



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Schools
Believing, Achieving, Serving

PARENTS' GUIDE

TO

SPECIAL EDUCATION

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

2018-2019

Revised June 2018



The Parents' Guide is available in Braille, large print, or audio format upon request.
Please contact the Board at 905-525-2930 x 2852 or www.hwcdsb.ca

Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board

Mission

The mission of Catholic Education in Hamilton-Wentworth, in union with our Bishop, is to enable all learners to realize the fullness of humanity of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the model.

The Catholic Community of Hamilton-Wentworth believes the learner will realize the fullness of humanity:

If the learning process:

- begins at home and is part of family life;
- is nurtured within the Parish;
- is anchored in the Catholic Faith;
- takes place within the context of worship, sacraments, and the life of the Church;
- is enhanced by the school community; and
- is embraced by the learner as a personal responsibility for life.

If learning takes place in an appropriate and challenging environment:

- in which members of the school community exemplify the teachings of Jesus Christ;
- which reflects Gospel values and responsible use of human, financial and natural resources; and
- which promotes academic excellence and clear indicators of achievement.

Vision

Learners from Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic Schools will demonstrate:

- knowledge and practice of their Catholic faith;
- the capability of nurturing a strong family unit;
- esteem, respect and responsibility for self and others;
- academic competence;
- the ability to listen accurately and express knowledge clearly;
- independence, critical thinking and effective problem solving;
- proficiency with technology in order to adapt to a changing world;
- the values, attitudes and skills for effective partnerships; and
- the ability to transform our society.

To enable learners to achieve this Vision, the faith community of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board will reflect:

- the centrality of Jesus Christ in our lives;
- the teachings of the Catholic Church;
- exemplary role models;
- social justice, respect and fairness for all;
- a dedicated staff;
- a curriculum that is dynamic, practical and relevant;
- high standards;
- an environment conducive to learning;
- effective partnerships; and
- accountability at all levels.

PHILOSOPHY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

“Each Belongs”

The philosophy of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board is to meet the needs of all children and to help them develop fullness of humanity in a Catholic Community. All students, regardless of special talents or challenging needs, can grow and they can grow best by attending their neighbourhood schools along with their brothers and sisters.

Every child with challenging needs requires a sense of belonging, reasonable and realistic success and concern for his or her dignity as a person. The child is not served by sympathy or sentimentality. Exceptional pupils share with their fellow pupils the responsibility to demonstrate acceptable behaviour and to strive for total growth and development.

It is the responsibility of each individual who instructs children to foster growth. No disability, however severe, and no learning deficit, however persistent, should discourage our efforts. No special gift is to be neglected. All human and material resources must be used to meet the needs of the pupil. Provision of programs and services in our schools is governed by inclusion and personalization.

(June 17, 1969 Board report to the Education Committee)



Meeting The Educational Needs of Exceptional Pupils

The Education Act requires that school boards provide, or purchase from another board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils. The purpose of this parents' guide is to provide parents/ guardians with information about the **Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)** and to outline for parents/guardians the procedures involved in identifying a pupil as "exceptional", deciding the pupil's placement and appealing such decisions if there is no agreement with the IPRC.

If, after reading this guide, parents/ guardians require more information, please refer to the board contact list at the end of this document.

What is an IPRC?

Regulation 181/98 requires that all school boards set up Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRC). This committee is a decision-making body.

The IPRC meets and decides if a student should be identified as an exceptional pupil and, if so, the placement that will best meet the student's needs. An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the board. A school board trustee may not be on the IPRC. (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/specedpartde.pdf>, p. D4)

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDsb) has two types of IPRCs:

- System IPRC which is composed of the Assistant Superintendent responsible for Special Education (or designate), the Principals of the schools in which the System Programs are situated, a representative of the board's Central Student Support Services Department, and one Principal from each family of schools to attend one meeting on a rotational schedule to build leadership capacity; and
- School IPRC which is composed of the Principal, the Special Education Department Head of a Secondary School, the Special Education Resource Teacher of an Elementary School, the Classroom Teacher and any other staff as designated by the Principal.

What is the role of the IPRC?

