

Degrees of Progress

News from the State Regents for Higher Education



OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Improving our future by degrees

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Oklahoma Higher Education: The State's Best Investment

Chancellor Glen D. Johnson

As state agencies grapple with mid-year budget reductions and state leaders seek solutions to an anticipated \$1.3 billion shortfall next year, we believe it is important to explain the impacts of this crisis from public higher education's perspective.

The state system of higher education started this budget year on July 1 with the largest dollar amount cut—\$24.1 million—in state government. This initial budget reduction was followed by a \$24 million cut in January due to the general revenue shortfall; a \$26.3 million reduction in February resulting from the oil gross production shortage; a general revenue reduction of \$32.1 million in March;

and a \$5.6 million cut April 1 due to a further decrease in oil gross production revenue. Higher education's cumulative budget reduction exceeds \$112.2 million for the current year.

These severe cuts have resulted in faculty and staff layoffs and furloughs, closed learning sites, deleted degree programs and course offerings, closed athletic programs and facilities, and reduced student services. While campuses are implementing significant cost saving measures to address the current budget shortfall and prepare for the anticipated deficit next year, the negative impact of these cuts on academic programs, student services, and degree completion initiatives is devastating.

Simultaneously, the deadline to increase degree and certificate attainment to meet workforce needs is fast approaching. The Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce tells us that by 2020, 67 percent of all Oklahoma job vacancies—or 418,000 jobs—will require a college degree or additional postsecondary education and training, and 37 percent will require an associate degree, bachelor's degree or higher. Our colleges and universities partner with business and industry to link academic programs, including business, information technology, healthcare, aerospace, energy and bioscience, directly to employment needs in the state's wealth-generating ecosystems.

The number of STEM degrees and certificates conferred has increased 28 percent over the last five years, and in the first three years of our Complete College America degree completion initiative, our public and private institutions and career technology centers have surpassed each benchmark. Oklahoma



Chancellor Glen D. Johnson

higher education has made these gains on either flat or reduced budgets, but we should acknowledge the negative impact additional budget reductions will have on our long-term ability to maintain the momentum required to meet state workforce development needs.

The Battelle Study tells us that for every \$1 appropriated to public higher education, \$4.72 is returned to the state's economy. Given our unique and critical role in advancing Oklahoma's workforce and economic development agenda, we will continue to make the case to the Governor and Legislature that public higher education should be a top funding priority in the upcoming budget. We need to emphasize that any cut to higher education should be minimized to give us the opportunity to stay on track in order to meet our college degree completion and workforce goals. Higher education continues to be the best investment our policy leaders can make to ensure a stronger economy and brighter future for our state.

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Guest Commentary: OneNet Celebrates 20 Years of Advancing Technology and Changing Lives

Ronald H. White, M.D. • Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education



Regent Ronald H. White, M.D.

This year marks a significant milestone for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education as we celebrate OneNet's 20th anniversary. When the concept for OneNet developed in the early 90s, the State Regents operated the Educational Telecommunications Network. OneNet was created to replace an antiquated ETN system and quickly grew into the state's most advanced network for internet and technology initiatives.

When OneNet became operational in 1996, the goal was to connect rural communities to a network that would provide the same high-speed connections available in urban areas. As we achieved this goal, OneNet became more than just a high-speed network. Today, OneNet adds value through benefits to education, research, health care and public service communities in every corner of the state.

OneNet's greatest value to Oklahoma has been in education—connecting rural K-12 schools and libraries and providing the high-speed connectivity required by our higher education institutions.

Through public-private partnerships with local telecommunications and cable service providers, OneNet is improving bandwidth availability and driving down broadband costs for K-12 schools, hospitals and libraries. OneNet's leadership advocates for broadband

expansion and more affordable pricing throughout the state, which creates cost savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

As an integral part of the higher education system, OneNet continues to operate interdependently with higher education institutions today. OneNet is the sole internet service provider for higher education and, in turn, 38 higher education campuses house OneNet network gear in their data centers. OneNet also provides the high-speed connectivity required to support big data movement for our institutions' world-class research programs. This connectivity equates to approximately \$3.1 million in annual savings system-wide for internet connections alone.

