

Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Overview and Guidelines



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Overview

The Alabama Seal of Biliteracy is awarded by the Alabama State Department of Education in recognition of graduating students who have demonstrated an intermediate level of proficiency in English and at least one other world language, including American Sign Language.

On April 1, 2022, Governor Kay Ivey signed into law Alabama Act #2022-200 which recognizes graduates who have demonstrated an indicated level of proficiency in English and at least one other world language, including American Sign Language. This designation on a student's high school diploma also provides employers and universities with a method of identifying bilingual candidates, students with 21st Century skills, and those who prioritized the study of other languages and cultures. Moreover, the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy emphasizes the importance of both bilingualism, which facilitates improved communication and boosts the local economy, and cultural understanding, which promotes social acceptance.



Purpose

The Alabama Seal of Biliteracy is awarded by an educational or governmental unit to honor and recognize a language learner who has demonstrated proficiency in English and one or more other world languages. The Alabama Seal of Biliteracy recognizes the linguistic resources that students develop in homes and communities as well as through a range of educational experiences. The Alabama Seal of Biliteracy acknowledges and communicates the value of the nation's diversity in language assets. It encourages language learners to maintain and improve their first or heritage language while also acquiring proficiency in additional languages.

The Alabama Seal of Biliteracy builds upon strong research about the benefits of mastery of two or more languages for individual students, and the increasing awareness of the need in our communities, state, nation, and world for people with biliteracy and cross-cultural skills. It will benefit learners in the labor market and the global society while strengthening intergroup relationships and honoring the multiple cultures and languages in a community.

The purpose of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy are:

- To encourage students to study multiple languages
- To certify attainment of biliteracy
- To provide employers with a method of identifying individuals proficient in language and biliteracy skills
- To provide institutions of higher education with a method to recognize and give academic credit to applicants seeking admission
- To prepare students with 21st Century skills
- To recognize and promote world language instruction in Alabama public schools
- To strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and languages of a community

Students enrolled in a Language Instructional Educational Program (LIEP) or world language courses may opt to apply for the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy. To honor the proficiency demonstrated by these learners, postsecondary institutions may award credit to students who received the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy.



Planning for Implementation

The implementation process for earning the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy may vary slightly; however, it is recommended that students in grades 7 and 8 are informed of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy and the requirements to earn it by graduation. Students should meet regularly with their high school counselor or advisor to track their progress towards biliteracy. This tracking should include requirements for both English and at least one world language. Suggestions for informing students and tracking this progress may include individual student planning meetings, parent and student meetings where various options for meeting the requirements are discussed, and student clubs/organizations where students are able to interact with and encourage each other through the enhancement of cultural experiences.

After meeting the requirements for the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy, it is recommended that the students work in collaboration with the school counselor, advisor, and World Languages teacher to complete and submit his or her application. The evidence will then be verified by the school counselor. Once the evidence is verified, the earned Alabama Seal of Biliteracy is on the high school transcript and recognized at school award ceremonies.

As a first step, the school or school entity must develop an Alabama Seal of Biliteracy implementation plan. Creating a planning committee to establish an Alabama Seal of Biliteracy program is critical. The committee should include a wide range of instructional staff (e.g., English as a Second Language (ESL), World Languages, social studies), school counselor, advisor, administrative staff, parents, and community members. The following task list may assist the planning committee toward developing and implementing the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy:

1. Define purpose and rationale
2. Communicate the program and its value
3. Identify funding needs and sources
4. Establish a timeline for implementation of proficiency criteria
5. Create an application process
6. Secure the appropriate individuals to develop the assessments for the language(s) that do not have formal assessments
7. Establish portfolio content, assessment and scoring guidelines
8. Validate intermediate proficiency in the language
9. Determine how the award will be presented
10. Secure school district board's approval
11. Conduct an annual review of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy program to ensure equity, improve pathways, and create preparatory programs in the lower grades, where possible



Financial Considerations

Alabama Act #2022-200 does not require schools to offer the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy nor does it provide financial support or incentives for offering the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy program.