The IPRC will:

- review pertinent information and documentation;
- decide whether or not a student should be identified as exceptional;
- identify the area(s) of your child's exceptionality, according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities provided by the Ministry of Education;
- decide the appropriate placement for your child - four placement options are available:

- *Regular Classroom with Indirect Support* - The student is placed in a regular class for the entire day, and the teacher receives specialized consultative services;
- *Regular Classroom with Resource Assistance* - The student is placed in the regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified special education teacher;
- *Regular Classroom with Withdrawal Assistance* - The student is placed in the regular class and receives instruction outside of the classroom for less than 50 per cent of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher;
- *System Special Education Program* - there are three types of System Special Education Programs:
 1. *Primary Speech and Language Centre (P.S.L.C.)* - A program situated at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Elementary School designed to provide ongoing assessment and compensatory strategies for the equivalent of one school year for pupils in Kindergarten Year 2 to Grade 3 who have a severe speech and/or language impairment;
 2. *Junior Academic Success Program (J.A.S.P.)* - A program situated at **St. Anthony Daniel Catholic Elementary School** designed to provide ongoing assessment and compensatory strategies for the equivalent of one school year for pupils in Grades 4-6 who have severe specific learning disabilities;
 3. *Technology Learning Centre (T.L.C.)* - A program situated at St. Ann Catholic Elementary School (Hamilton) designed to provide ongoing assessment and remediation through the use of a personal laptop or alternate device for up to six weeks for pupils in Grades 4-6 who have significant learning needs, particularly in reading and writing, and, who are deemed best able to learn through the use of technology; and
 - review the identification on an annual basis.

Who is identified as an exceptional pupil?

The Education Act defines an exceptional pupil as “*a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program...*” Students are identified according to the categories and definitions of exceptionalities as provided by the Ministry of Education. (Reg. 181/98).

What is a special education program?

A special education program is defined in the Education Act as an educational program that:

- is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation; and

- includes a plan (called an Individual Education Plan or IEP) containing specific objectives and an outline of special education services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil.

What are special education services?

Special education services are defined in the Education Act as the facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. It identifies learning expectations that are modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum policy document for the appropriate grade and subject or course, and/or any accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations. The IEPs of students who have no modified or alternative expectations will focus only on accommodations and services. The IEP is *not* a daily lesson plan itemizing every detail of the student's education.

The IEP also helps teachers monitor the student's progress and provides a framework for communicating information about the student's progress to parents and to the student. The IEP is updated periodically to record any changes in the student's special education program and services that are found to be necessary as a result of continuous assessment and evaluation of the student's achievement of annual goals and learning expectations.

The IEP reflects the commitment of the board and the school principal to provide the special education program and services, within the resources available to the school board, to meet the identified strengths and needs of the student. The IEP provides an opportunity for all those involved with the student to work together to provide a program that will foster student achievement and success within the students God-given potential.

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is:

- **a flexible, working document that is a written plan or action based on a student's strengths, needs, interests and current level of achievement;**
- **a plan developed, implemented and monitored by school staff;**
- **a tool to help teachers monitor and assess student growth and to communicate student progress throughout the school year, and is used in conjunction with the Ontario Provincial Report Card;**
- **a means of providing accountability for students, their parents and for board staff responsible for providing the students with assistance in order to meet their goals and expectations;**

- a record which indicates how special education programs and services will be delivered, to ensure continuity and consistency in programming; and
- describes the annual program goal(s), learning expectations, accommodations and/or modifications for a student's learning during a school year,
 - An annual program goal is a statement that describes what a student can reasonably be expected to accomplish by the end of a school year in a particular subject;
 - A learning expectation describes the knowledge and skill that a student is expected to develop and demonstrate in their class work, on tests and in various other activities on which achievement is assessed;
 - The term accommodations are used to refer to the special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports and/or individualized equipment required to enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning. Accommodations described in the IEP should include only those strategies and supports that differ from what is normally provided during classroom instruction. Accommodations do not alter the provincial curriculum expectations for the grade; and
 - Modifications are changes made to the grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. Modifications may include the use of expectations at a different grade level and/or an increase or decrease in the number and/or complexity of expectations relative to the curriculum expectations for the regular grade level.
 - Alternative expectations are developed to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario curriculum.

School principals are required to ensure that an IEP is developed for each student who has been identified as an exceptional pupil by an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) within 30 school days of the student's placement in a special education program.

In addition, an IEP may be developed for a student who has not been formally identified as exceptional but who requires a special education program, special education services and/or individualized accommodations.

Modified and alternative learning expectations described in an IEP must be reviewed, and updated as necessary at least once in every reporting period.

