Creating a World-Class Education System through Excellence and Equity: National Measure Attainment and Achievement Report

Report by Dr Grace Vickers – Head of Education

1 Purpose of Report

Further to the December Council Attainment Report outlining the local measures in respect of the 2016-17 examination diet, the purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the national measures for secondary school examination attainment in session 2016-17 using the senior phase national benchmarking attainment measures, called 'Insight'. This report will also provide an update on progress through the Broad General Education (P1-S3) including Curriculum for Excellence levels and Standardised Assessment data. In addition the report will also celebrate a number of wider achievements across the education service.

2 Background

Each year, our attainment reports highlight the use of the new senior phase benchmarking tool – Insight. This reporting and benchmarking tool which was introduced in 2013-14 provides a broader and deeper picture of how young people are progressing in our secondary schools and includes a wide range of new qualifications including vocational and wider achievement awards.

The measures report on the performance and progress of two main cohorts of students: the National Benchmarking measures report on the progress and performance of the summer leavers cohort from S4, S5 and S6 and the Local Benchmarking measures report on the progress and performance of the students who have continued their education in S4, S5 and S6. There are four Benchmarking Measures used to report on the progress and performance of students: Improving Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy; Increasing Post-School Participation; Improving Attainment for All; and Attainment versus Deprivation. To complement the data provided by these Benchmarking Measures, Insight also provides Breadth and Depth Course measures which are used to provide data on the percentage of pupils gaining awards at specific levels by the end of each year stage. This data, when used in conjunction with the Benchmarking Measures, provides a richer picture of the progress and performance of Midlothian students. This report focuses on the National Benchmarking Measures which were published in February 2018.

2.1 **Improving attainment in literacy and numeracy: this measure shows the National Benchmarking data for the percentage of pupils attaining literacy and numeracy at SCQF level 4 and SCQF level 5:**
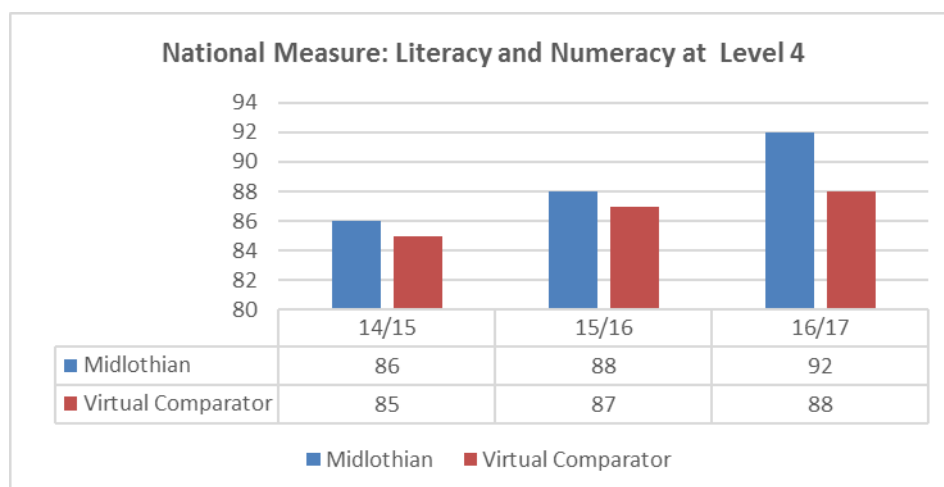
National Measure: Literacy and Numeracy at Level 4

