



SCHOOL NUTRITION MEALS SERVED AND REIMBURSEMENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Photo Credit: Laurens County School District 56 Child Nutrition, Clinton, SC



ABSTRACT

An analysis of USDA FNS data that compares March – December 2019 and 2020 school nutrition meals served and reimbursements to determine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on school meal programs.

4/21/2021



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report compares reimbursements and meals served in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) from March – December 2020 to the same time period in 2019. The focus on this specific time period is to determine some of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on school nutrition program participation and finances.

The data used is publicly available USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) data from the [April 2021](#) and [January 2021](#) Keydata reports (see footer for references). The USDA summary pages of the Keydata reports note that, “This report data is based in part on preliminary data submitted by various reporting agencies. User should anticipate changes in future reports as reporting agencies finalize data.”

Sources: USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) January Keydata Report (September 2020 data), published January 27, 2021. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/data/january-keydata-report-september-2020-data>

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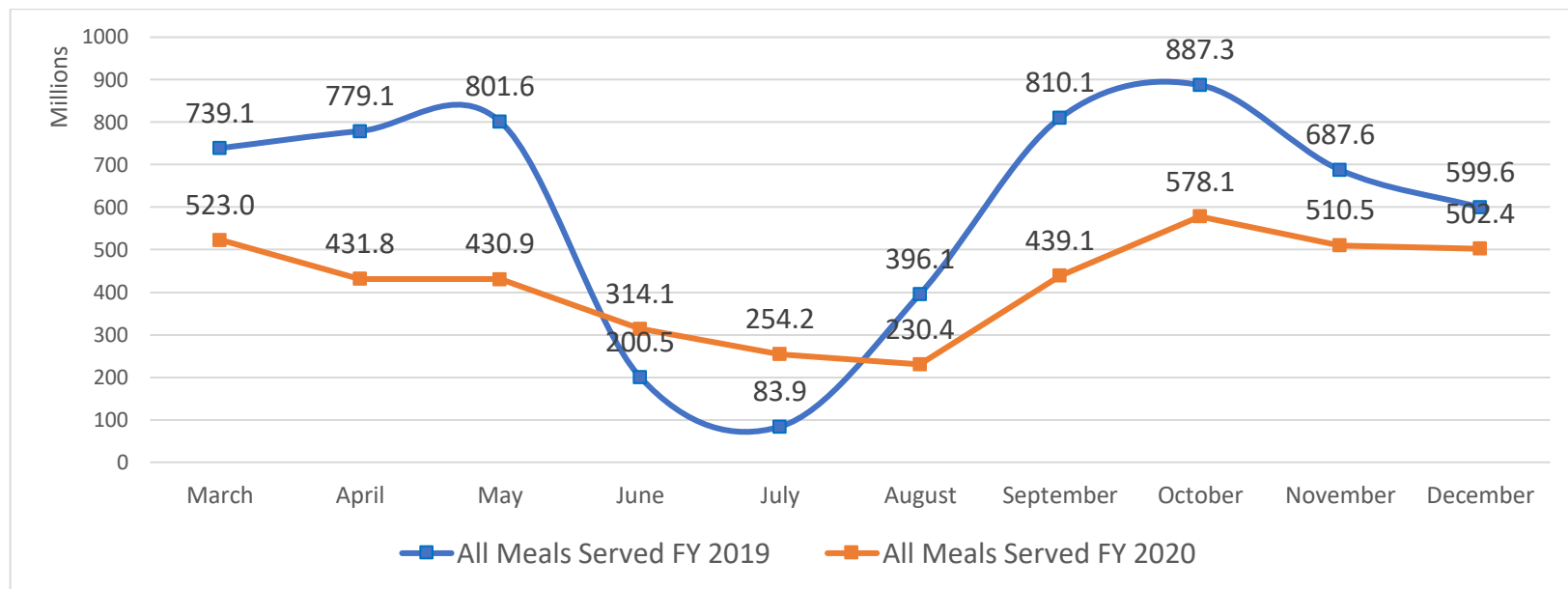
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Meals Served

There were **1,770,466,958 fewer meals (breakfasts and lunches)** served between March – December in 2020, as compared to the same period in 2019. This amounts to a **29.58% loss** in meals served.