An IEP summarizes:

- the reason for developing the IEP;
- the student profile;

- assessment data;
- the student's strengths and needs;
- pertinent health and medical information;
- subjects, courses or alternative programs to which the IEP applies;
- assessment, environmental and instructional accommodations;
- individualized equipment;
- rationale for exemptions from Provincial Assessments;
- current achievement levels in each subject/course/program;
- annual program goals and learning expectations;
- individualized teaching strategies used to reach learning expectations;
- incorporation of applied behaviour analysis (ABA) methods into the IEPs of students with autism, where appropriate;
- assessment methods for reviewing student progress;
- human resources assigned to provide special education program;
- the IEP Development Team;
- sources consulted in the development of the IEP;
- consultations with parent/student; and
- transition plans for all students K to 12 with an IEP.

What is an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)?

How is an IPRC meeting requested?

The Principal of your child's school:

- must set an IPRC meeting for your child, upon receiving your written request; and
- may, with written notice to you, refer your child to an IPRC when the Principal and the child's teacher or teachers believe that your child may benefit from a special education program.

Within 15 days of receiving your request, or giving you notice, the Principal must provide you with a copy of this Parent Guide and a written statement of approximately when the IPRC will meet.

May parents attend an IPRC meeting?

Regulation 181/98 entitles parents and pupils 16 years or older:

- to be present at and participate in all committee discussions about the child; and
- to be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made.

Who else may attend an IPRC meeting?

Other individuals who may attend include:

- the Principal of your child's school;

- other resource personnel such as the child’s teacher, special education staff, board support staff, or the representative of an agency, who may provide further information or clarification;
- your representative - that is, a person(s) who may support you or speak on behalf of your child; and
- an interpreter, if one is required. You may request the services of an interpreter through the Principal of your child’s school. The board provides interpreters for languages, including sign language.

Who may request that others attend?

Either you or the Principal of your child’s school may make a request for the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting.

What information will parents receive about the IPRC meeting?

At least 10 days in advance of the meeting, the chair of the IPRC will provide you with written notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend the meeting as an important partner in considering your child’s placement. This letter will notify you of the date, time and place of the meeting and it will ask you to indicate whether you will attend.

Before the IPRC meeting a written copy of any information about your child that the chair of the IPRC has received will be provided. This may include the results of assessments or a summary of information.

What if parents are unable to attend the scheduled IPRC meeting?

If you are unable to attend the scheduled meeting, you may:

- contact the school Principal to arrange an alternative date or time;

OR

- inform the school Principal that you will not be attending and, as soon as possible after the meeting, the Principal will forward to you, for your consideration and signature, the IPRC’s written statement of decision, noting the decision of identification and placement and any recommendations regarding special education programs and services.

What happens at an IPRC meeting?

- The chair introduces everyone and explains the purpose of the meeting.
- The IPRC will review all available information about your child. They will:
 - consider an educational assessment of your child;
 - consider, subject to the provisions of the Health Care Consent Act 1996, a health or

psychological assessment of your child conducted by a qualified practitioner if they feel that such an assessment is required to make a correct identification or placement decision;

- interview your child, with your consent if your child is less than 16 years of age, if they feel it would be useful to do so; and
 - consider any information that you submit about your child or that your child submits if he or she is 16 years of age or older.
- The committee may discuss any proposal that has been made about a special education program or special education services for the child. Committee members will discuss any such proposal at your request, or at the request of your child if the child is 16 years of age or older.
 - You are encouraged to ask questions and join in the discussion.
 - Following the discussion and after all the information has been presented and considered, the committee will make its decision.

What will the IPRC consider in making its placement decision?

Before the IPRC can consider placing your child in a special education class, it must consider whether placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services will:

- meet your child's needs; and
- be consistent with your preferences.

If, after considering all of the information presented to it, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a regular class will meet your child's needs and that such a decision is consistent with your preferences, the committee will decide in favour of placement in a regular class with appropriate special education services.

If the committee decides that your child should be placed in a special education class, it must state the reasons for that decision in its written statement of decision.

What will the IPRC's written statement of decision include?

The IPRC's written statement of decision will state:

- whether the IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil;
- where the IPRC has identified your child as exceptional; the categories and definitions of any exceptionalities identified, as they are defined by the Ministry of Education, (i.e., behaviour, communication, intellectual, physical, multiple);
- the IPRC's description of your child's strengths and needs;

- the IPRC's placement decision;
- the IPRC's recommendations regarding a special education program and special education services;
- where the IPRC has decided that your child should be placed in a special education class, the reasons for that decision;
- decisions regarding identification and placement must be reviewed on an annual basis; and
- for the Review of Identification and Placement, the review date is not more than one calendar year from the date of the previous (IPRC) meeting.

