

Regular Meeting
Stafford Board of Education
Stafford Elementary School Cafetorium
Limited In-person Meeting and Electronic Meeting- via Zoom
October 19, 2020, 6:30 p.m.

Board Members Present (in person):

- Ms. Kathy Bachiochi
- Mrs. Jennifer Davis
- Mr. Mike Delano
- Mrs. Andrea Locke, Secretary
- Ms. Laura Lybarger
- Mr. George Melnick
- Ms. Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson

Absent: Miss Allie Curtin, Student Representative

Also Present (virtual, except as noted):

- Mr. Steven Moccio, Superintendent of Schools (in person)
- Mr. Steven Autieri, Director of Curriculum and Instruction (in person)
- Mr. Frank Bonavita, Director of School Facilities
- Mr. Jonathan Campbell, Assistant Principal, Stafford Middle School
- Ms. Lynn Erickson, Technology Integration Specialist
- Mrs. Peggy Falcetta, Principal, Staffordville School (in person)
- Mr. Dean Fortin, IT / Network Coordinator (in person)
- Ms. Caroline Hargraves, Assistant Principal, Stafford Elementary School (in person)
- Ms. Beth LaPane, Supervisor of Building Services
- Ms. Trish Lustila, Director of Pupil Services
- Ms. Mary Claire Manning, Principal, Stafford Elementary School
- Ms. Susan Mike, Principal, Stafford Middle School
- Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal, Stafford High School
- Ms. Diane Peters, Business Manager (in person)

The meeting agenda and copies of all Board meeting materials were posted on the district's website (www.stafford.k12.ct.us) prior to the meeting, in accordance with the requirements for electronic meetings. Audience members were able to participate by phone utilizing the phone number provided on the meeting agenda. The live recording of this meeting will be available on the district website.

Item I. Call to Order- Establishment of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:41 p.m.

Item II. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Shegogue led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item III. Secretary’s Report- Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting, 09/28/2020

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, that the Board approve the Secretary’s Report for the regular meeting held on 09/28/2020, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Mrs. Locke made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Davis, to move Item XI.A.- **Possible Appointment of a School Resource Officer**, to follow Item V. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Item IV. Consent Agenda

- A. Cafeteria Profit and Loss Report for July 1, 2020, through September 30, 2020
- B. Resignations- Administrative and Certified Staff Members

NAME	POSITION	SCHOOL	EFFECTIVE DATE	REASON
Falcetta, Peggy	Principal	Staffordville School	December 31, 2020	Retirement
Trout, Shawn	Special Education Teacher	Stafford High School	November 6, 2020	To accept a position with the State of Connecticut.

- C. 19-20 Bills and Grants, 09/30/2020, \$6,030.20
- D. 19-20 Bills and Grants, 10/07/2020, \$1,429.05
- E. 20-21 Bills and Grants, 09/30/2020, \$25,393.86
- F. 20-21 Bills and Grants, 10/07/2020, \$113,316.58
- G. 20-21 Bills and Grants, 10/13/2020, \$15,044.40

Mr. Delano asked for clarification regarding the “Emergency Related Expenses” that were posted on the bill and grant reports. Ms. Peters stated that most of the expenditures were for protective equipment for staff and students. She noted that these expenditures will be charged to the COVID grant, once approved. Ms. Peters offered to send Mr. Delano a list of the expenditures.

Mr. Delano made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, that the Board approve the items listed in the consent agenda, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Item V. Correspondence

A. Board Meeting Reminder

Ms. Shegogue read the Board meeting reminder that was posted on the agenda. Ms. Shegogue also shared a thank you card that was sent to the Board by Ms. Millie Wilson.

Item IX.A.- Possible Appointment of a School Resource Officer

Mr. Moccio stated that a selection committee comprised of Sonya Shegogue, Jennifer Davis, Tim Kinel, Jon Campbell, Mary Claire Manning, parent representative Diana Usher, and Mr. Moccio interviewed Officer Earl Middleton on Thursday, August 6, 2020. The selection committee unanimously recommended Officer Middleton to the full Board for consideration.

The Board of Education interviewed Officer Middleton on August 17, 2020, and found him to be an excellent candidate to be the next School Resource Officer.

Board members were provided via the portal with Officer Middleton’s resume and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Stafford Board of Education, the Town of Stafford, and the Stafford Police Department.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, that the Board of Education appoint Officer Earl Middleton as the district’s School Resource Officer, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the district, town and Stafford Police Department. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Officer Middleton was present at the meeting and introduced himself to the Board and the community.