Participating schools and school entities must equitably offer this program to all students and should consider providing the program at no cost to students who apply. Potential costs may include:

1. Implementation and maintenance of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy program
2. Testing fees
3. Contractual time of school-based committee members
4. Communicating the qualification and award process to students, parents, and the community
5. Awards or letters of certification

Based on the proportional percentage of English Learners who may qualify for the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title III Language Instruction for English Learners And Immigrant Students funds may be used to pay for a part of the labor costs and language testing. For students whose primary language is English, a prorated percentage of funds from ESEA Title I: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies and Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichments Grants may be used to support the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy cost. *Note: Title IV funds can be used if it is supplemental funding and the school entity is not already paying districtwide with state and/or local funds.*



Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Proficiency Criteria

All students who meet proficiency criteria in both English and at least one world language through school-based programs, community-based language programs, or life experiences may earn the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy.

To earn the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy, a student must:

1. Complete the high school graduation requirements.
2. Demonstrate proficiency in one of the English language proficiency criteria options on Chart 1.
3. Demonstrate proficiency in one or more World languages other than English through one of the World Language Proficiency Criteria options on Chart 2.

Chart 1: English Language Proficiency Criteria Options	
Option 1	ACT English: A score of 18 or higher.
Option 2	ACT Reading: A score of 20 or higher.
Option 3	Advanced Placement Language Examination: A score of three (3) or higher.
Option 4	International Baccalaureate Examination: A score of five (5) or higher.
Option 5	WIDA ACCESS 2.0: For non-native English speakers, the student shall meet and maintain Alabama exit criteria in English proficiency. A composite score of level 4.8 or higher.
Option 6	American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages: For non-native English speakers, an intermediate Mid-3 or higher score in English.

Chart 2: World Language Proficiency Criteria Options	
Option 1	The Advanced Placement Language Examination: A score of three (3) or higher.
Option 2	American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages: An Intermediate Mid-3 or higher score in all four components.
Option 3	International Baccalaureate Examination with a score of four (4) or higher.
Option 4	Common European Framework of Reference: A score of level B1 or higher.
Option 5	Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency: A score of intermediate-mid level or higher.
Option 6	American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language Oral Proficiency Interview Writing Proficiency Test: A score of intermediate-mid level.
Option 7	American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment: A score of intermediate-mid level three (3) or higher.
Option 8	American Sign Language: Sign Language Proficiency Interview, American Sign Language Proficiency Interview, or Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages: A score of intermediate

plus on the Sign Language Proficiency Interview, level three (3) on the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview, or score of intermediate Mid-3.

A list of World Languages assessments and minimum scores can be found in Appendix A.

Note: Not all languages have all modes of communication. Modes of communication assessed include interpersonal communication involving conversational speaking and listening or signed exchanges; interpretive reading, listening, or viewing; and presentational communication shown by creating messages for a reader, listener, or viewer through writing, speaking, or signing.



Assessment of Proficiency for Languages that do not use All Modes of Communication

Alabama will follow the National Guidelines for Implementing the Seal of Biliteracy which state, “Due to unique characteristics of certain languages, special allowances may need to be made. We recommend that in cases where language assessments across all three modes of communication may not be appropriate or available, districts/schools have the right to substitute a different assessment.” Alternatively, a portfolio assessment may be used (such as the one provided in Appendix G) that meets the spirit of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy guidance. “Students seeking a seal through languages not characterized by the use of listening, speaking, reading, or for which there is not a writing system (such as American Sign Language), will then demonstrate the expected level of proficiency on an assessment of the modalities that characterize communication in that language.”

Examples include:

- Latin and Classical Greek – recommend assessment of interpretive reading and presentational writing, not of listening or interpersonal face-to-face communication.
- American Sign Language (ASL) – recommend assessment of interpersonal signed exchange, presentational signing, and demonstrating understanding of ASL (such as interpreting a signed lecture or by summarizing and responding to questions aimed at general understanding).
- Native American Languages – recommend assessment of interpersonal face-to-face communication as well as interpretive listening, presentational speaking, and writing and reading where a written code exists.



Portfolio

A student may demonstrate an intermediate-mid level of language proficiency in a foreign language by using the portfolio process as an alternative evidence method under certain circumstances. Those circumstances include the following:

- There is not a standardized examination to assess a student's native language.
- The district determines the portfolio process is necessary because of a student's disability. Documentation based on their disability, as stated in their IEP, shall be provided to the ALSDE as to why standardized assessment is not appropriate. The portfolio process is an alternative method of providing evidence that the student is proficient in one of the levels for a particular world language(s).

