



# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS 2015/16 SCHOOL YEAR ANNUAL REPORT







Dear Catholic School Supporters,

Our Archdiocese of Chicago school system continues to make me so proud. We have the largest number of National Blue Ribbon schools of any system of schools, public or private, in the country. This year, three more schools were added to that list: Our Lady of the Wayside School (Arlington Heights), St. Cornelius School (Chicago) and St. Theresa School (Palatine). A wonderful achievement.

Each year the Archdiocesan family, through the Annual Catholic Appeal and our parish contributions, provides over \$30 million of financial support to our schools, this makes me equally proud. And that is beyond the good work that other organizations like Big Shoulders Fund, religious communities, foundations and other partners provide. Financial aid is needed because of the large number of financially needy students we educate. We value that diversity; it makes us better.

Our Catholic schools have a proud past, and a bright future. None of us can do this alone. Thank you for your continued support of our schools, teachers, staff and students.

You can rely on my prayers for you every day, and I would just ask that you not forget to pray for me.

*Card. Blase J. Cupich*

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich  
Archbishop of Chicago





Dear Friends in Catholic Education,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Annual Report for the Archdiocese of Chicago's Catholic schools. This report profiles the progress of our Catholic schools from the 2015/16 school year. It was during this school year that I had the great honor of becoming Superintendent, having joined the Archdiocese in October 2015. During my months here, I have deeply enjoyed getting to know our students, educators and supporters. Chicago is the national hotspot for Catholic education; for generations we have set the example for faith, excellence and service.

Our schools remain strong, and we look to the future with confidence and hope. Shortly after I started, we began working on the next strategic plan for Catholic school education. This plan, which will be fully formed in spring 2017, will include new initiatives and programs for our schools.

It is impossible to measure the effect our schools have on the children we serve. Not only do our schools provide the academic rigor needed for college and beyond, but our schools provide each child with faith and values they need to give back to society. Most importantly, our schools provide hope, equipping our children to positively influence a world that desperately needs them.

Our schools are an essential part of our local Church, and the communities they serve. Thank you for the many ways you support our Catholic schools. I look forward to witnessing the ongoing success of this celebrated ministry.

Yours in Christ,

Jim Rigg, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

As one of the largest private school systems in the nation with 229 elementary and high schools serving more than 79,000 students in Cook and Lake Counties, the operating results from the 2015/16 school year demonstrate the extraordinary commitment on part of families, parishes and donors who believe in and support the mission of the Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic Schools.

## 2015/16 SCHOOL YEAR FACTS AND FIGURES

Elementary schools: **193**

High schools: **36**

Elementary school enrollment: **57,524**

High school enrollment: **21,936**

Total enrollment: **79,460**

Greatest number of **U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Awards** of any school system — public or private

All Archdiocesan elementary and high schools accredited by **AdvancED**, the largest community of education professionals in the world

Superintendent: **Jim Rigg, Ph.D.**

Associate Superintendent: **Mary Kearney, Ed.D.**

Chief Operating Officer: **Thomas McGrath**

# AUGUSTUS TOLTON ACADEMY OPENS FOR FIRST-EVER ACADEMIC YEAR

Reporting by Michelle Martin\*, *Chicago Catholic*

For the more than 250 students who streamed into Augustus Tolton Catholic Academy, the first day of school on August 24, 2015 marked a special kind of new beginning. It was the first day ever for the school, at 7120 S. Calumet Ave., which was formed by merging the former St. Columbanus and St. Dorothy schools.

Augustus Tolton Catholic Academy is the first school in the Archdiocese of Chicago to be designated a STREAM school, with emphasis on science, technology, religion, engineering, art and math. The school was named after Father Augustus Tolton, the first acknowledged African-American priest in the United States.

“It’s a new curriculum and a new wireless infrastructure,” said Father Matt O’Donnell, pastor at St. Columbanus.

Father O’Donnell, Dr. Mary Kearney, associate superintendent of Catholic schools, Alderman Roderick Sawyer (6th Ward) and representatives from the Big Shoulders Fund joined school faculty and staff in greeting students and parents on the first day. The school has benefitted from Archdiocesan grants and funding from Big Shoulders.