	14/15	15/16	16/17
■ Midlothian	86	88	92
■ Virtual Comparator	85	87	88

■ Midlothian ■ Virtual Comparator

Figure 1: National Measure – Literacy and Numeracy at Level4

National Measure: Literacy and Numeracy at Level 5

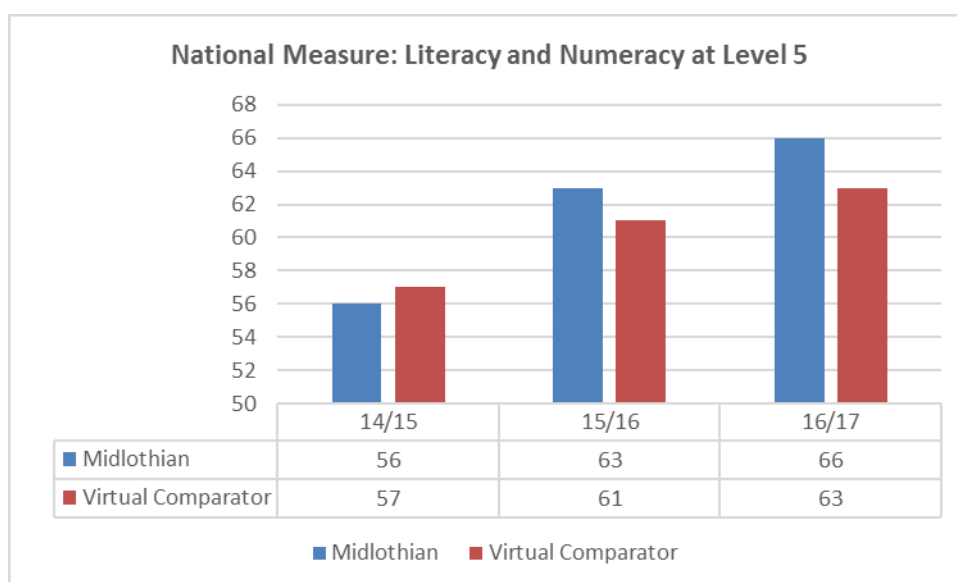|	14/15	15/16	16/17
■ Midlothian	56	63	66
■ Virtual Comparator	57	61	63

■ Midlothian ■ Virtual Comparator

Figure 2: National Measure – Literacy and Numeracy at Level5

The national data shows the following key strengths:

- Attainment at level 4 literacy and numeracy shows a positive three year trend in improvement from 86% in 2015 to 92% in 2017.
- Attainment at level 4 Literacy and numeracy has improved by 4% when compared with the previous year and now shows a 3 year pattern above the virtual comparator.
- Attainment at level 5 literacy and numeracy shows a positive three year trend in improvement from 56% in 2015 to 66% in 2017.
- Attainment at level 5 literacy and numeracy has improved by 3% when compared with last year and is above the virtual comparator for the second year in a row.
- These positive trends in literacy and numeracy over a consistent three year pattern represent an opportunity to continue to add value in an area highlighted in the National Improvement Framework (NIF)

- The 2017 figures are the highest recorded results for level 4 and 5 literacy and numeracy in Midlothian.

Next steps for improvement: to continue to improve level 4 and 5 literacy and numeracy ensuring that these measures are above the virtual comparator and the national average.

2.2 Increasing post-school participation: this measure shows the National benchmarking data for the percentage of pupils either staying on at school or in a positive initial destination:
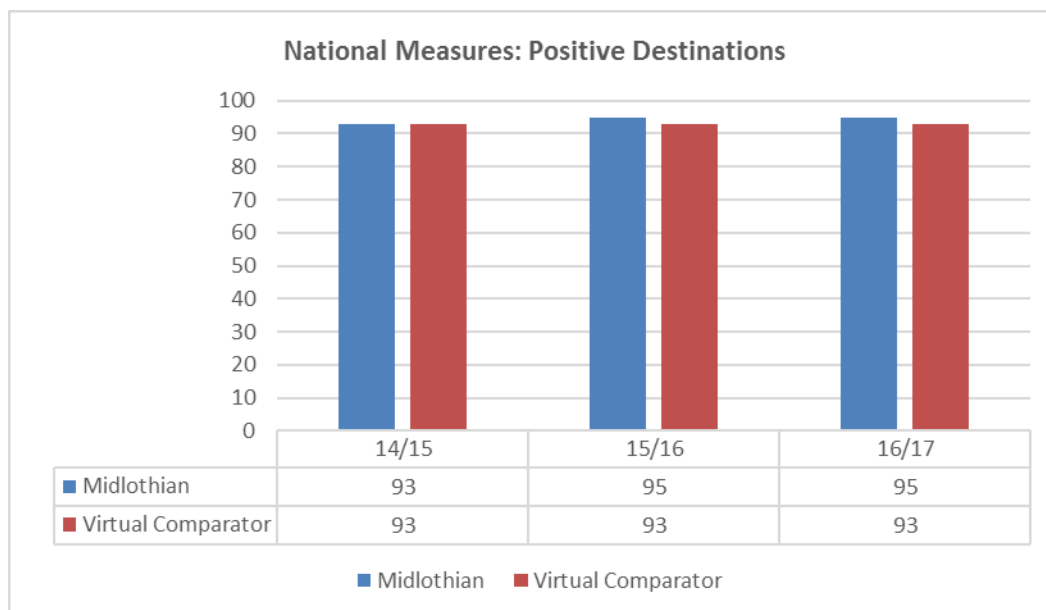
National Measures: Positive Destinations