Savings for Oklahoma's taxpayers extend beyond education. Over the last three years, OneNet has successfully optimized the networks of several state agencies, creating cost savings of approximately \$5 million annually. OneNet provides more than 700 connections for state agencies and will continue to seek opportunities to improve services and lower costs for our state's public service providers.

While generating costs savings is vital in today's economy, OneNet's true value is beyond dollars; it can be found in technology touching lives across our state.

The Northeastern State University student

who can't make it to campus for classes is able to take NSU courses at Carl Albert State College and complete her degree—thanks to the OneNet connection that enables distance learning courses.

In Antlers, a forester who is unable to download maps at home can visit the local library and utilize OneNet's high-speed internet to quickly download the maps required for his work.

A young student in Alva receives the life-changing speech therapy she needs through a telehealth connection on OneNet's network that allows her to interact with a therapist in Oklahoma City.

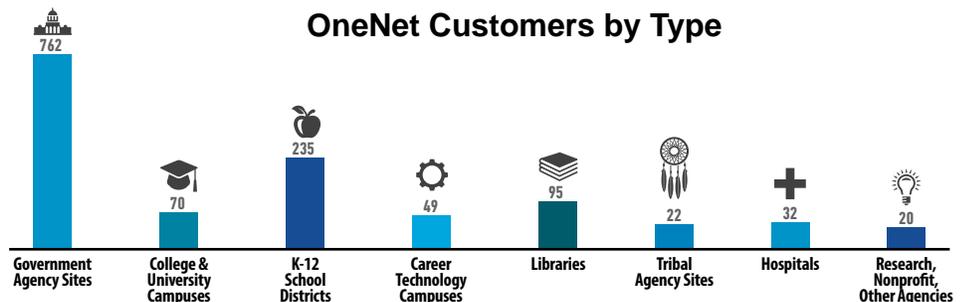
These stories demonstrate the true value of OneNet.

At a 20th anniversary event held March 25, we celebrated not only the network and all of OneNet's dedicated team members over the years, but also the thousands of lives OneNet touches each day. Guests included legislators who advocated for OneNet in the 90s; the first engineering team who designed the network; and many of our customers, who are changing lives in their own communities.

As we move forward in the future, our leadership will continue to focus on delivering the cutting-edge technology required to strengthen our state's connectivity, ensuring Oklahoma remains competitive both on a national and global stage.

QUICK FACT

OneNet Customers by Type



OKcollegestart.org Training Workshops for Educators

Dr. Natasha Mickel and Chelsea Hunt recently provided two OKcollegestart.org (OKCS) workshops for counselors, registrars and other educators. The first workshop was held at the State Regents' offices Feb. 29, and the second was offered at Kiamichi Technology Center (Durant campus) April 5. Their presentations focused on the many new tools and special features for counselors available through OKcollegestart.org and the Professional Center site for educators.

The Professional Center offers a wide selection of tools to manage college and career planning programs, including administration, reporting and student communication. Counselors can also send transcripts from high school to high school, follow student activities and customize academic plans for individual students.

On OKCS, students can compare and bookmark public and independent colleges and universities and build personal portfolios of grades and applications. Students can share their portfolios with counselors to strengthen communication and allow counselors to see assessment results, college selections and career goals.

Nearly 339,000 user accounts have been created on OKCS since its launch in 2007. There have been more than 8.3 million page views on the site with an average of approximately 2,500 views per day. More than 210,000 college applications have been received, and over 53,000 students have applied online for Oklahoma's Promise through the site.

Since fall 2008, more than 400 high schools

in the state have signed up to join the OKCS Transcript Exchange System. The Transcript Exchange System is sponsored by the State Regents and is provided free of charge to all Oklahoma high schools, counselors, students and colleges. The private, secure system allows students to apply quickly and easily to more colleges by electronically sending student transcripts with online applications.



Oklahoma Joins Mathematics Pathways to Completion Project

Leaders and policymakers in five states, including Oklahoma, will develop state mathematics task forces and work to improve college student success through a new initiative from The University of Texas at Austin's Charles A. Dana Center.