Figure 1. Total Meals Served (NSLP Lunches, SBP breakfasts, and SFSP Meals): March – December, 2019 vs 2020



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The number of total lunches served between March – December 2020 (including NSLP lunches and SFSP lunches) was **down 40.49%** compared to the same time period in 2019. The number of total breakfasts served between March – December 2020 (including SBP Breakfasts and SFSP breakfasts) was **down 8.19%** compared to the same time period in 2019.

Table 1. Total Meals Served (NSLP Lunches, SBP breakfasts, and SFSP Meals): March - December 2019 vs 2020

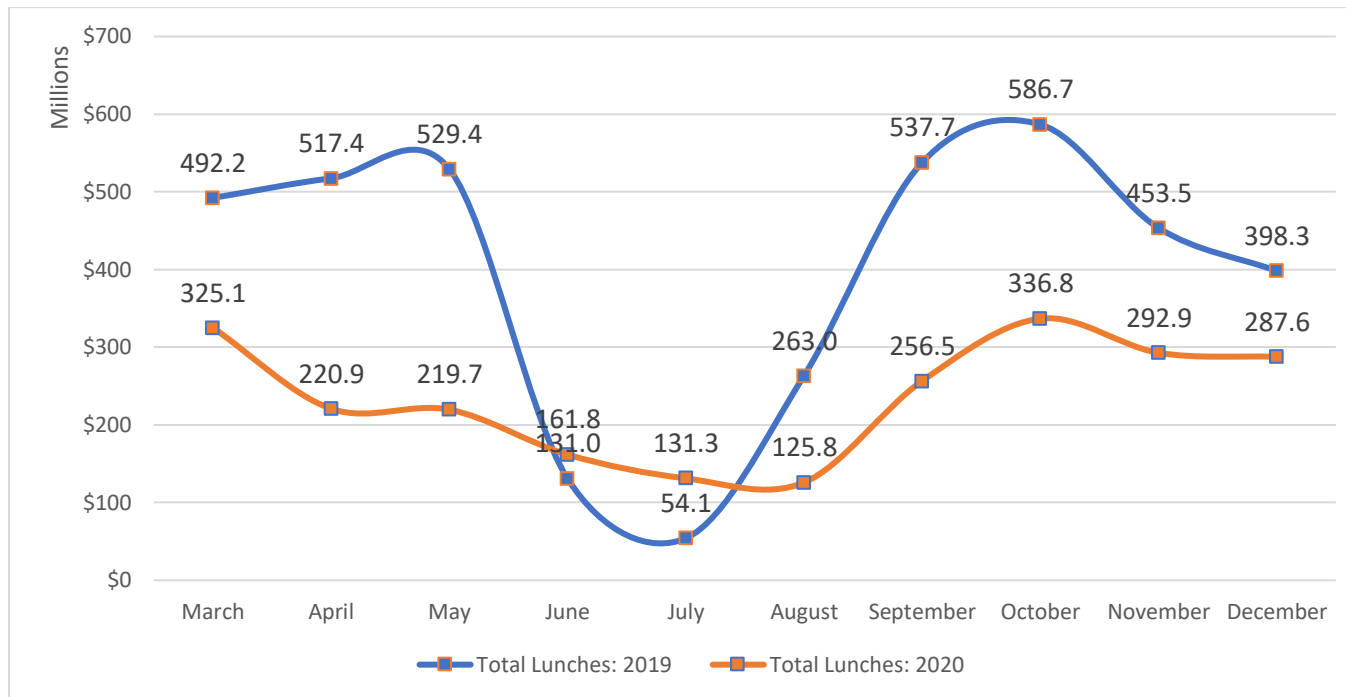
Month	Total Lunches: FY 2019	Total Lunches: FY 2020	Difference in Total Monthly Lunches: FY 2019 - FY 2020	% Difference in Total Monthly Lunches: FY 2019 - FY 2020	Total Bfst: FY 2019	Total Bfst: FY 2020	Total Monthly Bfsts: FY 2019 - FY 2020	% Difference in Total Bfsts: FY 2019 - FY 2020	All Meals Served FY 2019	All Meals Served FY 2020	Difference in Total Monthly Meals Served	% Difference in Total Monthly Meals Served
March	492,186,297	325,126,708	-167,059,589	-33.94	246,897,577	197,918,639	-48,978,938	-19.84	739,083,874	523,045,347	-216,038,527	-29.23
April	517,376,398	220,859,806	-296,516,592	-57.31	261,730,843	210,923,722	-50,807,121	-19.41	779,107,241	431,783,528	-347,323,713	-44.58
