



ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS
INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND CODE OF ETHICS

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PREFACE

The Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International expresses its thanks to the Professional Standards Committee and its chair, Dr. Pam Deering, for continuing to improve this important document. ASBO International also extends its thanks to the many professionals who reviewed the work of the committee at various stages. Their comments and recommendations made a positive impact on the final version of this work.

The professional standards presented in this document are intended to

- Assist those currently working in the profession of school business management to perform their duties as expertly as possible.
- Delineate the content of both the pre-service and professional development experiences of those entering or seeking growth in the profession.
- Provide a framework for establishing accreditation standards for higher education institutions involved in training school business officials.
- Present a model from which to build certification standards for the profession and aid local decision makers in seeking and securing the best person for the school business official position.

INTRODUCTION

The revised standards (2005) evolved from a combination of existing standards (2001), the knowledge base in the field, and the input of highly trained and well-recognized school business officials. The standards represent the best thinking of the profession in addition to decades of study and research ASBO International has conducted regarding the role of school business officials and their importance to the overall educational management team on national and international levels. While presenting the best thinking at this point and time, the standards presented in this document need to be viewed as dynamic. In our highly complex and quickly evolving society, standards such as these require regular review and refinement.

Today, school districts cannot meet the challenges of an increasingly demanding and diverse clientele without an efficient and effective business and financial framework within which to operate. Well-prepared and dedicated school business officials, working in tandem with other members of the administrative team, can better assure that such a framework is in place. The revised standards presented in this document have been developed to assist training institutions, accrediting agencies, certifying entities, and members of the school business profession to define and achieve educational excellence through the work of the school business official.

ASBO International considers professional standards for school business officials a key to gaining and maintaining the trust of policymakers and citizens. The Association has been actively developing and disseminating standards for the position of school business official for nearly five decades. Throughout those years, ASBO International has operated under the principle that public trust is built when written standards are in place, professional development supports the standards, and the performance of members of the profession are judged in concrete terms against the standards. Being judged as “professional” is critical to the school business official. The term engenders an image of expertise, trust, and dedication. ASBO International believes all school business officials today must strive for this image. In so doing, these standards address: The Educational Enterprise, Financial Resource Management, Human Resource Management, Facility Management, Property Acquisition and Management, Information Management, Ancillary Services, as well as the Code of Ethics.

THE EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE

The public is giving more attention to the relationship between a school's sound business practices and the quality education of students. Legislative mandates, such as the "No Child Left Behind Act" in the United States, from all levels of government have drawn more scrutiny to the utilization of resources in schools. School business officials have been recognized as being central to the successful operation of the educational enterprise. School business practices permeate the entire school district. The local education enterprise often maintains the largest budget in the community. Therefore, due to the public's increased demand for accountability, transparency, and independence; the challenge to do more with less; and the needed expertise to manage the financial resources of the school, the school business official must endorse certain standards in organization and administration, public policy and intergovernmental relations, and the legal framework of our public school districts.

Organization and Administration

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Identify and apply various organizational leadership models.
- Identify techniques for motivating others, delegating authority, decision making, information processing, planning, and allocating resources.
- Examine methods of assigning personnel and resources to accomplish specific goals and objectives and to utilize scheduling techniques for the coordination of tasks to maximize personnel and resource utilization.
- Identify problems, secure relevant information, and recognize possible causes of conflict.
- Utilize questioning techniques, fact-finding, categorizing information, and retention of relevant data.
- Apply concepts of change, group dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and effective problem solving.
- Delegate and assign responsibilities to staff; collect, analyze, and evaluate information to generate contingency plans; and apply basic concepts of organizational development.
- Maintain a positive working relationship with all staff.

Public Policy and Intergovernmental Relations

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Develop and apply the policies and roles of all relevant education authorities and local and national governments.
- Identify the role of special interest groups (public and private) within a school district and their ability to influence those who approve district policy.
- Analyze the political and legislative process as it relates to local board elections, municipal governments, state/provincial legislatures, and other governmental jurisdictions.
- Use the skills necessary to interpret and evaluate local school board policies and administrative procedures to ensure consistent application in the daily operation of the school district.