Item VI. Board Reports

A. Student Representative’s Report

Mr. Moccio read the updates on behalf of Miss Curtin, who was at an athletic event.

B. Board Policy Committee Report

Mrs. Davis, Committee Chair, updated the Board regarding the policies that were reviewed during the committee meeting, which was held on Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at 5:15 p.m., at Stafford High School. She said that several of the policies appear on this meeting agenda for review and possible approval. Other policies, including 5132- Dress Code, were sent back to the Administrative Policy Committee for further review / revision.

C. Curriculum Committee Report

Mr. Melnick and Mr. Autieri, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, updated the Board regarding the topics reviewed at the committee meeting, which was held just prior to this Board meeting. Topics discussed were, as follows: Overview of Performance Matters Analytics Data Dashboard, Summer Curriculum Development Summary, District Assessment Calendar 2020-2021, and August 2020 Professional Learning Summary—PDEC. Mr. Autieri stated that he will share the documents reviewed with the full Board.

Item VII. Superintendent's Reports

A. Update Regarding Shift in Learning Model

Mr. Moccio provided the Board with an update regarding the number of students attending in person vs. full-remote, as today was the first day of the four day per week learning model for K-5 students, and some families have shifted their selection.

Mr. Moccio stated that safeguarding the students and staff will continue to be his top priority, and he anticipates that the current model continuing until at least Thanksgiving, or until a State mandated shift occurs.

Decisions regarding shifts in the learning model continue to be based on the following indicators:

- Spread and prevalence of COVID-19 in the community
- Building and classroom size vs. enrollment
- Ability to physically distance during in-person learning
- Ability for a school to cohort students and complete contact tracing should a case occur
- Age and developmental level of students
- Student and staff compliance with self-screening
- Ability to provide adequate staffing in all five schools
- Ability of classrooms to livestream during remote sessions
- Limitations due to the age or connectivity of technology

Today's attendance rates for the schools were, as follows:

Staffordville School- 95%

West Stafford School- 96%

Stafford Elementary School- 96%

Mr. Moccio stated that since the announcement of the shift to the four day hybrid learning model for K – 5 students, 17 students were moved to the new hybrid plan and 7 students were moved to fully remote learning. Mr. Moccio stated that the district currently has 291 students (approximately 22%) participating in the fully remote learning model. Mr. Moccio also noted that the high school has experienced an increase of approximately 34 students moving to the fully remote plan since the beginning of the school year.

Mr. Melnick asked about the average class size in grades K – 5. Mr. Moccio stated that most classes have 15 – 16 students, with grade 5 averaging 18 - 22 students.

Mr. Melnick asked if the middle school would be moving to the four day hybrid model. Mr. Moccio stated that since it is more difficult to cohort students in grades 6 – 12 and because the classes are livestreamed, he is not looking to move in that direction any time soon.

B. Strategic Educational Framework (SEF) Update

The Board of Education approved the Strategic Educational Framework (SEF) on September 23, 2019. The framework provides the overall vision for the district and identifies strategic goals related to Organizational Health; Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; and Continuous Learning for All. Each strategic goal is broken down into two strategic imperatives, which are further broken down into long-term strategies. The

long-term strategies are currently in year two of a three-year timeframe. Each school year, the leadership team identifies short-term actions aligned to the long-term strategies. The short-term actions are the items that will be addressed during that school year, as the district moves toward implementation of the long-term strategies.

The district level SEF provides an overarching context and educational vision for the work that needs to be completed to move the district forward. School administrators will utilize the same format as they focus on building needs and improvements as they create individual school improvement plans for the 2020-2021 school year. Budgetary decisions are also made in alignment with the SEF short-term actions and long-term strategies.

Over multiple days, the leadership team reviewed the progress made on the 2019-2020 short-term actions, and while not all short-term actions could be termed completed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, much progress has been made.

Mr. Moccio reviewed a PowerPoint presentation (posted with the meeting materials on the district website) regarding the district's achievements and successes last school year, along with a revised SEF, which included updated short-term actions for the 2020-2021 school year. Mr. Moccio stated that he will continue to provide the Board of Education with additional status report updates, as data is collected and information becomes available throughout the school year.

C. 2019 – 2020 Technology Plan Accomplishments

Board members were provided via the portal a detailed memorandum from Mr. Steve Autieri, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, along with a presentation regarding the 2019-2020 technology accomplishments. Mr. Autieri continues to work alongside Ms. Lynn Erickson, District Technology Integration Specialist; and Mr. Dean Fortin, IT / Network Coordinator; when reviewing the plan.