May	529,357,466	219,681,999	-309,675,467	-58.50	272,211,386	211,172,809	-61,038,577	-22.42	801,568,852	430,854,808	-370,714,044	-46.25
June	131,007,665	161,838,040	30,830,375	23.53	69,537,304	152,239,579	82,702,275	118.93	200,544,969	314,077,619	113,532,650	56.61
July	54,088,413	131,255,707	77,167,294	142.67	29,782,021	122,900,929	93,118,908	312.67	83,870,434	254,156,636	170,286,202	203.03
August	262,976,039	125,817,565	-137,158,474	-52.16	133,108,918	104,534,270	-28,574,648	-21.47	396,084,957	230,351,835	-165,733,122	-41.84
September	537,708,383	256,505,175	-281,203,208	-52.30	272,438,914	182,639,445	-89,799,469	-32.96	810,147,297	439,144,620	-371,002,677	-45.79
October	586,727,378	336,779,195	-249,948,183	-42.60	300,523,467	241,287,120	-59,236,347	-19.71	887,250,845	578,066,315	-309,184,530	-34.85
November	453,536,821	292,857,695	-160,679,126	-35.43	234,099,841	217,669,748	-16,430,093	-7.02	687,636,662	510,527,443	-177,109,219	-25.76
December	398,251,318	287,648,502	-110,602,816	-27.77	201,363,948	214,786,786	13,422,838	6.67	599,615,266	502,435,288	-97,179,978	-16.21
Total	3,963,216,178	2,358,370,392	-1,604,845,786	-40.49	2,021,694,219	1,856,073,047	-165,621,172	-8.19	5,984,910,397	4,214,443,439	-1,770,466,958	-29.58
	Note: Includes NSLP Lunches and SFSP Lunches				Note: Includes BSP Breakfasts and SFSP Breakfasts				Note: Includes NSLP Lunches, SFSP Lunches, SBP breakfasts, and SFSP breakfasts			

