

STUDENT WELLNESS

Introduction and Rationale

RSU #2 is committed to the optimal development of every student. The RSU believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular activities – do better academically.^{11,12,13,14}

¹ Bradley, B, Green, AC. Do Health and Education Agencies in the United States Share Responsibility for Academic Achievement and Health? A Review of 25 years of Evidence About the Relationship of Adolescents' Academic Achievement and Health Behaviors, *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2013; 52(5):523–532.

² Meyers AF, Sampson AE, Weitzman M, Rogers BL, Kayne H. School breakfast program and school performance. *American Journal of Diseases of Children*. 1989;143(10):1234–1239.

³ Murphy JM. Breakfast and learning: an updated review. *Current Nutrition & Food Science*. 2007; 3:3–36.

⁴ Murphy JM, Pagano ME, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman RE. The relationship of school breakfast to psychosocial and academic functioning: Cross-sectional and longitudinal observations in an inner-city school sample. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. 1998;152(9):899–907.

⁵ Pollitt E, Mathews R. Breakfast and cognition: an integrative summary. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 1998; 67(4), 804S–813S.

⁶ Rampersaud GC, Pereira MA, Girard BL, Adams J, Metz J. Breakfast habits, nutritional status, body weight, and academic performance in children and adolescents. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 2005;105(5):743–760, quiz 761–762.

⁷ Taras, H. Nutrition and student performance at school. *Journal of School Health*. 2005;75(6):199–213.

⁸ MacLellan D, Taylor J, Wood K. Food intake and academic performance among adolescents. *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*. 2008;69(3):141–144.

⁹ Neumark-Sztainer D, Story M, Dixon LB, Resnick MD, Blum RW. Correlates of inadequate consumption of dairy products among adolescents. *Journal of Nutrition Education*. 1997;29(1):12–20.

¹⁰ Neumark-Sztainer D, Story M, Resnick MD, Blum RW. Correlates of inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption among adolescents. *Preventive Medicine*. 1996;25(5):497–505.

¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *The association between school-based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance*. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, 2010.

¹² Singh A, Uijtewillig L, Twisk J, van Mechelen W, Chinapaw M. *Physical activity and performance at school: A systematic review of the literature including a methodological quality assessment*. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*, 2012; 166(1):49-55.

¹³ Haapala E, Poikkeus A-M, Kukkonen-Harjula K, Tompuri T, Lintu N, Väistö J, Leppänen P, Laaksonen D, Lindi V, Lakka T. *Association of physical activity and sedentary behavior with academic skills – A follow-up study among primary school children*. *PLoS ONE*, 2014; 9(9): e107031.

¹⁴ Hillman C, Pontifex M, Castelli D, Khan N, Raine L, Scudder M, Drollette E, Moore R, Wu C-T, Kamijo K. *Effects of the FITKids randomized control trial on executive control and brain function*. *Pediatrics* 2014; 134(4): e1063-1071.

¹⁵ Change Lab Solutions. (2014). *RSU Policy Restricting the Advertising of Food and Beverages Not Permitted to be Sold on School Grounds*. Retrieved from <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/district-policy-school-food-ads>.

This policy outlines the RSU's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the RSU have access to healthy foods throughout the school day – both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus – in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the RSU in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits
- The RSU establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives

This policy applies to all students, staff, and schools in the RSU.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The RSU will convene a representative RSU wellness committee that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversees school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this RSU-level wellness policy.

The committee shall be comprised of individuals invited to participate representing at least one of each of the following sectors (the first six sectors are required to be represented):

1. Board member
2. School administrator
3. Food Services Director/Designee
4. Student representative
5. Parent representative
6. Community representative
7. School nurse or school health professional
8. Teacher(s)
9. Guidance counselor
10. Social worker
11. Physical Education teacher(s)
12. Others as designated by the Board

To the extent possible, the wellness committee will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Superintendent or designee(s) will convene the wellness committee and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, maintain active wellness committee membership, and will ensure each school's compliance with the policy.