	14/15	15/16	16/17
Midlothian	93	95	95
Virtual Comparator	93	93	93

Figure 3: National Measure – Positive Destinations

The national data shows the following key strengths:

- 2016/17 shows that we have maintained the high level of positive destinations securing performance above the virtual comparator and the national average for the second year in a row.
- There has been a significant and continuous overall improvement trend in this measure since 2010-11 and there is a focus on continuing to add value to this measure through incremental target setting in improvement planning.

Next steps for Improvement: To further analyse and improve the following trends:

- The relatively low numbers of leavers going into Higher Education compared to the virtual comparator and the national figure average.

2.3   **Improving attainment for all: this measure shows the national benchmarking data for the average total tariff score of pupils based on the attainment of the lowest 20%, middle 60% and highest 20% by performance:**
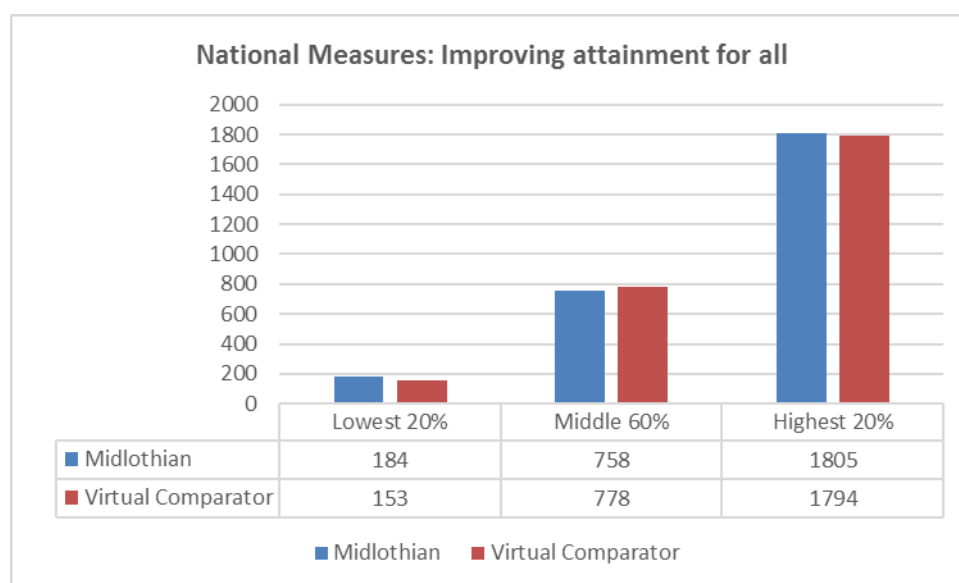

National Measures: Improving attainment for all

	Lowest 20%	Middle 60%	Highest 20%
Midlothian	184	758	1805
Virtual Comparator	153	778	1794

Figure 4: National Measure – Improving attainment for all

The numbers shown in the table are total tariff points gained by cohorts of Midlothian pupils and includes three categories: lowest performing 20%, middle performing 60% and highest performing 20%. Each qualification attained by pupils is given a tariff score by SQA. The highest performing 20% of students tend to attain higher tariff scores as they often stay on until the end of S6, complete more courses, and pass courses at higher levels.