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Figure 2. Total Lunches Served: March – December 2019 vs. March – December 2020

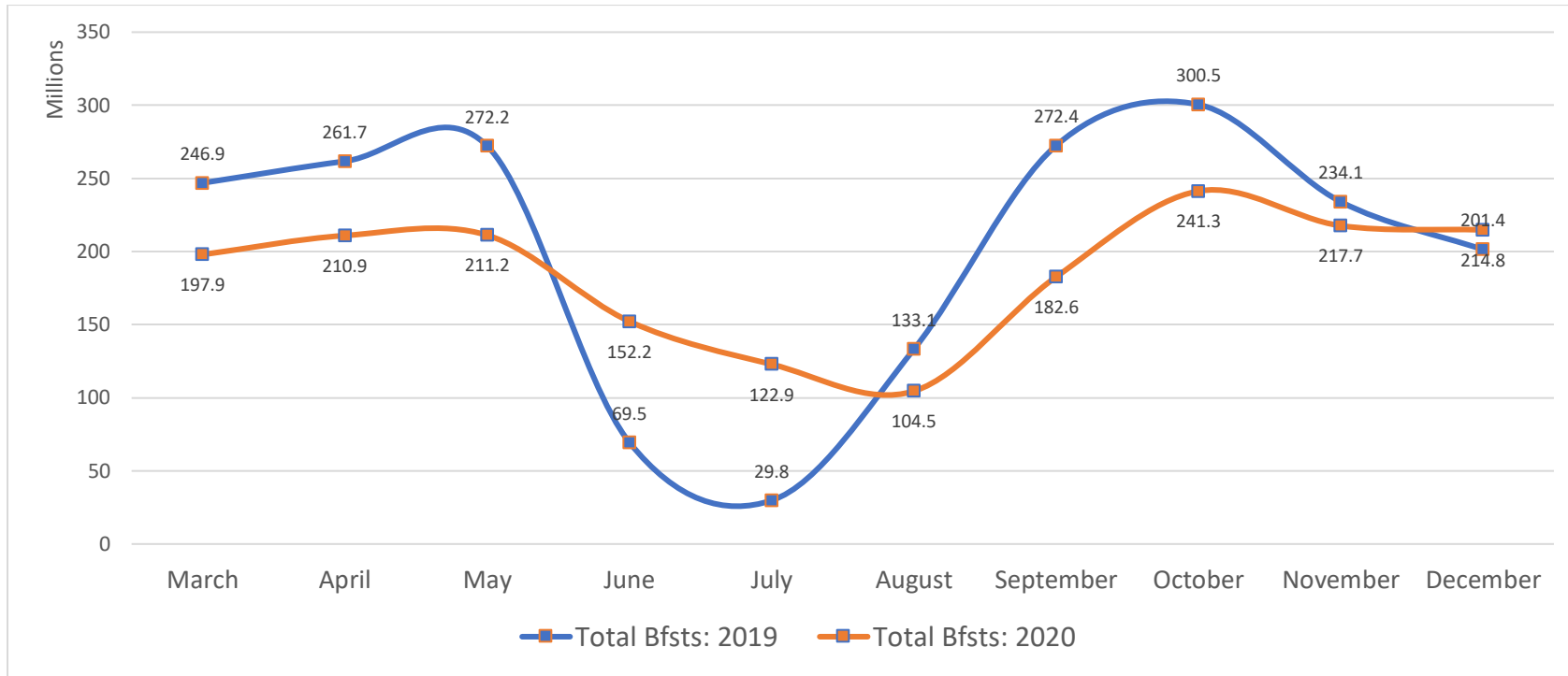


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Figure 3. Total Breakfasts Served: March – December 2019 vs. March – December 2020



