a guardian as required and was dated July 6, 2010.

The qualification for being a FBL in the summer of 2010 was to be a Newark High School student with a minimum 3.0 grade point average. The age requirement for work papers is 16 years of age at the time of the application. Students who must attend summer school are not eligible to apply. Mr. Riggs did not qualify to be a FBL. He was not a Newark High School student. He was visiting Newark for the summer therefore; he could not produce the most recent semester report card or written verification from a guidance counselor. Mr. Riggs was under age 16 at the time of the application. Mr. Riggs only took an English summer course at Science Park. The 2010 summer programs pamphlet stated the student must be a Newark resident and in high school. Ms. DeGeneste stated that her grandson stayed with a friend of his father in Newark. The parental consent form showed Ms. DeGeneste as his parent/guardian. Ms. DeGeneste is not a Newark resident.

The auditor noted on September 9, 2011 that Mr. Riggs had an HR status and Payroll status of an active employee in PeopleSoft. He was only employed during July and August 2010. The auditors determined that there were 158 FBL's active in PeopleSoft. The auditors notified the Human Resources Services (HRS) Interim Executive Director that FTL's should be terminated in PeopleSoft if they are no longer working in the district. The auditors checked PeopleSoft on January 25, 2011 and Mr. Riggs was still an active employee.

RECOMMENDATION:

The auditors recommend that the district hire only Newark High School students who are qualified to be FBL's and that HRS terminate all FBL's that are active in PeopleSoft that are no longer working in the district.

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES REVIEW
2009-2010 and 2010-2011 FISCAL YEAR**

CONCERN 7:

Ms. DeGeneste did not renew the Solesource Certiport Contract, which would have prevented the certification for hundreds of students testing in June. Yet she spent Perkins funds on consultants and other non-essential items. DeGeneste knew this was going to cause a major problem for staff and students, as evident by emails.

FINDINGS:

The contract between Certiport and the District expired on January 27, 2011 and was not renewed leaving the remaining five month of the 2010-2011 school year without a contract. The auditors received correspondence dated August 30, 2011, between Adam Sanchez, Territory Manager and Saundra DeGeneste that indicated that the contract between Certiport and the NPS took longer to process because of a three month Purchasing Department delay. Certiport unilaterally decided to extend the license until April, 2011 so the students and faculty were able to get a full year use out of the exams and practice exams purchased.

The vendor and the Director of the CTED agreed in April of 2011 to extend the license until the end of June 2011 for \$5,940.

RECOMMENDATION:

The auditors recommend that the contract period coincide with the applicable fiscal year's beginning and ending dates, to properly cover the entire school year rather than cross school years.

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:

District policy states that Fixed Asset Management Group (FAMG) shall maintain an inventory of all District-Owned Fixed Assets and equipment items, as defined by the Fixed Asset Policy Manual for financial accounting and insurance purposes. Fixed assets items with an acquisition cost of \$2,000 or greater and all computers, laptops, digital cameras, computer projectors and related equipment shall be labeled with a District identification tag. The Carl D. Perkins Grant also requires that each piece of equipment purchased with state or federal funds must have a visible, permanently attached, and numbered inventory tag (computer, printers and monitors need separated inventory tags even if purchased as a unit). Any unit purchased, which consists of multiple pieces must be tagged with sequential numbers.

The auditors noted the following during their review:

- Two items (Whiteboard 77", Yamaha Vibraphone) purchased with Carl D. Perkins Grant funds on PO's 11-0005968, and 11-0007790 were not found in the application for Fiscal Year 2010-2011. The District FAMG attempts to get district schools, private schools and central office locations to perform a physical inventory as of year-end. Locations are provided a list of fixed assets to update. Some locations did not respond to the request. All

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES REVIEW
2009-2010 and 2010-2011 FISCAL YEAR**

locations should be required to provide a physical inventory of fixed assets. FAMG relies on Accounts Payable (AP) to provide them with the PO numbers that were used to make purchases, after AP has paid the invoices. A copy of the PO is provided, but not the invoices which contain most of the necessary information needed to identify each item, such as quantity and serial numbers if applicable. In Fiscal Year 2010-2011, FAMG requested inventory updates from 83 district school locations with the following results: 53 locations returned inventory updates, 22 locations returned the inventory requests without updates and 7 locations did not return the request at all. One location was closed. The auditors did not have the results for the Central Office. The auditors requested a list of uncooperative Central Office departments and private schools.