Mr. Steve Autieri, Ms. Erickson, and Mr. Fortin reviewed the plan and provided a summary of accomplishments.

D. Self-Funded Health and Dental Insurance Update through September 30, 2020

Board members were provided via the portal with a memorandum that provides an update of the self-funded health claims through June 2020, as reported at the Board meeting on September 14, 2020, as the medical claims for June have now cleared. A second memorandum was provided regarding the status of the fund, as of September 30, 2020.

Mr. Moccio stated that due to the previous large balance of the fund in recent years, in consultation with Lisa Baxter, Town of Stafford Chief Financial Officer, premiums were not raised in either 2018-19 or 2019-20, and the employer share of the health savings accounts for employees was paid from the fund. This information was also shared in each of the respective budget presentations and documentation.

Ms. Peters and Ms. Baxter were in attendance at the meeting and provided a historical accounting of how the fund grew and what steps are being taken to bring the fund into proper alignment with recommended reserve amounts. Ms. Baxter stated that claims may have been higher last year due to the fact that the non-

certified staff would be moving to the high deductible account as of July 1, 2020, and they may have had procedures completed before the migration to the new plan.

Mr. Moccio stated that the fund will continue to be closely monitored, and he would like to build the reserve to enough money to cover 2 – 3 months of claims and keep the balance there. He reminded the Board that the purpose of the fund is to cover claims and should not build up a significant balance.

Mr. Melnick asked what would happen if the plan runs out of money. Ms. Baxter stated that the town would cover the claims and be reimbursed once the funds in the account build up. Mr. Melnick asked if the premiums would be increased. Mr. Moccio and Ms. Baxter responded that the rates were increased by 3% for the 20 – 21 school year and that they would most likely be increased again for the 21 – 22 school year. Ms. Baxter said that she cautioned against over reacting (like the 23% increase that was imposed in the first year of the plan) and continue with moderate increases until the plan stabilizes.

III. Public Comment

There were no questions or comments.

Item IX. Old Business

There was no Old Business.

Item X. New Business

A. Acceptance of a Donation and Creation of the Kevin and Lee Gordon Business Scholarship

Board members were provided via the portal with a detailed memo from Mr. Marco Pelliccia, Principal of Stafford High School, requesting acceptance of a generous donation from Mr. Kevin Gordon. Mr. Gordon's donation of \$100,000 would be for the purpose of establishing a scholarship. Along with Mr. Pelliccia's memo, Board members were provided with the details associated with the scholarship, including how the scholarship will be administered, the composition of the selection committee, award criteria, and other specific information on how the scholarship would function.

According to Stafford Board of Education Policy #3280 – Gifts, Grants, and Bequests, *“the Board of Education may accept on behalf of and for the schools any bequest or gift of money or property for a purpose deemed by the Board of Education to be suitable, and to utilize such money or property so designated...All gifts shall be accepted for the school district as a whole, and not for a particular school. At the discretion of the Superintendent, the gift may be used in a particular school.”* While the policy requires I notify the Board for any donation greater than \$500, due to the overwhelming generosity and amount of this donation, I request the Board make a motion to accept the donation and create the scholarship, as designated within the attached agreement.

Mr. Pelliccia was in attendance at the Board meeting (virtually) and presented an outline of the scholarship. The Board members thanked Mr. Gordon for his generosity.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, that the Board accept the donation of \$100,000 for the purpose of creating the Kevin and Lee Gordon Business Scholarship, in accordance with the agreement

outlining the criteria. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

B. Review and Possible Approval of Proposed Changes to the 2020 – 2021 School Calendar

Thursday, October 29th, is currently scheduled to be an early-release day for professional development. Mr. Moccio proposed shifting the early release day to Wednesday, October 28th, since Wednesdays are currently remote learning days and many parents have already arranged childcare. Shifting the day would reduce the need for additional childcare on Thursday and would increase the instructional minutes for students, as they would remain in school for the full day. The proposed shift will not change the number of school or work days.

The instructional time for students and professional development / collaborative time for teachers and staff is valuable. Teachers and staff utilize professional development time to collaborate, review data, and plan for upcoming units of study. Collaboration is vital this year, as teachers continue to adjust curriculum and instruction. The time also provides grade level teams the ability to meet with content area specialists, vertical grade level teams across multiple buildings can meet regarding transition work and to align expectations, and staff can participate in professional development sessions offered.