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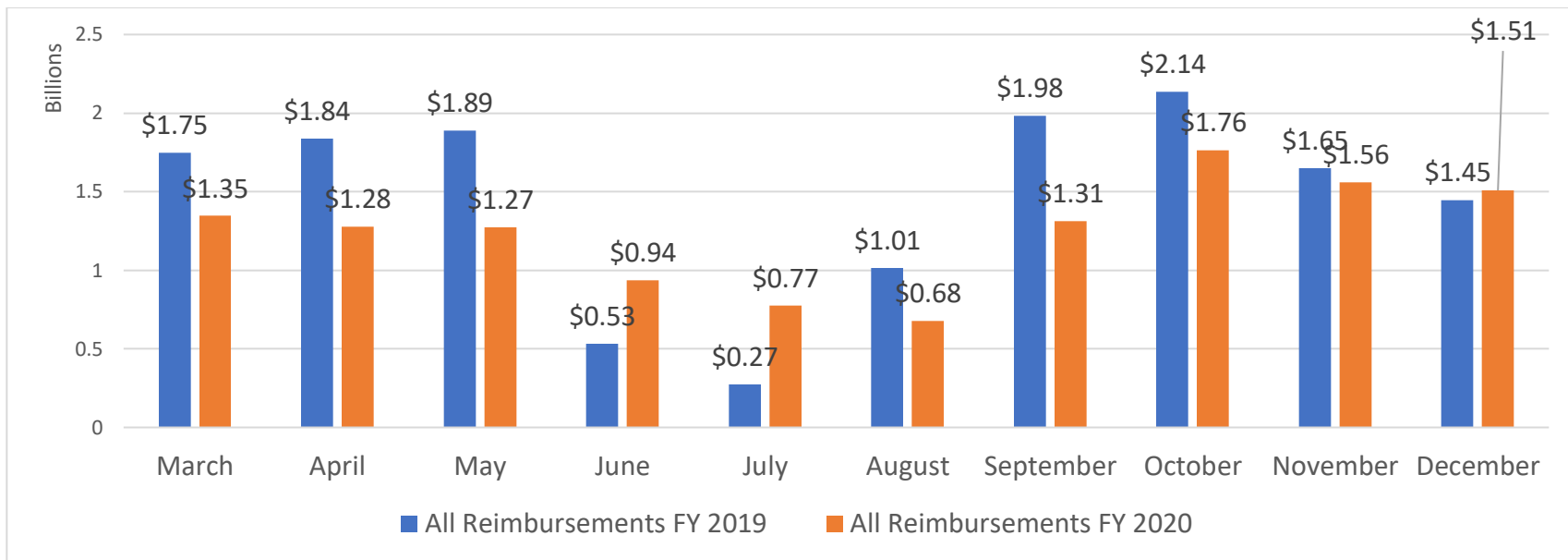
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Reimbursement

Total reimbursements for NSLP lunches, SBP breakfasts, and SFSP meals from March – December in 2020 was **\$2,076,396,984 less** than the same time period in 2019, a 14.31% loss in reimbursements.

Figure 4. Total NSLP, SBP, and SFSP Lunch and Breakfast Reimbursements (\$): March – December, 2019 vs. 2020



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The beginning of the pandemic (March – May) brought significant drops in reimbursements. Expanded summer feeding programs in June and July fueled an increase in reimbursements, as compared to the prior year. August – October were characterized by significant drops in reimbursements. However, December does show a reverse in the trend to a positive difference in reimbursements, due to the higher per meal reimbursement rate for SFSP meals.

Table 2. Total Reimbursements for NSLP Lunches, SBP breakfasts, and SFSP Meals (\$): March – December, 2019 vs 2020