- Equipment totaling \$64,466 was listed on the Fiscal Year 2011 Carl D. Perkins Grant Final Report – Federal/State Equipment Inventory submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education. However, these items were not ordered until June, 2011 and were not received until July, 2011. Therefore, they could not be used in Fiscal Year 2010-2011, the year the equipment was approved for.
- Fixed assets inventories for all Carl D. Perkins Grant purchases are not being maintained by CTED or completely captured by the Districts' FAMG. At the request of the auditors, CTED prepared an inventory for items that were located in their current office location that were purchased with Carl D. Perkins Grant funds, however, they do not have a complete inventory of items purchased with Carl D. Perkins funds over the life of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The auditors recommend that the CTED only purchase items approved in the grant application with grant funds. The approved items must be purchased and received timely to be used during the proper year. The auditors recommend that all district schools, private schools and the Central Office inventory their fixed assets as requested and that FAMG reconcile any differences between the inventory provided and the information in their data base. The auditors recommend that FAMG periodically spot check the inventories submitted by a location for accuracy. The auditors recommend that FAMG report any uncooperative schools or Central Office departments to upper management for their action.

Auditor:
Clarence Joffrion

Approved by:


Steven Hoffmann
Coordinating Auditor



Deborah Terrell
Interim State District Superintendent

Roger Leon
Acting Chief Academic Officer

Deborah Mitchell-DeBerry
Director

THE NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of Academic Services
Career & Technical Education Department
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Christopher D. Cerf
Acting Commissioner of Education

To: Mrs. Valerie Wilson, School Business Administrator
From: Mrs. Deborah Mitchell DeBerry, Director of the Career and Technical Education Department
Re: Request for an audit of the 2010-2011 Perkins Funds and NPS CTE accounts allocations

Date: May 23, 2011

In January 2011 I received notice that the NJDOE CTE Division rejected Newark Public Schools Final Report for the 2009-2010 SY and our 2010-2011 Perkins Application due to data inconsistencies and spending concerns. As the newly assigned Director I was instructed to address the issues and make the necessary corrections where possible. Since most of the funds in both our CTE and NPS accounts were already spent and had purchase orders, there was very little I could reassign to satisfy the recommendations of NJDOE CTE Department.

Before I was hired Mrs. DeGeneste was solely responsible for running CTE Office. Also, she was the only person with access to our accounts. Since I had not obtained my access rights, I asked Mrs. DeGeneste to assist me with the corrections on the two documents. While working together on the documents I immediately discovered problems and asked Mrs. DeGeneste for explanations. Oftentimes Mrs. DeGeneste answers left me baffled. It was during that time the Mrs. DeGeneste took her first FMLA, without giving me any notice.

Over the past five months I continued to examine the spending out of the CTE and NPS accounts and discovered additional problems that led me to the conclusion that a thorough investigation was warranted. Listed below are the discoveries that led to my decision.

- Perkins Final Report for year 2009-2010 was twice rejected by the CTE State Department
 - The VEDS Report did not support her explanations for student failures.
- Perkin Application for 2010-2011 was rejected. According to the NJDOE, too much money was spent on supplies and equipment and not enough on instructional materials and Professional Development geared to improve student achievement. During the inquiry about the budget and final report, Mrs. DeGeneste took her first unannounced leave.
- Mrs. DeGeneste hired no-show consultants with a contract for over \$43,000 dollars. Their daily rated contracted date started on January 3, 2011. My first knowledge of them was in April 2011 after I cancelled their PO for not providing the contracted service.
- Mrs. DeGeneste wrote a proposal for a school (American History High School) that did not have any CTE/Perkins Funded Pathways. In addition, the proposal was never approved for funding ***Changing Hearts and Minds to Value Education***

- support by NPS, which would have resulted in the return of the \$60,000.00 to the State and a loss of funding for other CTE necessities such as the reactivation of the CERTIPORT Contract.
- Mrs. DeGeneste ordered supplies and technology equipment under a fictitious name (Riggs) from the 2010-2011 Perkins Funds.
 - Mrs. DeGeneste ordered an expensive computer with extra speakers under the name of (Riggs) and circumvented Paul Mailloux's procedure for authorization.
 - Mrs. DeGeneste gave away over twenty electronic notebooks, and created a fictitious July/2010 inventory listing the Career and Technical Department as the storage location.
 - Mrs. DeGeneste placed my name on the July, 2010 inventory list as one of the recipients of the missing electronic notebooks, when I was not hired until January 18, 2011.
 - In the summer of 2010, Mrs. DeGeneste hired her grandson, (Siddeeq H. Riggs 42753) who lives and attends school out of state, as a Future Business Leader, using NPS funds earmarked for only NPS High School Students. Our records show that he received several checks throughout the summer.
 - Mrs. DeGeneste did not renew the Solesource Certiport Contract, which would have prevented the certification for hundreds of students testing in June. Yet she spent Perkins funds on consultants and other non-essential items. DeGeneste knew this was going to cause a major problem for staff and students, as evident by emails.

Mrs. DeGeneste, returned from her first leave after a three-week absence, but she took a second leave of absence, without giving me any notice, when I share some of the additional discoveries with her. Since Mrs. DeGeneste's answers were not consistent with policies and procedures that regulate the CTE Department Budget, I am requesting an investigation of the CTE accounts.

cc: Roger Leon
Laurette Asante
Joe Blundo
Lisa Pollak

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