The portfolio process includes the following steps:

1. Student, parents/guardians, and school district personnel work together to secure a language expert who is proficient in the domains of the target language who can legitimately review and assess the student's proficiency in the four domains of the language.
2. The language expert reviews the evidence submitted by the student (or meets with the student in person) to assess the domains and certify that the student's evidence meets the high criteria.
3. To assess the student, the language expert should use the portfolio rubric in Appendix G (or a similar one adopted by the local district) to assess each domain (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). If one or more domains is not applicable, the expert shall provide documentation.
4. The language expert's evaluation and signature indicate that the student meets the criteria and sufficient evidence is demonstrated.
5. The language expert evaluation should provide feedback to the school regarding the evidence demonstrated, such as the student's completion of a real-world application task in each domain and their level of proficiency within the domains.
6. Each local school district will determine the method for maintaining the records and documentation for the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy that meets the district standard for maintaining records and original signatures.
7. Districts shall ensure that the portfolio assessment includes both expressive and receptive aspects of the language assessment.



District Requirements

Participating districts shall adopt a local board policy which adheres to basic guidance set forth by the Alabama State Department of Education. Districts recognizing students for attaining biliteracy shall also determine practical methods for identifying and recording the name(s) of students who have met the requirements and report the information to the Alabama State Department of Education. Schools with students receiving the recognition of biliteracy shall follow their district policy for determining and verifying qualifications. Awarding of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy shall be completed by high school graduation.

Each district shall determine the date for awarding and recognizing the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy, including the following:

- The seal shall be affixed to the high school diploma.
- The seal shall be posted to the high school transcript to be visible to institutes of higher education and future employers.
- Districts and schools are encouraged to recognize the achievement of biliteracy at graduation and student academic award ceremonies.
- Districts shall set up their own procedures for collecting, recording, and maintaining student data for those recognized for biliteracy and the evidence upon which it is based. Student data shall include:
 - languages other than English in which students earned the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy
 - number of students who received the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy
 - number of students earning the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy who are current English learners
 - number of students earning the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy who are former English learners
 - number of students earning the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy who are National Origin Minority Student whose Primary Home Language is Other Than English (Nomphlote)
 - number of world language students that received the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy
 - number of students who were awarded the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy in two world languages in addition to English
 - number of students who were awarded the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy in three world languages in addition to English



Appendix A

World Language Assessments and Minimum Scores

Assessment	Minimum Score
AP – Advanced Placement Examination Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Spanish Language and Culture, Spanish Literature and Culture	3
AAPPL – The ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages AAPPL Forms A and B are available in Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish. AAPPL Form E is available in English, Chinese (Mandarin), and Spanish.	3
IB – International Baccalaureate French, Spanish	4
OPI – American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language Oral Proficiency Interview Afrikaans, Akan-Twi, Albanian, Arabic (MSA), Armenian, Assyrian, Azerbaijani, Baluchi, Bengali, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cambodian, Cebuano, Chechen, Cantonese Chinese, Mandarin Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dari, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, Ga, Georgian, German, Greek (Modern), Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Hmong, Hungarian, Ilocano, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Javanese, Kazakh, Kikongo, Kinyarwanda, Korean, Krio, Kurdish-Kurmanji, Kurdish-Sorani, Lao, Lingala, Malay, Malayalam, Mandingo-Bambara, Mongolian, Nepali, Norwegian, Pashto, Persian Farsi, Polish, (European) Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Serbian/Croatian, Sindhi, Sinhalese, Slovak, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Tajik, Tamil, Tausug, Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Turkmen, Uighur, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, Vietnamese, Wolof, Yoruba, Zulu	Intermediate-mid
WPT – American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language Writing Proficiency Test Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Albanian (Booklet form only), Amharic, Armenian, Czech, Dari, Dutch, Greek (Modern), Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Pashto, Persian Farsi, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Swahili, Swedish, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese	Intermediate-mid
STAMP 4S – Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency Arabic, English, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin (Simplified & Traditional), Polish, Portuguese (Brazilian), Russian, Spanish, Spanish Monolingual	Intermediate-mid
ALIRA - American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment Latin	Intermediate-mid level 3
ASLPI - American Sign Language Proficiency Interview	Level 3
SLPI:ASL – Sign Language Proficiency Interview	Intermediate Plus
CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference	B1
Tribal Languages – Tribes may certify that a student is proficient in the respective language using their own methods and processes for determining proficiency in their tribal language. Students may also utilize the alternative portfolio for verification of biliteracy.	Intermediate