The national data shows the following key strengths:

- The 2017 average total tariff score figure is above the virtual comparator and National for the highest 20% of leavers.
- Total tariff scores for the lowest performing 20% of leavers' shows positive progression from 147pts in 2013/14 to 184 pts in 2016/17, an improvement of 37 pts. This is above all of our comparators including the national average.
- Total tariff scores for the middle performing 60% of leavers' shows positive progression from 711 pts in 2013/14 to 758 pts in 2016/17 but is lower than last year. And is lower than the virtual comparator.
- The improving trend for the lowest 20% of the learner cohort supports our aspiration to continue to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

Next steps for improvement:

- To focus on improving the attainment of the middle 60% cohort in order to bring in line with the virtual comparator and the national average.
- To further improve the attainment of the highest 20% in order to exceed that national average.

2.4 **Attainment versus deprivation: tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attaining pupils relative to higher attaining pupils based on the average total tariff score of pupils, by decile, using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD):**

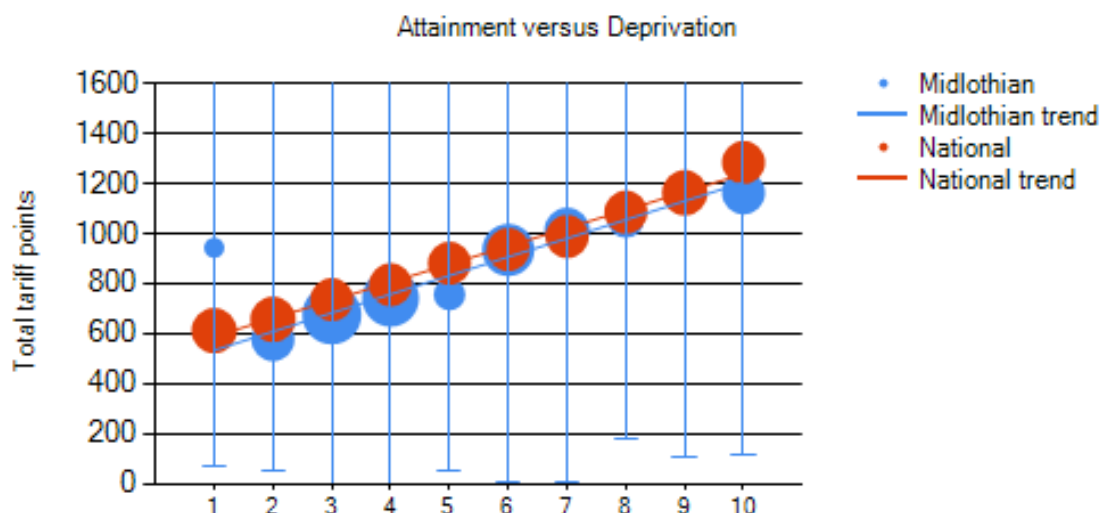Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers

Figure 5: National Measure – Attainment versus deprivation

The discs presented in figure 5 represent the relative performance of Midlothian leavers in each SIMD deciles compared with the virtual comparator group. The size of the disc gives a visual indication of the number of students in the decile. The gradient of the line indicates the relative level of attainment vs. deprivation for Midlothian leavers.

Figure 5 shows the following key strengths and areas for improvement:

- In SIMD decile 1, performance is much greater than the national establishment.
- In SIMD decile 2,3, 4, 5 and 10 it is lower than the national establishment.

Next Steps for improvement:

- To Improve total tariff scores for all SIMD deciles so that they are above both the VC and National figure.
- To focus on pace and challenge in order to improve attainment in the top deciles.
- The focus will be on the retention of students at the lower SIMD deciles and the continued development of curriculum pathways that offer flexible and progressive pathways to ensure that all students attain at the highest possible level and progress to a sustainable positive destination.

2.5   Assessing progress through the Broad General Education

In 2015/16, for the first time Midlothian collected for National purposes Curriculum for Excellence levels at the end of P1, P4, P7 and S3.