The Mathematics Pathways to Completion project currently works with 50 community college systems and 28 universities in Texas and seven other states, and this

expansion will bring the project to five additional states: Arkansas, Michigan, Missouri, Oklahoma and Washington. The three-year project is funded by a \$2 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The Dana Center will work with mathematics leaders and policymakers in the expansion states to replicate successes and develop each state's mathematics task force. The task force supports faculty leadership, sets the vision and creates the momentum to promote mathematics "pathways." The focus of the project is to provide students with new math pathways that give them choices among several different courses or course sequences in which they learn rigorous mathematics relevant to their chosen field of study. The math pathways approach requires shifting the focus from individual courses toward identifying full pathways that provide a cohesive learning experience.

After one year of implementation in Texas, 23 percent of students enrolled in the New Mathways Project's developmental math course successfully completed a college-credit-bearing math course within one year, compared to the statewide average of eight

percent. At campuses that more fully implemented the program, 43 percent of students earned college credit within one year.

The New Mathways Project model is guided by four principles to ensure high-quality implementation across many college systems and states.

1. Multiple pathways with relevant and challenging mathematics content aligned to specific fields of study.
2. Acceleration that allows students to complete a college-level math course more quickly than in the traditional developmental math sequence.
3. Intentional use of strategies to help students develop skills.
4. Curriculum design and pedagogy based on proven practice.

The Mathematics Pathways to Completion Project provides a unique opportunity to customize and strengthen the math learning experience for Oklahoma students and significantly improve math learning outcomes in our state.



Photo courtesy of Cameron University

Oklahoma's Promise Day at the Capitol

Tuesday, April 19, students, faculty, representatives from Oklahoma colleges and universities and other supporters gathered at the Oklahoma State Capitol to celebrate Oklahoma's Promise Day.

The purpose of the rally is to show appreciation for Governor Fallin and the Legislature's ongoing support of the Oklahoma's Promise program and encourage

elected officials to continue to protect the program's dedicated funding source.

The Oklahoma's Promise scholarship pays tuition at any Oklahoma public college or university until the student receives a bachelor's degree or for five years, whichever comes first. It will also cover a portion of tuition at an accredited Oklahoma private institution. The scholarship does not cover the cost of fees, books, or room and board.

To be eligible, students must apply during the eighth, ninth or 10th grade, and annual family income must not exceed \$50,000 when they apply. A student's family income also must not exceed \$100,000 at the time the student goes to college.

To receive the scholarship at graduation, students must achieve a minimum 2.50 GPA in 17 core courses that prepare them for college and an overall GPA of 2.50 or better for all courses in grades nine through 12. Oklahoma's Promise graduates also must attend class regularly and refrain from drug and alcohol abuse and delinquent acts.

Students completing the program continue to be successful academically, with high school GPAs that exceed the state average, ACT scores that exceed those of their comparable middle- and lower-income peers, and higher-than-average freshman college GPAs.

In order to receive the scholarship in college, students must be U.S. citizens or lawfully present in the U.S. by the time they begin college.

For the high school graduating class of 2015, approximately 6,100 students met the program requirements to be eligible for the scholarship.

Since 1996, when the first students in the program entered college, more than 70,000 students have received the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship. By law, the program has a dedicated funding source that helps ensure the program is fully funded each year.

For more information about Oklahoma's Promise, visit www.OKPromise.org.



Oklahoma's Promise Champions

Seven Oklahoma high schools were named "Oklahoma's Promise 2015 State Champions" by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for leading the state in the number of graduates who met the requirements to receive a scholarship through Oklahoma's Promise, a state program that allows students from families whose annual income is \$50,000 or less to earn a scholarship for college tuition.

Recognized by many as America's best college access program, Oklahoma's Promise continues to help thousands of students achieve the dream of a college education by encouraging them to aspire to attend college and prepare themselves for academic success, and by providing them with financial assistance.