What happens after the IPRC has made its decision?

- If you **agree** with the school IPRC decision, you will be asked to indicate, by signing your name, that you agree with the identification and placement decisions made by the IPRC. The statement of decision may be signed at the IPRC meeting or taken home and returned.
- If the System IPRC has identified your child as an exceptional pupil and you **have agreed** with the IPRC identification and placement decision, the board will promptly notify the Principal of the school where the special education program is to be provided of the need to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child.

Once a child has been placed in a special education program, can the placement be reviewed?

- The principal of the school at any time may recommend a review IPRC meeting to be held if there is a change in either the identification or the special education placement.
- A parent/guardian may request a review IPRC meeting any time after his or her child has been in a special education program for three months.
- A review IPRC of program placement may occur prior to the three months as discussed at the initial System IPRC meeting.

What does a review IPRC consider and decide?

- The review IPRC considers the same type of information that was originally considered.
- With your written permission, the IPRC conducting the review will consider the progress your child has made in relation to the IEP.
- The IPRC will review the placement and identification decisions and decide whether they should be continued or whether a different decision should now be made.

What can parents do if they disagree with the System IPRC decision?

- If you **do not agree** with either the identification or placement decision made by the IPRC, you may:
 - within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns;
 - if you do not agree with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a written notice of appeal within 15 days of receipt of the decision to the Director of Education address

OR

 - within 30 days of receipt of the decision, if no second meeting has taken place, file a written notice of appeal to the Director of Education, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, 90 Mulberry Street, P.O. Box 2012, Hamilton, Ontario, L8N 3R9.
- Your child's identification and placement may not change until the appeal process is completed.

If parent/guardian does not consent to the IPRC decision and does not appeal, the board will instruct the principal to implement the IPRC decision.

How do I appeal an IPRC decision?

If you disagree with the IPRC's identification of your child as exceptional or with the placement decision of the IPRC, you may, within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the second meeting described above, give written notification of your intention to appeal the decision to; Director of Education, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, 90 Mulberry Street, P.O. Box 2012, Hamilton, Ontario, L8N 3R9.

What happens in the appeal process?

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- The board will establish a special education appeal board to hear your appeal. The appeal board will be comprised of three persons (one of whom is to be selected by you, the parent; one selected by the board; a third selected jointly by the board and the parent/guardian) who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal;
- The chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, no later than 30 days after he or she has been selected (unless parents and board both provide written consent to a later date);
- The appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal;
- You, the parent, and your child, if he or she is 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at

and to participate in all discussions;

- The appeal board must make its recommendation within 3 days of the date of the meeting. The appeal board may:
 - agree with the IPRC and recommend that the decisions be implemented; or
 - disagree with the IPRC decisions and make a recommendation to the board regarding your child's identification and/or placement.
- The appeal board will report its recommendations in writing to you and to the school board, providing the reasons for its recommendations;
- Within 30 days of receiving the appeal board's written statement, the school board will decide what action it will take with respect to the recommendations. Boards are not required to follow the appeal board recommendation; and
- You may accept the decision of the school board or you may appeal to a Special Education Tribunal. You may request a hearing by writing to the Secretary of the Special Education Tribunal. Information about making an application to the tribunal will be included with the appeal board's decision.

What special education programs and services are provided by the HWCDSB

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board provides special education programs and services for pupils with the following exceptionalities:

- **BEHAVIOUR EXCEPTIONALITY**
- **COMMUNICATION EXCEPTIONALITIES**
 - Autism;
 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing;
 - Language Impairment;
 - Learning Disability; and
 - Speech Impairment.
- **INTELLECTUAL EXCEPTIONALITIES**
 - Mild Intellectual Disability;
 - Developmental Disability; and
 - Giftedness.
- **PHYSICAL EXCEPTIONALITIES**
 - Physical Disability; and
 - Blind or Low Vision.

- **MULTIPLE EXCEPTIONALITIES**

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board emphasizes the inclusion of exceptional pupils in its schools. This means that the majority of exceptional pupils are placed in the regular classroom setting where they receive their special education programs and services. A smaller number of exceptional pupils receive a part of their special education program and some of their special education services outside of the regular classroom. Frequently this occurs in the school's Resource Room. An even smaller number of students attend the Primary Speech and Language Centre at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Elementary School, the Junior Academic Success Program at **St. Anthony Daniel Catholic Elementary School** or the Technology Learning Centre at St. Ann Catholic Elementary School (Hamilton).