At the end of September 2016, as part of the National Improvement Framework, CfE data using the new term 'achieving a level' was uplifted for P1, P4, P7 and S3. For the first time a report called *Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels 2015/16 was* published by the Scottish Government. In December 2017 the second year of data was published outlining the CfE data for each local authority and the Scottish average for 2016/17. The CfE data was included in the quarter three report. In this report, caution is still advised in terms of the validity and reliability of this data used by the Scottish Government which is called 'Experimental statistics'. This means that the data published is data under development. Therefore, due to the lack of standardisation, there is a high level of variance from local authority to local authority. However, with that said, this will remain a core priority for Midlothian in order to ensure that we bring CfE levels at all stages in line with the national average. Figure 6 outlines the progress from 2015/16 and 2016/17:

	Reading		Writing		Listening and Talking		Numeracy	
CfE	**2016/17**	**2015/16**	**2016/17**	**2015/16**	**2016/17**	**2015/16**	**2016/17**	**2015/16**
P1	76.1	75.6	71.2	74.0	84.8	83.9	76.2	81.9
P4	76.1	71.8	65.8	63.9	78.4	75.7	73.0	69.0
P7	73.9	64.5	58.5	54.0	74.3	67.3	62.8	61.0
S3	82.0	75.1	78.3	71.2	83.5	73.1	88.8	84.3

Figure 6: 2016/17 Curriculum for Excellence levels

There were improvements in 14 out of 16 of the key measures. However attainment is still below the national average. In order to bring CfE attainment in line with the national average, we have implemented rigorous attainment meetings in the primary sector mirroring the good work which has been implemented in the secondary sector using a robust evidence-base. With the introduction of a new tracking module in SEEMIS, and pilot work surrounding new assessment and reporting guidance from Education Scotland we have implemented 3 tracking and monitoring periods to ensure that identify any learners not expected to achieve the level appropriate to their stage early in session and ensure we maximise the opportunity for all learners to meet and exceed their expected levels.

In terms of closing the gap relating to SIMD 1 and 2 the following improvements are notable when compared with the previous year: 7.16% improvement in achievement by the end of P1; 9.74% improvement by the end of P4; 8.27% improvement by the end of P7; and 17.6% improvement by the end of S3.

2.6   The National Improvement Framework

The National Improvement Framework was launched by the Scottish Government on 6th January 2016.   To support on-going strategic work in schools to secure continuous improvement, guidance to Head Teachers was issued in the form of Professional Practice Paper 68 in February 2017 and Paper 69 in February 2018 – *Guidelines on Planning for Improvement*.

The theme for 2018-19 is *Adopting a one size fits one approach to closing the gap*. The strategic outcomes set out below are central to supporting learning and development, wider achievement and ensuring that the needs of all learners are met. In line with the National Improvement Framework, school improvement priorities will clearly articulate with the following 4 key outcomes in session 2018/19: Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy; Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children; Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.

As part of our aspiration to create a World-Class Education System in Midlothian, in addition to the areas for improvement outlined on pages xx of this report, the following key strategic outcomes for session 2018/19 have been prioritised:

2018-19 Key Theme – Adopting a one size fits one approach

Year	NIF Priorities	2018-19
Theme		**Creating a World-Class Education System through Excellence and Equity***: Theme: Adopting a One Size fits one approach*
Priority 1 Successes and Achievements including PEF	• **Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy** • **Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children**	**3.2 Raising the attainment and Achievement of Children and Young people in Midlothian schools: (NIF: Performance Information and School Improvement)** ● Ensure CfE levels in Literacy and Numeracy by the end of P1, P4, P7 and S3 are above the national average ● PEF: Interrupting the cycle of poverty: Further 5% increase in number of children from SIMD 1 and 2 achieving the expected CfE level in Literacy and Numeracy by the end of P1, P4, P7 and S3 ● **Increase Senior phase attainment;** Secondary schools should work with their SGM to set clear and meaningful targets in relation to: Literacy and numeracy L3-6 using VC as a benchmark Breadth and depth measures in relation to VC as a benchmark Indicate performance requirements in relation to A-B, A-C and A-D grades at Nat 5/H/AH by subject areas ● Secure a three year pattern of 96% Sustained Positive Destinations **Key Tools – A Collaborative Impact approach:** Utilising the VL Collaborative impact cycle training, the programme for this year will take a closer look at year-on year progress. We will evaluate practitioner enquiry and reflective practice and how this feeds into New Centre for Research and Innovation in learning