Month	Total Cash - NSLP Lunches: 2019	Total Cash - NSLP Lunches: 2020	Difference in Total Monthly NSLP Lunches: 2019 - 2020	% Difference in Total Monthly NSLP Lunches: 2019 - 2020	Total Program Costs - SBP Bfst: 2019	Total Program Costs - SBP Bfst: 2020	Difference in Total Monthly SBP Meals: 2019 - 2020	% Difference in Total Monthly SBP Meals: 2019 - 2020	Meal Cost - SFSP Meals: 2019	Meal Cost - SFSP Meals: 2020	Difference in Total Monthly SFSP Lunches: 2019 - 2020	% Difference in Total Monthly SFSP Lunches: 2019 - 2020	All Reimbursements FY 2019	All Reimbursements FY 2020	Difference in All Reimbursements	% Difference in All Reimbursements
March	\$1,292,007,452.15	\$805,688,404.46	-\$486,319,047.69	-37.64	\$455,096,844.54	\$314,110,747.82	-\$140,986,096.72	-30.98	\$114,727.26	\$226,052,074.52	\$225,937,347.26	196934.32	\$1,747,219,023.95	\$1,345,851,226.80	-\$401,367,797.15	-22.97
April	\$1,355,920,908.41	\$354,117,897.34	-\$1,001,803,011.07	-73.88	\$481,302,164.61	\$207,793,419.91	-\$273,508,744.70	-56.83	\$32,208.99	\$714,290,079.23	\$714,257,870.24	2217573.01	\$1,837,255,282.01	\$1,276,201,396.48	-\$561,053,885.53	-30.54
May	\$1,385,418,654.10	\$335,043,037.63	-\$1,050,375,616.47	-75.82	\$501,283,948.03	\$199,592,751.37	-\$301,691,196.66	-60.18	\$3,568,887.60	\$739,855,274.95	\$736,286,387.35	20630.70	\$1,890,271,489.73	\$1,274,491,063.95	-\$615,780,425.78	-32.58
June	\$278,578,799.00	\$220,559,577.63	-\$58,019,221.37	-20.83	\$103,391,571.83	\$132,112,558.13	\$28,720,986.30	27.78	\$148,476,165.08	\$582,843,719.38	\$434,367,554.30	292.55	\$530,446,535.91	\$935,515,855.14	\$405,069,319.23	76.36
July	\$48,391,600.27	\$133,968,530.82	\$85,576,930.55	176.84	\$19,379,078.15	\$79,140,150.18	\$59,761,072.03	308.38	\$204,516,668.09	\$561,019,758.88	\$356,503,090.79	174.31	\$272,287,346.51	\$774,128,439.88	\$501,841,093.37	184.31
August	\$708,668,385.51	\$181,614,009.15	-\$527,054,376.36	-74.37	\$244,244,997.43	\$88,958,000.89	-\$155,286,996.54	-63.58	\$60,597,140.12	\$405,987,235.41	\$345,390,095.29	569.98	\$1,013,510,523.06	\$676,559,245.45	-\$336,951,277.61	-33.25
September	\$1,464,240,075.47	\$451,280,222.16	-\$1,012,959,853.31	-69.18	\$516,895,690.73	\$194,379,264.93	-\$322,516,425.80	-62.39	\$141,878.86	\$668,523,278.70	\$668,381,399.84	471093.02	\$1,981,277,645.06	\$1,314,182,765.79	-\$667,094,879.27	-33.67
October	\$1,573,307,147.31	\$557,466,663.27	-\$1,015,840,484.04	-64.57	\$563,376,857.69	\$239,338,559.16	-\$324,038,298.53	-57.52	\$519,768.84	\$966,986,299.38	\$966,466,530.54	185941.61	\$2,137,203,773.84	\$1,763,791,521.81	-\$373,412,252.03	-17.47
November	\$1,209,964,453.95	\$489,141,162.81	-\$720,823,291.14	-59.57	\$438,590,249.39	\$216,872,712.53	-\$221,717,536.86	-50.55	\$9,976.99	\$853,955,093.11	\$853,945,116.12	8559145.76	\$1,648,564,680.33	\$1,559,968,968.45	-\$88,595,711.88	-5.37
December	\$1,068,145,723.08	\$517,226,155.53	-\$550,919,567.55	-51.58	\$379,130,344.77	\$229,581,507.25	-\$149,548,837.52	-39.45	\$38,312.95	\$761,455,549.75	\$761,417,236.80	1987362.59	\$1,447,314,380.80	\$1,508,263,212.53	\$60,948,831.73	4.21
Total	\$10,384,643,199.25	\$4,046,105,660.80	-\$6,338,537,538.45	-61.04	\$3,702,691,747.17	\$1,901,879,672.17	-\$1,800,812,075.00	-48.64	\$418,015,734.78	\$6,480,968,363.31	\$6,062,952,628.53	1450.41	\$14,505,350,681.20	\$12,428,953,696.28	-\$2,076,396,984.92	-14.31
	Source: Tab NSLP - \$, column I, 'Total Cash', FY 2019 & FY 2020				Source: Tab SBP - \$, column I, 'Total Program Costs', FY 2019 & FY 2020				Source: Tab SFSP - \$, 'Meal Cost', column B, FY 2019 & FY 2020				Includes all reimbursements for NSLP Lunches, SBP Breakfasts, and SFSP Meal cost reimbursements			

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