The two parishes began talking about merging their schools in October 2014, and moved quickly to plan for a new school. In addition to designing a new curriculum and getting parents on board, the two schools made sure their students got a chance to interact.

All of them will be coming together to create a new Tolton Academy tradition, O’Donnell said, noting that the new school has new uniforms and new school colors.

Principal Pamela Edwards-Sherley said the school must be cognizant that it has drawn new students from several schools.

“It’s not just St. Columbanus and St. Dorothy,” she said. “My first expectation is that we learn to function as a family, that we look out for each other.”

Her second expectation is that the students and faculty become accustomed to inquiry-based learning, and see the connections between their academic work and the real world.

To learn more about Augustus Tolton Academy, visit: [www.toltonacademy.com](http://www.toltonacademy.com).



Friends, family and supporters gathered together to celebrate the opening of Augustus Tolton Catholic Academy. Parents took photos of students and walked them into school on their first day of classes. (Karen Callaway/*Chicago Catholic*)

# FINANCIAL DATA

## TAXPAYER SAVINGS (2015/16 SCHOOL YEAR)

With 79,000 students enrolled in Catholic schools during the 2015/16 school year, it saved Illinois taxpayers more than \$1 billion in education costs. Details on taxpayer savings are outlined below.

	Catholic Schools 2015/16 Enrollment	Average Estimated Public District Cost per Student (2014/15 School Year)*	Estimated Positive Impact on State and Local Education Budgets (Taxpayer Savings)
<b>CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS</b>			
City of Chicago	29,293	\$ 12,170	\$ 356,495,810
Suburban Cook County	23,771	\$ 12,980	\$ 308,547,580
Lake County	4,460	\$ 13,730	\$ 61,235,800
<b>Total Elementary</b>	<b>57,524</b>		<b>\$ 726,279,190</b>

<b>CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS</b>			
City of Chicago	10,662	\$ 16,490	\$ 175,816,380
Suburban Cook County	9,179	\$ 17,770	\$ 163,110,830
Lake County	2,095	\$ 16,340	\$ 34,232,300
<b>Total High Schools</b>	<b>21,936</b>		<b>\$ 373,159,510</b>

<b>TOTAL SYSTEM</b>			
City of Chicago	39,955		\$ 532,312,190
Suburban Cook County	32,950		\$ 471,658,410
Lake County	6,555		\$ 95,468,100
<b>Total System</b>	<b>79,460</b>		<b>\$ 1,099,438,700</b>

\*Article excerpts from *Chicago Catholic*, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago.  
To view additional *Chicago Catholic* articles or to learn more, visit: [chicagocatholic.com](http://chicagocatholic.com).

\*Source: Illinois State Board of Education, <http://webprod1.isbe.net/ilearn>



# STORIES FROM ACROSS THE ARCHDIOCESE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

(2015/16 SCHOOL YEAR)

Article excerpts from *Chicago Catholic*, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago and *Católico*, the official Spanish newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

To view additional *Chicago Catholic* articles or to learn more, visit: [chicagocatholic.com](http://chicagocatholic.com).

To view additional *Católico* articles or to learn more, visit: [catolicoperiodico.com](http://catolicoperiodico.com).

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HONORED THREE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AS BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS



Three Catholic schools – Our Lady of the Wayside School (Arlington Heights), St. Cornelius School (Chicago) and St. Therese School (Palatine) – were recognized during the 2015/16 school year by the U.S. Department of Education with Blue Ribbon Awards. The Blue Ribbon Award is presented to schools based on the schools overall academic excellence or the schools progress in closing student achievement gaps. The Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic Schools have received more Blue Ribbons than any other school system in the country.

“We are thrilled to once again have schools within our Archdiocese recognized for excellence by the Department of Education,” said Dr. Mary Kearney, Associate Superintendent of Catholic schools. “Our recent system-wide AdvancED accreditation, in combination with our holding the most Blue Ribbon Awards of any school system in the country, validates the superior academic program our students receive every day in a faith-filled environment.”

Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic schools position students as future leaders with an emphasis on academic success, work ethic, service, critical thinking and a solid moral foundation. Preparedness in Catholic schools translates to exceptionally high graduation rates and college

attendance rates. Ninety-eight percent of Catholic high school students graduate from high school and ninety-six percent attend college after graduation.

To learn more about the Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic schools, visit: [schools.archchicago.org](http://schools.archchicago.org).

## ONLINE CATECHESIS: A NEW WAY TO TRAIN OUR TEACHERS

Reporting by Michelle Martin, *Chicago Catholic*

Catholic school teachers and catechists now have a new way to learn about the Church and experience spiritual formation through the My Catholic Faith Delivered program. The new program, at the first level, emphasizes knowledge of the Catholic faith and ways teachers and catechists can witness to the faith. It includes 25 hours of instruction, which can all be completed at the teacher's convenience online, and one in-person retreat. The program is required for everyone teaching in religious-education programs and for all Catholic school teachers, whether or not they teach religion.

To learn more about the program, visit: [schools.archchicago.org/catechetical-certification](http://schools.archchicago.org/catechetical-certification).

## ST. VIATOR HIGH SCHOOL OPENED RENOVATED FINE ARTS FACILITIES, NEW DINING HALL

Reporting by *Chicago Catholic*

In the beginning of the 2015/16 school year, Cardinal Cupich dedicated renovated fine arts facilities and a new multi-media, college-style dining facility at St. Viator High School in Arlington Heights. The \$3 million project was the last piece of the school's four-year, \$14 million “Shaping the Future with Faith” campaign. The overall effort included major building improvements and boosting the school's endowment fund from \$8 million to \$10 million.

To learn more about St. Viator High School, visit: [saintviator.com](http://saintviator.com).



Students rehearse in the music room of the renovated fine arts facilities at St. Viator High School. (Photo Courtesy of St. Viator High School)

## SCHOOLS CELEBRATED THE JUBILEE OF MERCY

Reporting by Michelle Martin, *Chicago Catholic*

During the Jubilee of Mercy, schools across the Archdiocese worked to spread mercy in the world through a variety of activities.

### St. Patrick School in Wadsworth

The school focused on one of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy each month, starting in February. The school also hosted a poster contest for all students, asking them to illustrate the works of mercy. The winning poster was printed inside the cover of the school's yearbook. In addition, students participated in a variety of service projects during Catholic Schools Week, including a book drive for Bernie's Book Bank, an organization that gets gently used children's books into the hands of kids who would otherwise have few or no books in their homes. School families could sign up to work with Feed My Starving Children, a Christian non-profit in which volunteers pack meals specifically designed for malnourished children around the world. Students also made cards and wrote letters to people in their own community who are homebound or in nursing homes or rehabilitation centers.



Kindergarten through eighth grade students from Mary, Seat of Wisdom School made a pilgrimage to Holy Name Cathedral to celebrate the Jubilee of Mercy together as a school. (Yasmin Quiroz/Archdiocese of Chicago)

### St. Agnes School in Chicago Heights

Fifth- through eighth-graders learned about “Careers in Mercy” during Catholic Schools Week. Seven speakers, including a prison chaplain and funeral director, represented each of the seven corporal works of mercy and presented to students.

### St. Nicholas of Tolentine School in Chicago

Students did everything from collecting food and clothing for local charities to raising money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society through the Olive Garden's “Pasta for Pennies” fundraiser. They chose that charity because the school has a student with a cancer who benefits from the society's research.

### Holy Angels School in Chicago

Students made cards for sick kids at Lurie Children's Hospital, as well as completed food drives and other collections. Additionally, some students examined the roots of violence and student council members researched corporal punishment and its effects.

To learn more about the Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic schools, visit: [schools.archchicago.org](http://schools.archchicago.org).



REGINA DOMINICAN AWARDED CLEAN ENERGY GRANT

Reporting by *Chicago Catholic*

Regina Dominican High School in Wilmette received \$22,000 from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and rebates from ComEd for energy upgrades to campus lighting systems. Led by contractors from Windy City Lighting, the facility changes improved lighting quality, saved money and decreased Regina Dominican’s energy footprint.