Each school within the RSU will participate in a review of wellness policy issues, in coordination with the wellness committee and designate a wellness policy coordinator who will ensure implementation and compliance.

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The RSU will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and time lines specific to each school and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where, and when, as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. Each school will complete a school level assessment, create an action plan that fosters implementation, and generate an annual progress report.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at: www.kidsrsu.org.

Recordkeeping

The RSU will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at RSU #2 Central Office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

1. The written wellness policy
2. Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements:
 - a. Efforts to actively solicit wellness committee membership from the required stakeholder groups
 - b. Participation in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy
3. Documentation of annual policy progress reports for each school under its jurisdiction
4. Documentation of the triennial assessment of the policy for each school under its jurisdiction
5. Documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements:
 - a. Methods by which the wellness policy, annual progress reports, and triennial assessments are made available to the public
 - b. Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of wellness policy

Annual Progress Reports

The RSU will compile and publish an annual report to share basic information about the wellness policy and report on the progress of the schools within the RSU in meeting wellness goals. This annual report will be published around the same time each year in June and will include information from each school within the RSU. This report will include, but is not limited to:

- The website address for the wellness policy and/or how the public can receive/access a copy of the wellness policy
- A description of each school's progress in meeting the wellness policy goals
- A summary of each school's events or activities related to wellness policy implementation

- The name, position title, and contact information of the designated RSU policy leader(s) identified in Section I
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the wellness committee. The RSU will notify households/families of the availability of the annual report. The wellness committee will establish and monitor goals and objectives for the RSU's schools.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the RSU will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which schools are in compliance with the wellness policy
- The extent to which the RSU's wellness policy compares to model wellness policies
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the RSU's wellness policy

The superintendent (designee) is responsible for managing the triennial assessment. The wellness committee, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor schools' compliance with this wellness policy.

The RSU will notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The wellness committee will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, and/or as RSU priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

The RSU is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The RSU will communicate ways in which representatives of the wellness committee and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for the RSU. The RSU will use electronic mechanisms such as email or displaying notices on the RSU's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The RSU will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the RSU and individual schools are communicating other important school information with parents. The RSU will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually. The RSU will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

RSU is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams *trans* fat

per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

All schools within the RSU participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs. The RSU also operates additional nutrition-related programs and activities including Farm to School, school gardens, and Grab 'n Go Breakfast. All schools within the RSU are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students
- Are appealing and attractive to children
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The RSU offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students
 - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab and go meals available to students
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal
 - Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas
 - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.)
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor, and promotional ideas
 - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options
- Menus will be posted on the RSU website
- Menus with nutrient content and ingredients available upon request
- School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals
- The RSU child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs documented by a health care professional
- Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school
- The RSU will implement the following Farm to School activities :
 - Local and/or regional products are incorporated into the school meal program
 - Messages about agriculture and nutrition are reinforced throughout the RSU

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus. The RSU will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

- Water cups/jugs will be available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present
- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The RSU is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating. Foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (i.e., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information are available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and snack or food carts.

School Pantries and Backpack Programs

RSU #2 recognizes the need for all learners to have access to healthy meals during and beyond the school day. To address student hunger issues, schools may establish on-site food pantries or take-home backpack programs. These programs will not operate in competition with the school meal program. Food items available will not replace meals offered at the school. Consideration will be made to the hours of operation of pantry and backpack programs. To optimize student health and wellness, students will be encouraged to participate in NSLP and SBP during the school day and be encouraged to utilize school food pantries and backpack programs for their at-home nutrition needs.

Donations to school pantry and backpack programs will meet Smart Snack Guidelines at a minimum.

Celebrations and Rewards

1. All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.
2. Celebrations and parties during the school day: To address food safety, oral health, food allergy, nutrition concerns, and to minimize disruptions to instruction, foods brought into the school for celebrations, parties, and events during the school day will be prohibited unless:
 - a. they are prepackaged and meet Smart Snack Guidelines
 - b. they are prepared by the school nutrition program
3. Celebrations and parties outside of the school day: The RSU will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.
4. Rewards and incentives: Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior, unless part of a student's IEP goal. The RSU will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a [list of alternative ways to reward children](#).