Priority 2 Learning Provision	• **Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy** • **Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children** • **Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing**	**2.2 and 2.7 Curriculum as a hook – the power of partnerships** **(NIF: Assessment of Children's Progress)** . • BGE: Taking a closer look at QI 2.7 - how can enhanced partnerships help us to deliver a tailor made curriculum that acts as a hook to improve engagement and participation resulting in improved outcomes for all learners. • Senior Phase: Taking a closer look at QI 2.7: how can enhanced partnerships help us to deliver a tailor made curriculum that acts as a hook to improve engagement and participation resulting in improved attendance, attainment, wider achievements and sustained positive destinations? **2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment** • To share best practice in moderation, tracking and assessment of progress through the BGE • To continue to implement Visible Learning including Impact Cycle Training to improve pedagogy and impact on learner outcomes • To share best practice in learning and teaching across schools
Priority 3 Learning Provision	• **Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing**	**3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion** • Monitor the ongoing implementation of the Inclusion Review • Taking a closer look at Mental Health and Wellbeing • Further improve attendance and reduce exclusions

Priority 4 *for Learning Communities*
 	
Leadership and Management
		1.3 Leadership of change and 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement
		(NIF: School Leadership and Teacher Professionalism)
		We-Collaborate
		• Continue to develop the Collaborative Leadership Culture at all Levels by continuing to grow our ASGs into Learning Communities and building the professional networks through DHT/PT LLC and Subject leaders group
		
		Self-Evaluation for self-improvement
		Continuing to build independence in self-evaluation for self-improvement through
		QI Calendar to be distributed to all schools
		   - Reviews – three attainment visits per session or more for target schools
		   - Formal reviews – schools or Learning communities
		   - HMIe inspections
		   - Toolkit evaluation returns
		   - Challenging conversations and support
		   - Shared practice forums – self-evaluation – cluster or trio

Figure 7: Strategic priorities for 2018/19

3   Report Implications

3.1   Resource
The Education Leadership Teams, all Head Teachers and staff are committed to closing the attainment gap and this will remain a key priority as we move forward. The implementation of the Pupil Equity Fund will further assist schools in their commitment to interrupt the cycle of poverty.

3.2   Risk
Addressing Inequalities by closing the attainment gap is of significant importance in order to improve the life chances of children and young people in our care.

3.3   Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation
Themes addressed in this report:

☐ Community safety
☐ Adult health, care and housing
☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
☐ Sustainable growth
☐ Business transformation and Best Value
☐ None of the above

3.4   Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan
GIRFEC 5: Our people will be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

3.5   Impact on Performance and Outcomes
To close the gap by improving 'attainment versus deprivation' and 'attainment for all' outcomes for children and young people.

3.6   Adopting a Preventative Approach
The Education (Scotland) Act 2017 aims to take preventative action in order to close the attainment versus deprivation gap by implementing key policies and programmes which are designed to target support to children and young people from disadvantaged communities. This Attainment Report highlights our commitment to closing the attainment gap which compliments the strategies employed by Midlothian to create a world-class education system through excellence and equity.

3.7   Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders
All Head Teachers update their Parent Councils on progress in terms of attainment and all schools publish their Standards and Quality reports for Parents and other stakeholders.

3.8   Ensuring Equalities
The recommendations is this report should continue to promote equity of attainment for disadvantaged children and support the steps being taken towards narrowing the attainment gap by imposing duties on education authorities and the Scottish Ministers in relation to reducing pupils' inequalities of educational outcome together with a duty to report on progress.

3.9   Supporting Sustainable Development
There are no impacts arising directly from this report.

3.10 IT Issues

Ongoing dialogue is taking place with SEEMiS and Digital Services to ensure that we are on target for the introduction of the new system for data collection in line with the guidance on the collection of CfE levels.

4   Recommendations

Council is asked to:

1. Congratulate Pupils, Staff and Parents on the significant improvements in performance outlined in this report.
2. Note the next steps for improvement.

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