High schools named Oklahoma's Promise 2015 State Champions are:

- Class B, Indianola with nine Oklahoma's Promise graduates.
- Class A, Hydro-Eakly with 13 Oklahoma's Promise graduates.
- Class 2A, Dove Science Academy (Oklahoma City) with 26 Oklahoma's Promise graduates. This is Dove Science Academy's fourth consecutive year as an Oklahoma's Promise state champion.
- Class 3A, Okmulgee with 24 Oklahoma's Promise graduates.
- Class 4A, Santa Fe South (Oklahoma City) with 72 Oklahoma's Promise graduates. Santa Fe South has been the Class 4A champion for seven consecutive years.

Social Media Spotlight



"Like" us on Facebook

facebook.com/okpromise

- Class 5A, Southeast (Oklahoma City) with 70 Oklahoma's Promise graduates. This is Southeast's third consecutive year as the Class 5A champion.
- Class 6A, Union (Tulsa) with 158 Oklahoma's Promise graduates. Union has been the Class 6A champion for four consecutive years.



NT4CM Workshops

National Training for Counselors and Mentors (NT4CM) provides free training and support for counselors and mentors who assist students and their families in preparing financially for college. As the state coordinator for NT4CM, the Oklahoma College Assistance Program (OCAP) recently provided three workshops highlighting college planning services offered through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The workshops were held in January and February in Tulsa, Ardmore and Oklahoma City.

At each workshop, OCAP's outreach team presented information about UCanGo2.org resources and tools, NT4CM resources, and information about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The Oklahoma Money Matters team offered information regarding their financial education efforts in Oklahoma and the services provided through the program. Oklahoma's Promise staff highlighted trends in the program, and OKcollegestart.org staff introduced the website's newest features and enhancements. Presentation materials and publications were

made available to all participants.

With more than 80 registrants, the NT4CM workshops have continued to contribute to OCAP's ongoing mission to provide schools and community partners the support required to empower students and families to reach their educational goals. Through NT4CM, OCAP offers informational sessions for Oklahoma's high school and middle school counselors, financial aid administrators, Native American program specialists and various community partners.

2016 Regents Business Partnership Excellence Awards

Twenty-eight business and higher education partnerships throughout the state were recognized recently as innovative collaborations that further the education of Oklahoma's workforce. The luncheon was held on the University of Central Oklahoma campus. Speaking at the presentation were Chancellor Glen D. Johnson and Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb, who highlighted the importance of higher education in the state's economic development and ultimate prosperity.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award is designed to highlight successful partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses and to further cultivate the higher learning environment through State Regents' Economic Development Grants.

Institutions involved in these partnerships provide \$500 for tuition waivers to employees of the partnering businesses; internships that

enable current students to work at the partnering businesses; faculty externships with the partnering businesses; and/or enhancement of the partnerships with additional equipment, materials or supplies. The State Regents provide a \$500 match to the waivers. To date, the State Regents have awarded \$116,000 to 232 businesses and education partnerships, which has been matched by partnering colleges and universities.

2016 Partnerships

- Cameron University and the Red River Best Chevy Dealers
- Carl Albert State College and Stigler Printing
- Connors State College and the Muskogee County Commissioners
- East Central University and Ram Jack
- Eastern Oklahoma State College and Symbiotic Aquaponic
- Langston University and ONEOK
- Murray State College and the Chickasaw Nation
- Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College and Osborn Drugs
- Northeastern State University and Saint Francis Health System
- Northern Oklahoma College and Shell Club Lambs
- Northwestern Oklahoma State University and Enid Public Schools
- Oklahoma City Community College and Lopez Foods Inc.
- Oklahoma Panhandle State University and Draper Farms
- Oklahoma State University's Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center (FAPC) and Fairview's Best
- Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology and Phillips 66
- Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City and Tinker Air Force Base
- Redlands Community College and the U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Rogers State University and ONEOK
- Rose State College and the United States Fab Lab Network
- Seminole State College and Oklahoma Southeast
- Southeastern Oklahoma State University and First United Bank
- Southwestern Oklahoma State University and Bar-S Foods
- Tulsa Community College and AAON
- University of Central Oklahoma and the Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- University of Oklahoma and Microsoft Corp.
- University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and HSI Sensing, Hermetic Switch Inc.
- Western Oklahoma State College and AT&T
- Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and Chartwells

OneNet Partners with Norman Public Schools and OU to Boost Innovation and Increase Cost-Savings

OneNet recently collaborated with the Norman Public School District and Information Technology Shared Services at the University of Oklahoma to form an innovative technology cost-sharing alliance.