Special education programs and services are provided within the schools by classroom teachers, **designated early childhood educators** and Special Education Resource Teachers.

The HWCDSB also provides an array of support services for exceptional pupils, their parents/guardians and the school staffs, including:

- Superintendent of Education;
- Assistant Superintendent of Education;
- Audiologist;
- **Child and Youth Workers;**
- Special Education and Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Consultant;
- Educational Assistants;
- **Transition Coordinator;**
- **Job Coaches;**
- Manager, Psychological Services
- Psychologists;
- Psychometrists;
- Central Resource Teachers (with knowledge in Assistive Technology, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Behaviour, Deaf**blind**, Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Developmental & Physical Disabilities, Gifted, Learning Disabilities, Visual Impairments);
- Orientation and Mobility Trainers;
- Manager, Social Work Services;
- Social Workers;
- Mental Health Lead;
- Manager, Speech, Language and Hearing Services; and,
- Speech-Language Pathologists.

If a **parent/guardian** of an exceptional pupil wishes **his/her child** to be placed in a special education program offered by another school board, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board will investigate the placement option.

What organizations are available to assist parents?

Many parent organizations are available to provide information and support to parents of exceptional pupils. The following organizations are current members of the Board's Special Education Advisory

Committee (SEAC):

- Community Living Hamilton;
- Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton;
- Hamilton Family Network; and,
- **Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario.**

There are several Members-at-Large representing other community interests.

There are two Trustee representatives, as well as one alternate Trustee representative.

The Special Education Advisory Committee is a committee of the HWCDSB which has been established to further the interests and well-being of exceptional pupils. One of its responsibilities is to monitor the educational needs of exceptional pupils and to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees on any matter affecting special education programs and services.

SEAC meets on the second Thursday of each month (unless otherwise indicated) at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are generally held at the Father Kyran Kennedy Catholic Education Centre, 90 Mulberry Street, Hamilton, Ontario, and are open to the public. Confirmation of dates are posted on the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board website.

What are the Ministry's provincial and demonstration schools?

The Ministry of Education operates provincial and demonstration schools throughout Ontario for deaf, blind, deaf-blind and **severe learning disabilities**. Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

Demonstration schools for English-speaking students with ADHD and severe learning disabilities:

- Amethyst Demonstration School
1090 Highbury Avenue
London, Ontario N5Y 4V9
Tel: 519-453-4408
Fax: 519-453-2160
- Sagonaska Demonstration School
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2
Telephone: 613-967-2830
- Trillium Demonstration School
347 Ontario Street South
Milton, Ontario L9T 3X9
Telephone: 905-878-8428
Fax: 905-878-7450

School for the blind and deaf-blind:

- W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind and Deafblind
350 Brant Avenue
Brantford, Ontario N3T 3J9
Tel: 519-759-0730
Fax: 519-759-4741

Schools for the deaf:

- Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf
255 Ontario Street South
Milton, Ontario L9T 2M5
Telephone: 905-878-2851
TTY: 905-878-7195
- Robarts School for the Deaf
1515 Cheapside Street
London, Ontario N5V 3N9
Telephone and TTY:
Tel: 519-453-4400
Fax: 519-453-7943
- Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf
350 Dundas Street West
Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2
Tel: 613-967-2823
Fax: 613-967-2857

Francophone school for the deaf and for those with learning disabilities:

- Centre Jules-Léger
281 rue Lanark
Ottawa, Ontario K1Z 6R8
Telephone: 613-761-9300
TTY: 613-761-9302 and 613-761-9304

Where can parents obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from:

- a member of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC);
- a school Principal; and/or
- a staff member of Student Services.

The Parents' Guide is available in Braille, large print, or audio format upon request. Please contact the Board at 905-525-2930 x 2852 or www.hwcdsb.ca

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2018-2019 Membership**PARENT ORGANIZATIONS**

- ❑ **Hamilton Family Network**
 - Linda Armour (Vice-Chair)
larmour1@cogeco.ca

- ❑ **Community Living Hamilton**
 - Sylvia D'Intino (Representative)
sd'intino@clham.com

- ❑ **Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton**
 - Veronica Hannon (Representative)
veronica.a.hannon@gmail.com

 - Monica Fox – (Alternate)
monicarpfox@gmail.com

Members-At-Large

- Dr. William Mahoney (Chair) (Member at Large)
mahoneyw@hhsc.ca

- ❑ **Trustees**
 - Tony Perri
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 - Joseph Baiardo (Alternate)
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 - Mark Valvasori
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