Fundraising

Foods and beverages ready for consumption may not be sold for fundraisers during the school day. Non-food fundraisers are preferred. The RSU will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas. Ref: JJE Student Fundraising Activities.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. The RSU will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#)
- Promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional possible promotion techniques that the RSU and individual schools may use are available at www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks

Nutrition Education

The RSU aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school Gardens

- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods
- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise)
- Link with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services
- Teach media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing
- Include nutrition education training for teachers and other staff

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

The RSU is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Brand-specific food or beverage advertising on school grounds is prohibited, except for water and product packaging¹⁶, including:

- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards, or backboards
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books, or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered, or sold by the RSU
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings
- Free product samples, taste tests, or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product

IV. Physical Activity

It is recommended that children and adolescents participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day.¹⁷ A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program that includes these components: physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, walk and bicycle to school, and out-of-school time activities and the RSU is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection).

No more than half of the time allotted for physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, etc.) will be withheld as consequence for any reason. "*This does not include participation in physical education or on sports teams that have specific academic requirements.*" The RSU will provide teachers and other school staff with a [list of ideas](#) for alternative ways to support students.

To the extent practicable, the RSU will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The RSU will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Through a formal joint or shared use agreements indoor and outdoor physical activity facilities will be open to students, their families, and the community outside of school hours.

The RSU will work with schools to ensure that inventories of physical activity supplies are known and, when necessary, will work with community partners to ensure sufficient quantities of equipment are available to encourage activity for as many students as possible.

Physical Education

The RSU will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The RSU will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary. The RSU physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments using criterion-based reporting for each student.

- Students will be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions
- All physical education teachers will be required to participate in at least once a year professional development in education
- All physical education classes are taught by licensed teachers who are certified or endorsed to teach physical education
- Student waivers, exemptions, or substitutions for physical education classes will not be granted

Recess

All elementary schools will offer at least **20 minutes of recess** on all or most days during the school year. **Outdoor recess** will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. In the event that the school or RSU must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable. Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Students are encouraged to be active and adults will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Physical Activity Breaks

The RSU recognizes the research that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered periodic opportunities to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The RSU recommends teachers provide short (3-5 minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

Before and After School Activities

The RSU offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. The RSU will encourage students to be

physically active before and after school by offering school sport programs, clubs, and intramurals where appropriate.

Active Transport

The RSU will support active transport to and from school, such as walking or biking when deemed safe and appropriate.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The RSU will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. The RSU will coordinate and integrate all initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary; not duplicative and not conflicting. For example, school pantries and fundraisers will work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the wellness committee.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy.

Handwashing

Schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms to ensure proper hygiene. Students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time will be built in to the recess transition period/timeframe before students enter the cafeteria.

Community Partnerships

The RSU will develop, enhance, and/or continue relationships with community partners (i.e. hospitals, public health organizations, universities/colleges, local businesses, etc.) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Engagement

The RSU will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The wellness committee will have a staff wellness subcommittee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources, and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff.

Schools in the RSU will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. The RSU promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

The RSU will use a healthy meeting policy for all events with available food options, created by the wellness committee or one that currently exists that optimizes healthy food options with a variety of choices and selections of healthy foods for a variety of dietary needs.

Professional Learning

When feasible, the RSU will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school. Professional learning will help RSU staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing RSU reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

16. An Act To Protect Children's Health on School Grounds 123rd ME State Legislature Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §6662, sub-§3

17. 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. Available at: <http://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/>. Accessed December 8, 2015.

USDA Smart Snack Guidelines <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks>

Legal Reference: Title 7-U.S. Department of Agriculture, Chapter II-Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, Part 210-National School Lunch Program (7 C.F.R. § 210)
See 42 U.S.C. § 1751(a)(2)
An Act to Fully Fund School Breakfast from Kindergarten to Grade 12. (Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §6602, sub-§1)

Cross Reference: EFE – Competitive Foods
JJE – Student Fundraising Activities

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