OU Information Technology Shared Services was first introduced in 2011 as a way to reduce costs and realize statewide savings in Oklahoma by sharing services, hardware, software, training and expertise. The new affiliation with Norman Public Schools expands OU's initiative to K-12 schools in Norman.

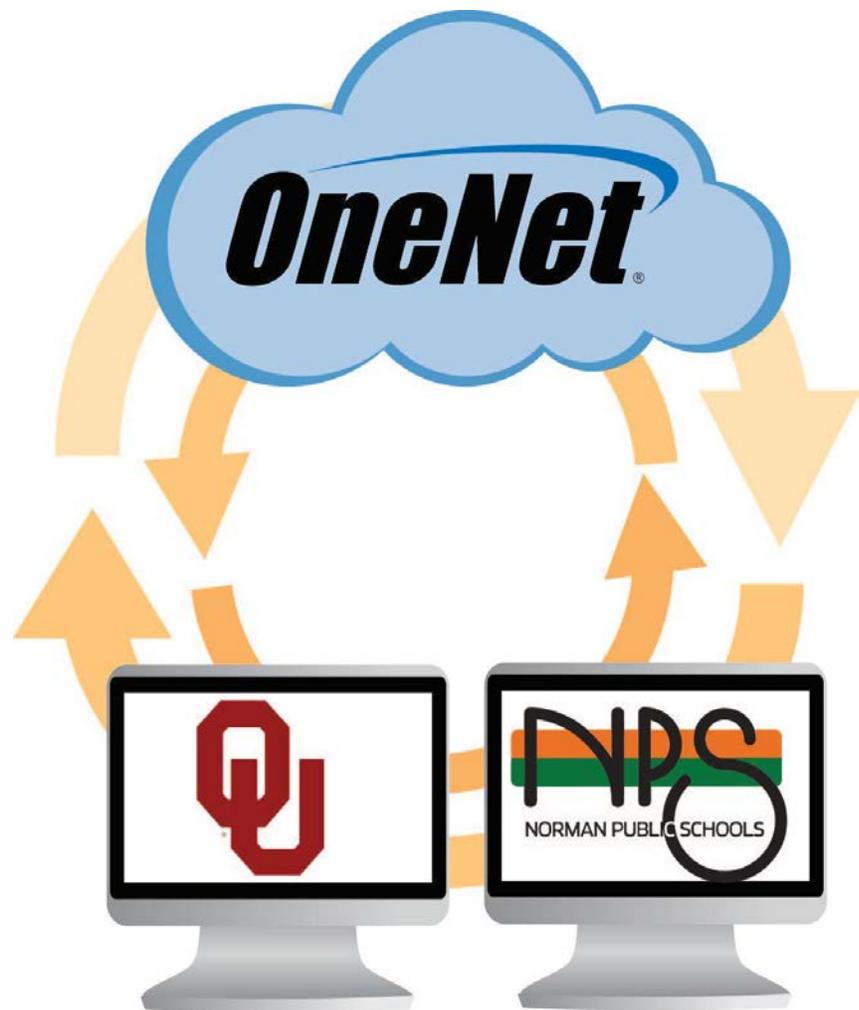
After Norman Public Schools faced a series of facility and hardware challenges, it became critical for the district to quickly find a cost-effective way to modernize and protect their data and computing infrastructure. On campus, OU had completed the Four Partners Place data center facility, a technology hub created to meet both administrative computing needs and the supercomputing requirements of OU researchers and faculty. To help make the connection, the two organizations turned to OneNet, a division of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education that provides Internet services for both the university and the public school system.

OneNet deployed a virtual, high-speed interconnect from OU's data center to Norman Public Schools, allowing the school's information technology team to operate as though OU's data center is an extension of the district's own data center. The district pays a monthly fee that helps OU offset some of their data center costs.