Mr. Moccio noted that future discussion may be necessary in the spring, as the district is currently scheduled for early release days on March 5th (Friday), April 1st (Thursday), and May 28th (Friday). Mr. Moccio said that while he is optimistic that the district will be able to return to full in-person instruction, it would be his recommendation to adjust the school calendar similarly in the spring, should the district still be operating with a Wednesday remote learning day.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lybarger, that the Board of Education approve the revised 2020-2021 school calendar, as presented. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

C. Review and Possible Approval of Board Policies- 4118 and Appendices A – C- Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children or Sexual Assault of Students by School Employees (Revised); 5125.11- Health / Medical Records (New); and 6146- Graduation Requirements (Revised). Review of Regulations- 4118.12 / 4218.12- Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace; and 5145.6- Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment.

Board members were provided via the portal with copies of new / revised Board policies, as well as two regulations that require review by the Board of Education, as detailed below. All of the policies and regulations were reviewed / revised by the Administrative Policy Committee (APC), which is comprised of the following staff: Mr. Steve Autieri, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; Ms. Trish Lustila, Director of Pupil Services; Ms. Peggy Falcetta, Principal, Staffordville School; Mr. Tim Kinel, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School; and Ms. Caroline Hargraves, Assistant Principal, Stafford Elementary School; Christine Marinelli, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools / Director of Human Resources; and me. The same policies and regulations were then reviewed / revised by the Board Policy Committee (BPC), comprised of Mrs. Jen Davis (Chairperson), Ms. Kathy Bachiochi, and Ms. Laura Lybarger.

Mr. Moccio stated that typically, when policies are presented to the Board of Education, the initial presentation serves as a “first reading” to allow for ample review, discussion and public comment prior to possible approval at a subsequent meeting, which serves as a “second reading.” As the requested changes on these policies are to bring proper alignment with other Board policies, or to meet mandated legislative requirements, the Board may consider approving these policies, as presented.

Policy #4118 – Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children or Sexual Assault of Students by School Employees

The policy was revised to update various operational definitions of abuse and neglect in the appendices, as well as organizational clarity. Per legislation, licensed behavior therapists were added to the list of mandatory reporters and the ability for reports to be filed to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) electronically was also included.

Regulation #4118.12 / 4218.12 – Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

The updated policy regarding Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace was adopted at the Board of Education meeting on August 17, 2020. The comprehensive administrative regulations were recently released by Shipman & Goodwin and include detailed procedures in alignment with federal Title IX requirements. This regulation does not require Board approval and is being presented for informational purposes.

Policy #5125.11 – Health / Medical Records

This is a new mandated policy that is being included following the CAFE Policy Manual audit. The policy details the way in which the district shall comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). The Director of Pupil Services oversees the nurses in the district and has been designated as the HIPAA Privacy Officer.

Regulation #5145.6 – Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

The updated policy regarding Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment was adopted at the Board of Education meeting on August 17, 2020. The comprehensive administrative regulations were recently released by Shipman & Goodwin and include detailed procedures in alignment with federal Title IX requirements. This regulation does not require Board approval and is being presented for informational purposes.

Policy #6146 – Graduation Requirements

This policy was revised and approved by the Board of Education on July 16, 2018, and is in compliance with Public Act 17-42, which implemented new graduation requirements effective with the graduating class of 2023. A clarification is necessary regarding the Financial Literacy course requirement. The policy should read that each graduate is required to complete at least one (1) course, rather than one (1) credit.

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, that the Board of Education adopt the following new or revised policies, as presented: **Policy #4118 and Appendices A - C – Reports of Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children or Sexual Assault of Students by School Employees; Policy #5125.11 – Health / Medical Records; Policy #6146 – Graduation Requirements.** Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

D. Review (First Read) of Board Policies- 5131.911- Bullying Prevention and Intervention (New); and 5131.912- Safe School Climate Plan (New)

Board members were provided via the portal with copies of these new Board policies, as detailed below. The policies were reviewed / revised by the Administrative Policy Committee (APC), which is comprised of the following staff: Mr. Steve Autieri, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; Ms. Trish Lustila, Director of Pupil Services; Ms. Peggy Falcetta, Principal, Staffordville School; Mr. Tim Kinel, Assistant Principal, Stafford High School; and Ms. Caroline Hargraves, Assistant Principal, Stafford Elementary School; Christine Marinelli, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools / Director of Human Resources; and me. The same policies were then reviewed / revised by the Board Policy Committee (BPC), comprised of Mrs. Jen Davis (Chairperson), Ms. Kathy Bachiochi, and Ms. Laura Lybarger.