By replacing existing fixtures with light-emitting diode, or LED, systems, the school improved visibility around building exteriors, parking lots and in the O’Shaughnessy Theater. The transition saved Regina Dominican about \$10,200 in energy costs and 85,698 kilowatt hours annually.

The lighting upgrades are among several capital projects completed at Regina Dominican as part of its Gateway to Leadership Campaign launched in 2013. With a goal of raising \$4 million, the campaign has raised money to complete a full remodel of the school’s cafeteria and other projects.

To learn more about Regina Dominican, visit: [rdhs.org](http://rdhs.org).



NEIGHBORHOOD TIES HELPED WEST LAWN SCHOOL BUILD ENROLLMENT

Reporting by Julio Rangel, *Católico*



Principal of St. Mary Star of the Sea, Candice Usauskas, works with a student on a writing project. (Karen Callaway/*Chicago Catholic*)

Schools often play a key role in connecting their neighborhoods and building their communities across generations. St. Mary Star of the Sea, 6424 S. Kenneth, is no exception, and has found that its ties to the community have helped it as well.

The school, which adopted the slogan “A star in the heart of the neighborhood,” saw its enrollment increase from about 155 at the end of last school year to 225 now, said Candice Usauskas, the school’s principal, who attended St. Mary Star of the Sea. An added emphasis on attracting Hispanic families also helped, she said, as 80 percent of the students are Hispanic.

“What sets us apart is that we have a Catholic identity,” said Usauskas. “We go to Mass twice a month.”

The day starts with prayer led by a student from the public address system and children pray in the classroom.

While the school performs well academically — students regularly score above the national average in the TerraNova tests — it faces financial challenges.

“Our neighborhood is working class,” Usauskas said. “Our families are struggling to put their children through school. For them, their faith is very important, but they struggle financially.”

One widespread notion among Hispanics is that Catholic schools are not affordable, she said.

“People tell me, ‘I can’t afford it,’” said Usauskas; “and I always tell them, ‘Come see me.’ We are fortunate to receive money from Caritas and Big Shoulders.”

Different financial resources are available to parents, especially at the beginning of the year, before the funds are allocated, she said.

“I attended this school myself,” she explained. “I live in this neighborhood. These are not only my students, but my neighbors and fellow parishioners. So when I cannot offer them a place in the school due to their financial situation, it truly breaks my heart because this is what I think is our mission.”

With the involvement of parents who volunteer, after-school activities have multiplied at St. Mary. Spanish classes also began this school year.

“We have never had language classes before, so it is new in the curriculum,” the principal said. “We have made the school day longer, so they can take extra classes in math and language.”

The school also upgraded its computer lab and installed wireless Internet.

To learn more about St. Mary Star of the Sea School, visit: [stmarystaroftheseaschool.org](http://stmarystaroftheseaschool.org).



Kindergarten students work with their seventh grade buddies at St. Mary Star of the Sea School on Dec. 16. (Karen Callaway/*Chicago Catholic*)

ENHANCING PARTNERSHIPS: CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE A “GROUP EFFORT”

The Catholic schools in the Archdiocese have long benefitted from partnerships with supporters who believe in our mission. These partnerships deepened and expanded during the 2015/16 school year. In January 2016, Mr. Jim Perry became the Chair of the Archdiocesan Catholic School Board. Under Mr. Perry’s leadership, the Board reactivated several committees, welcomed new members and began shaping the next strategic plan for Catholic schools.

The Archdiocese continued to partner with the Big Shoulders Fund, which dedicates over \$18 million per year to scholarships and programs that support urban Catholic schools.

“We are grateful for the invaluable support of Big Shoulders,” said Dr. Jim Rigg, Superintendent of Catholic Schools. “I look forward to our continued work together on behalf of the children we serve.”