Many of today's applications are designed to be delivered from an on-site data center. By extending OU's data center capabilities to Norman Public Schools, the district can provide the applications that best meet their needs. This private interconnection removes limitations, improves reliability and offers opportunities for future growth. The technology sharing allows both organizations to continue to focus more of their limited resources on students.

Cost savings for Norman Public Schools are significant. The district would normally have to spend more than \$400,000 annually, not counting the cost of the facilities, which could run as high as \$2 million to build, maintain, and operate the facility. Additionally, district data is securely partitioned from OU's data, and vice versa. Each of the entities has its own security measures in place, even before connecting with servers.

Aside from budgetary benefits, this collaboration enables other opportunities for the institutions to work more closely together. OU has many programs that work closely with future students. Technology can sometimes be a barrier to those efforts, and collaborations like this one help remove some of those barriers.



Applications Now Accepted for Free Summer Academies on College Campuses

This summer, middle and high school students can experience life on a college campus while exploring exciting and varied fields of study at the free 2016 Summer Academies in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

STEM Summer Academies, sponsored by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, are open to upcoming eighth-through 12th-graders. Each academy explores the latest trends in science, technology, engineering and math through fun, hands-on activities and innovative software as students experiment both in the classroom and outdoors. Many academies also include field trips to some of the state's top companies, science facilities and museums.

The academies will be offered on 20 of Oklahoma's college and university campuses in June, July and August. Thirty-eight different academies will be offered statewide and last from two days to two weeks. Some academies require students

to live in the campus residence halls, while others require that students travel to and from campus each day.

More than 17,000 Oklahoma students have attended Summer Academies since 1990. Students who attend Summer Academies are more likely to go to college immediately after high school, require less remediation and earn a bachelor's degree at a higher rate than other students.

Applications are now being accepted for the academies, and many have deadlines. Because the academies are free and enrollment is limited, students are encouraged to apply early. To qualify, students must be entering eighth through 12th grade this fall. Officials emphasize the academies are not exclusive to top students, but instead are designed to give all students an opportunity to increase their interest and confidence in science, technology, engineering and math and, ultimately, expand their career and educational aspirations.

Academy descriptions and contact information are available at www.okhighered.org/summer-academies. Students can also get information from their school counselors or by calling (800) 858-1840.



OKMM Brings Financial Education to Freshman Orientation

Oklahoma Money Matters (OKMM) is teaming up with Oklahoma colleges and universities to help freshmen and transfer students succeed at managing their money and eliminating unnecessary debt by offering engaging financial education sessions in freshman orientation programs this fall.

OKMM provides free personal finance education customized for college students, including living on a college budget, understanding the value of saving, managing credit, preventing identity theft and borrowing student loans wisely. OKMM staff know that incorporating relevant, practical financial education information into orientation programs is a great way to reach a large number of students who are eager to learn.

OKMM also offers instructional resources to enhance financial education that institutions are already providing, including interactive money management tools, self-paced learning modules, newsletters and podcasts.

An initiative of the Oklahoma College Assistance Program and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, OKMM offers information, resources, and a variety of services to educate students, adults and families about managing personal finances, saving, consumer credit, financial aid and student loan management. OKMM also participates in and supports financial literacy efforts in partnership with a wide variety of organizations, including the Oklahoma Jump\$Start Coalition, of which OKMM was a founding member. Visit OklahomaMoneyMatters.org to learn more.





Front row left to right: Assistant Secretary Jay Helm, Real Estate, Tulsa; Vice Chair John Massey, Banker, Durant; Chairman Gen. Toney Stricklin, Businessman, Lawton; Glen D. Johnson, Chancellor; and Secretary Ronald H. White, M.D., Cardiologist, Oklahoma City.

Back row left to right: Marlin "Ike" Glass Jr., Businessman, Newkirk; Joseph L. Parker Jr., Business Owner, Tulsa; Ann Holloway, Investments, Ardmore; Mike C. Turpen, Attorney, Oklahoma City; and James D. Jimmy Harrel, Banker, Leedey.



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