Appendix B

Alabama Seal of Biliteracy District Participation Form	
<p>This form shall be completed and submitted upon initial determination to participate in the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy program.</p>	
District Name _____	
District Address _____	
District Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Contact Name _____	
District Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Contact Email _____	
<p>Our district agrees to abide by the Alabama’s Seal of Biliteracy ACT#2022-200 and guidance as outlined in the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Guidelines. We also agree to submit the required information as listed on the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Reporting Form.</p>	
_____	_____
District Superintendent Signature	Date



Appendix C

Alabama Seal of Biliteracy District Reporting Form	
<i>This form shall be completed annually and shall be submitted no later than July 1 following the awarding of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy.</i>	
District Name _____	
District Address _____	
District Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Contact Name _____	
District Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Contact Email _____	
Reporting for School Year _____ - _____	
Number of students enrolled in world language courses this school year:	
Languages other than English in which students earned the seal:	
Number of students who received the seal:	
Number of students earning the seal who are current English learners:	
Number of students earning the seal who are former English learners:	
Number of students earning the seal who are National Origin Minority Student whose Primary Home Language is Other Than English (Nomphlote):	
Number of world language students that received the seal:	
Number of students who were awarded the seal in two world languages in addition to English:	
Number of students who were awarded the seal in three world languages in addition to English:	



Appendix D

Sample Grade Seven and Eight Notification Form

This form may be used to assist seventh and eighth grade students in notifying the school that they wish to pursue the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy.

Grade Seven and Eight Student Notification of Interest of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy			
Student Name _____			
School _____		Expected Year of Graduation ____	
Parent/Guardian Name _____			
We have been notified of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy and the requirements for earning this credential.			
My child would like to pursue coursework and/or other requirements to work towards attaining this seal upon graduation.			
Language(s) of interest _____			
_____ Student Signature		_____ Parent/Guardian Signature	
_____ Date		_____ Date	



Appendix E

Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Student Application			
<p>Directions to Applicants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please type or legibly print all information. 2. Complete all sections of the application. 3. Submit application and documentation of qualifying scores to your school counselor at your high school no later than April 1. 			
Name _____ Date _____ Current Grade Level _____ Expected Year of Graduation _____ School Counselor Name _____ Recommending Teacher Name _____			
Assessment Information			
Language	Name of Assessment	Date Completed	Score
English			
Other Language:			
Other Language:			
<p>*Attach a copy of the score report. <i>Some exams do not give results until after June. Students and advisors may need to plan accordingly.</i></p>			
For School Counselor Use Only			
Qualifications checklist for an Alabama Seal of Biliteracy:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete all high school graduation requirements; and		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meet any one of the defined English Proficiency Criteria Options; and		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meet any one of the defined World Language Proficiency Criteria Options.		
Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Awarded		If No, reason:	
_____ Yes _____ No			
_____ School Counselor Signature		_____ Recommending Teacher Signature	
_____ Date		_____ Date	



Appendix F

Date _____

Dear Recipient;

Congratulations! You have been awarded the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy.

You have received this designation and the accompanying diploma seal based on your demonstration of high levels of proficiency in both English and at least one other world language.

On April 1, 2022, Governor Kay Ivey signed into law House Bill 46 establishing an Alabama Seal of Biliteracy for all students meeting rigorous standards and demonstrating bilingualism and biliteracy in both English and high proficiency in an additional world language, including American Sign Language.

Your transcript has been updated in our files and this achievement has been communicated to the Alabama State Department of Education.

Please be advised that this is a very rare accomplishment and one that you should consider highlighting on future applications including those for college, graduate school, and on job applications. Remember, **by earning the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy you have earned a designation that can be highlighted on your resume for a lifetime!**

You may wish to include a variation of the recommended wording below on your resume and on job applications:

“Recipient of the Alabama Seal of Biliteracy verifying professional-level biliteracy and bilingualism in both English and _____.”

Congratulations again on your achievement.

Sincerely,

High School Principal



Appendix G

To assess the student using a portfolio, the language expert may use the following rubric or a similar one adopted by the district.

Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Portfolio Assessments				
Required score for earning an Alabama Seal of Biliteracy:	3.0			
Rubric Scoring Guidelines: 1 – student is unable to complete task 2 – student completes task with many errors that make understanding difficult 3 – student completes task with some errors that do not interfere with understanding 4 – student completes task with few or no errors; understanding is clear at all times				
Domain: Reading (Interpretive Reading)				
Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).				
A. The student can easily understand the main idea of texts related to everyday life, personal interests and studies.	1	2	3 4	Evaluator's Notes
B. The student can follow stories and descriptions about events and experiences during various time frames in history.	1	2	3 4	Evaluator's Notes
Overall Reading Score Average the scores from letters A-B	Overall Reading Score:			
Examples of evidence that could be included in the student's portfolio for the reading domain: The student can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand written accounts of personal events or experiences; or • Understand a letter describing a family experience/vacation; or • Understand a written description of an individual's daily life; or • Follow simple written directions; or • Understand the main idea of and a few supporting facts about famous people and historic events in a biography; or • Other types of evidence as determined by the student and agreed upon by the authority in the language. 				



Domain: Writing (Presentational Writing)
Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).

A. The student can write on topics related to school, work, and community in a general organized way.	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes
B. The student can write simple paragraphs about events and experiences in various time frames.	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes
Overall Writing Score Average the scores from letters A-B	Overall Writing Score:	

The language authority should consider the student's use of grammar and vocabulary when scoring the student's writing. Examples of evidence that could be included in the student's portfolio for the writing domain:

The student can:

- Write about school and academic topics such as writing a simple summary about something the student has learned in school; or
- Write a series of steps needed to complete a task; or
- Prepare notes for someone who was absent from class or school; or
- Write the content for a multi-media presentation, a handout, a synopsis, etc.; or
- Write about work and career topics; or
- Write about community topics and events; or
- Write about an entertainment or social event; or
- **Other types of evidence as determined by the student and agreed upon by the authority in the language.**

Domain: Listening/Receptive (Interpretive Listening)
Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).

A. The student can easily understand the main idea in conversations and oral/signed presentations on a variety of topics related to everyday life and personal interests and studies.	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes
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B. The student can usually understand what they hear in conversations even when something unexpected is expressed.	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes
C. The student can follow what they hear about events and experiences.	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes
Overall Listening Score Average the scores from letters A-C	Overall Listening Score:	
<p>Examples of evidence that could be included in the student's portfolio for the listening domain: The student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand foreign visitors telling about activities they have done and are planning to do while in town; or • Understand a tour guide's description of a city's history and attractions; or • Understand details about a nutritional recommendation in a public service health announcement; or • Understand the services offered in a radio advertisement for an auto repair shop; or • Understand details from public service announcements, such as severe weather warnings or safety alerts; or • Other types of evidence as determined by the student and agreed upon by the authority in the language. 		
Domain: Speaking (Interpersonal Speaking) Rate the following areas of evidence on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest).		
A. The student can participate with ease in conversations on familiar topics.	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes
B. The student can usually talk about events and experiences at various points in their lives.	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes
C. The student can usually describe people, places, and things.	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes
D. The student can handle social interactions in everyday situations,	1 2 3 4	Evaluator's Notes



sometimes even when there is an unexpected complication.		
Overall Speaking Score Average the scores from letters A-D	Overall Speaking Score:	
<p>Examples of evidence that could be included in the student’s portfolio for the speaking domain: The student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for and provide information about a personal interest, current local/world events; or • Ask for and provide information about a hobby or activity; or • Ask for and provide descriptions of places that the student knows or places that the student would like to visit; or • Talk about family history; or • Talk about jobs and career plans; or • Use the language needed to complete a task that requires multiple steps such as providing the basic rules of a game or sport and answer questions about them or they can ask for, follow, and give instructions for preparing food, etc.; or • Other types of evidence as determined by the student and agreed upon by the authority in the language. 		
Recommendation for Alabama Seal of Biliteracy Award		
<p>Average Overall Score</p> <p>Average the overall scores from the Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking domains.</p>	<p>Final Overall Score: _____</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No seal (0 – 2.9)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Alabama Seal of Biliteracy (3.0-4.0)</p>	



Reference

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