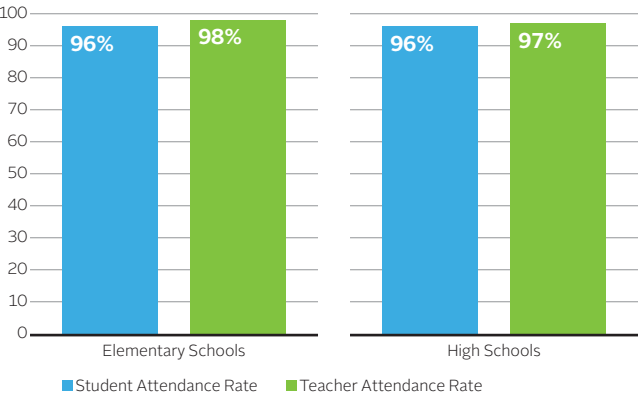
Other partnerships include ongoing support from foundations such as the Danial Murphy Scholarship Fund. In January 2016, Cardinal Cupich took a few minutes to thank donors during the annual Celebrating Catholic Education Breakfast. “I’d like to thank each of you that love and support our Catholic schools,” said Cupich. “You are truly making a difference!”



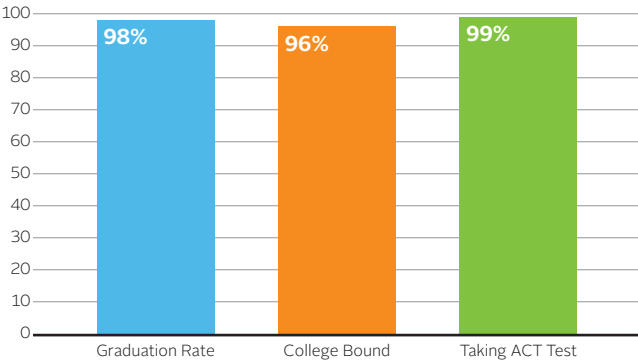
Catholic school students, including students from St. George School, provided colorful placemats for the annual Celebrating Catholic School Education breakfast. (facebook.com/pg/toteachcampaign/photos/)

# TEST SCORES AND PERFORMANCE DATA

## STUDENT AND TEACHER ATTENDANCE RATES (2015/16 SCHOOL YEAR)

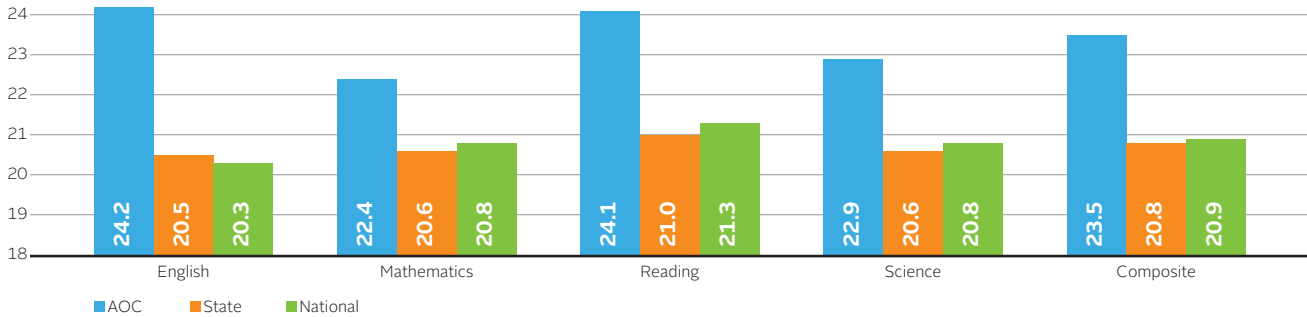


## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND COLLEGE BOUND RATE (2015/16 SCHOOL YEAR)