These policies are being presented to the Board of Education as a “first reading” to allow for ample review, discussion and public comment prior to possible approval. The policies will be added to the Board of Education agenda for a “second reading” and possible approval on November 23, 2020.

Policy #5131.911 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention

This is a new policy that would replace the current policy, which would need to be repealed. Extensive revisions to this policy were made, as the required procedures in reference to Safe School Climate Plans were removed from the bullying policy and are to be included in a new Policy #5131.912 – Safe School Climate Plan. Other revisions to the bullying policy include deletion of obsolete timelines, insertion of additional statutory language, and an update of the legal references. Reference to the new administrator training required by Section 5 of Public Act 19-166 has also been included. The Act requires the Board to post on its website training materials regarding the prevention of and intervention in discrimination against and targeted harassment of students based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics. The forms associated with reporting, investigation, and notification to parents are in the process of being updated and will be reviewed at the next BPC meeting.

Policy #5131.912 – Safe School Climate Plan

This is a new policy to provide greater access and transparency regarding the steps the district is required to take to meet individual school / student needs, in addition to legislative requirements. The information included within this policy was formerly included in Policy #5131.911 – Bullying. The updated policy revised language to include deletion of obsolete timelines, insertion of additional statutory language, and an update of the legal references. Reference to the new administrator training required by Section 5 of Public Act 19-166 has also been included. The Act requires the Board to post on its website training materials regarding the prevention of and intervention in discrimination against and targeted harassment of students based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics.

Item XI. Personnel Matters

B. Review and Possible Approval of Proposal to Hire an Interim Principal for Staffordville School Through June 14, 2021

In a memo to the Board, Mr. Moccio stated that as accepted earlier on the agenda, Mrs. Peggy Falcetta, Principal of Staffordville School, has officially submitted her intent to retire as of December 31, 2020. While sad to hear of Mrs. Falcetta’s retirement, Mr. Moccio said that he is thankful for her 34-year devotion to the Stafford Public Schools. During a typical replacement process, a posting would immediately be created and a

search committee comprised of administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and BOE representatives would be created.

Mr. Moccio said that he recommends postponing an official posting of this position and hiring of a replacement. He said that he has spoken with Mrs. Falcetta and in an attempt to provide the greatest sense of consistency for students, staff, and parents, he would like to rehire her as an interim principal at Staffordville School through the 2020-2021 school year. Mrs. Falcetta is willing to return and would work on a per diem basis at her current daily rate. He has confirmed with the Connecticut State Department of Education Teachers' Retirement Board that Mrs. Falcetta is eligible to return. The school calendar currently includes 106 student days from January 1, 2021, through the end of the school year.

Mr. Moccio said that in the current environment, there are many unknowns, and an experienced administrator with historical background and established familial relationships is crucial. Mrs. Falcetta continuing as the interim principal through the school year, will allow her to continue to provide direction and support for teachers, counsel parents as questions arise regarding the new COVID-19 policies and procedures, and manage the daily operations of the school.

Mrs. Davis congratulated Mrs. Falcetta on her retirement and said it will be a sad day when she leaves at the end of the school year. Mrs. Davis asked Mr. Moccio if there would be any cost savings with his proposed plan. Mr. Moccio said that there would be savings with this plan. He noted that the savings in salary and benefits would cover the contractual payout of Mrs. Falcetta's 25 vacation days with additional savings beyond that in excess of \$7,000.00.

Mr. Delano asked if the position has been posted for the 2021 – 2022 school year. Mr. Moccio stated that he has held off on posting the position until he has had an opportunity to discuss the matter as part of the budget process. He said that he would like to take some time to investigate other potential leadership models, as at any one time West Stafford School and Staffordville School houses approximately 125 students. Mr. Moccio said that since the 2021 – 2022 budget must be approved by the end of February 2021, a decision would have to be made by then with regard to the leadership model for Staffordville School, which leaves plenty of time to post and recruit a candidate.

Mr. Melnick congratulated Mrs. Falcetta.

Ms. Lybarger made a motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick, that the Board rehire Mrs. Peggy Falcetta through the 2020-2021 school year on a per diem basis as the principal of Staffordville School. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried.

Item XII. Student Matters

There were no Student Matters.

Item XIII. Adjournment

Mrs. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Locke, to adjourn. Ms. Bachiochi, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Delano, Mrs. Locke, Ms. Lybarger, and Mr. Melnick voted for the motion, which carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine C. Marinelli, Recording Secretary
(In Person)

Sonya Shegogue, Chairperson

Andrea Locke, Secretary

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