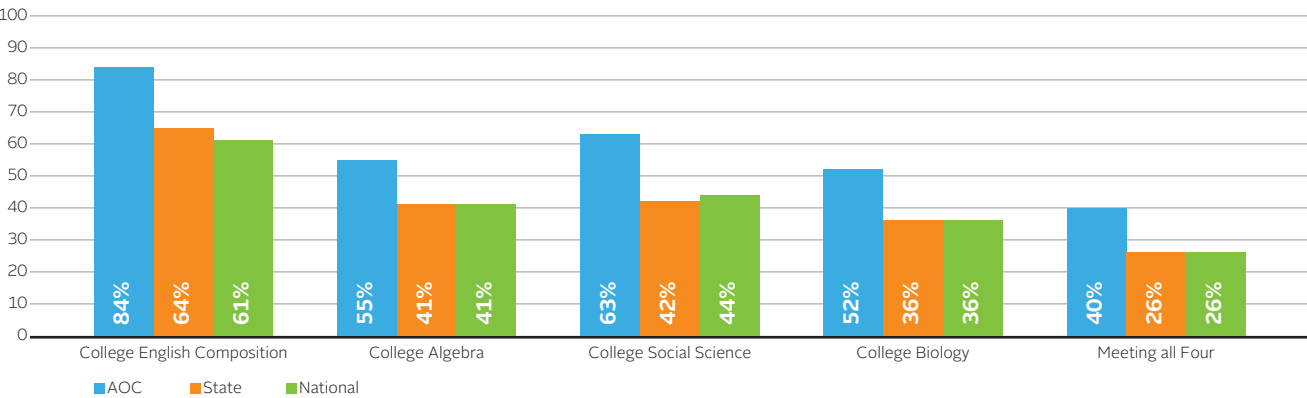
## 2016 ACT SCORES

Average score comparison



## 2016 COLLEGE READINESS

Percent of ACT-tested students ready for college-level coursework



## ASPIRE TEST SCORES (SPRING 2016)

In April 2016, elementary schools across the Archdiocese of Chicago administered the ACT Aspire summative test for the first time to all students in grades three through eight. The ACT Aspire test assesses students' academic proficiency in five academic areas: English, Reading, Writing, Math and Science. The test is aligned to the rigorous curriculum standards that inform classroom instruction in all classrooms across the Archdiocese.

The ACT Aspire test evaluates student understanding of concepts and asks students to demonstrate their proficiency with grade-level skills. Additionally, ACT Aspire engages all students in a written response to a grade-appropriate prompt. Assessment of writing has high value for college-bound students. The results of the test are outlined in the below graphs.



LEGEND: ACT Readiness Benchmark (shaded area), AOC Current Average (orange dot), National Average (grey dot)



# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PRAYED FOR A PEACEFUL SUMMER

As the 2015/16 school year wrapped up, 79,000 Catholic school students, 7,500 Catholic school staff members and more than 500 Archdiocesan Pastoral Center employees joined together to pray the “Prayer of St. Francis” for a peaceful summer. Students also colored images of doves and wrote their hopes for peace during the summer months. The doves were displayed in schools and were sent home with children at the end of the school year to help spread the message of peace.

“From experience we know that incidents of violence increase as the weather warms. As institutions unified under a Catholic mission, our school communities will pray for peace this summer throughout Cook and Lake Counties,” said Dr. Jim Rigg, Superintendent of Catholic Schools. “It is our hope that students, school staff members and Pastoral Center employees saying this prayer together will make a strong statement that our schools and our Archdiocese foster peace, mercy and understanding.”

Additionally, throughout the summer, the Archdiocese’s 229 Catholic Schools displayed banners that read: “We are Praying for Peaceful Summer. Join Us.” in the hopes of uniting the community in peace.

Banners were also hung at the Quigley Pastoral Center and Holy Name Cathedral.

“We must band together to address violence in our society,” said Cardinal Blase J. Cupich. “Prayer is powerful and I commend our schools – students, faculty and staff – for uniting to take a stand against violence. By providing children with a strong foundation of faith, respect and understanding, we will start to see change for the better.”

The Archdiocesan Office of Human Dignity and Solidarity, [pvm.archchicago.org](http://pvm.archchicago.org), has additional information and resources about peace initiatives in the Archdiocese.



**Photos on right:** “We are Praying for a Peaceful Summer” banners were on display at the 229 Catholic schools throughout the Archdiocese, as well as Quigley Pastoral Center and Holy Name Cathedral. Shown here are the banners that hung outside of Our Lady of Grace School and the Quigley Pastoral Center. (Karen Callaway/Chicago Catholic)

**Front cover photos:** Catholic school students across the Archdiocese of Chicago. (Karen Callaway/Chicago Catholic; and some photos courtesy of schools)

**Inside front cover:** A student from St. Mary Star of the Sea School counts on her fingers during math class. (Karen Callaway/Chicago Catholic)





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