Legal Issues

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Identify the local and national constitutional rights that apply to individuals within the public and private education system.
- Review and analyze appropriate statutory and constitutional authority regarding the administration of public and private schools.
- Review and analyze significant statutory and case law relative to financial resource management, human resource management, facility management, property management acquisition, information management including freedom of information and protection of privacy, and management of ancillary services.
- Apply the highest values and ethical standards as they relate to the entire profession of school business administration.
- Protect all stakeholders' interests with respect to responsibility and financial integrity.

FINANCIAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

School business officials must be able to demonstrate, understand, and comprehend the principles associated with school finance, budgeting, financial planning, accounting, auditing, financial reporting, cash management, investments, debt management, and technology for school business operations.

Principles of School Finance

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Apply economic and financial markets/theories.
- Recognize and forecast the major sources of revenue available to the school district from local and national governments and other sources.
- Interpret the relevant governmental funding model.
- Analyze the impact of shifts in local and national funding and the effect on local spending plans.
- Apply multiple techniques for identifying expenditures across cost centers and programs.
- Explore alternative and innovative revenue sources.
- Recognize and analyze significant social, demographic, and economic changes that may impact the financial plan of the district.

Budgeting and Financial Planning

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Prepare a budget calendar to meet the time constraints of budget preparation.
- Use multiple approaches to determine reliable enrollment and personnel projections.
- Forecast anticipated expenditures by program.
- Identify various methods of budget analysis and management.
- Apply statistical process control techniques for budgetary analysis.
- Apply the legal requirements for budget adoption.
- Prepare revenue projections and estimates of expenditures for school sites and district-wide budgets.
- Recognize and explain internal and external influences on the budget.
- Maximize state/provincial/national aids for the district.
- Communicate the relationship between programs, revenues, and appropriations of the school district to the stakeholders.
- Develop multi-year budgets that serve as a communications tool for the stakeholders.
- Develop a financial model to monitor a school district's financial health.
- Analyze comparable data of other school districts.

Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Reporting

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Obtain the services of an internal and external auditor.
- Establish and verify compliance with finance-related legal and contractual provisions.
- Communicate the relationship between programs, revenues, and appropriations of the school district to the stakeholders.

- Prepare, analyze, and report financial statements and supporting discussion documents to the board of education throughout the fiscal year.
- Prepare a corrective action plan from the information conveyed in the annual audit report to improve financial tracking and reporting and internal controls and guide the implementation of the plan.
- Apply concepts and standards of accounting relevant to the district's location.
- Adhere to the accounting standards- setting governing body and prepare financial statements in accordance with the most current standards as issued by such body.
- Report the financial status of the district to the appropriate state/provincial agency in the appropriate regulatory format, which may be on a generally accepted accounting basis or on a customized/regulated basis of reporting.

Cash Management, Investments, and Debt Management

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to:

- Select professional advisors/contractors such as bond counsel, rating agencies, financial advisors, and underwriters.
- Use lease purchasing and partner with other jurisdictions such as municipalities, counties, and other school districts.
- Develop/recommend investment policies for the governing board to include investment objectives such as maximizing investment income and preserving the investment principal.
- Develop specifications for the selection of banking and other financial services.
- Apply the concept of compensating balances.
- Comprehend procedures and legal constraints for cash collection and disbursement.
- Calculate the yields and understand the risks of various investment options legally available to a school district.
- Apply various methods of cash forecasting.
- Apply appropriate types of short-term debt financing instruments available to school districts.
- Analyze monthly internal transfers and loans.
- Analyze the legal constraints and methods of issuing long-term general obligation bonds, including the bond rating process and the role of the bonding attorney and rating services.
- Analyze the implication of arbitrage rules that may apply to the issuance of long-term general obligation bonds; provide for arbitrage payable when appropriate.
- Prepare a cash flow analysis, including a fund balance report, for the board of education.
- Review accrued receivables and understand permitted collection processes.

Technology for School Finance Operations

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Keep current with technology applications and programs.
- Assess the district's needs related to available budget dollars for technology.
- Ensure that the district technology plan is designed to meet the district's goals.
- Develop an operational plan to meet the district's financial goals and objectives.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

In the education sector, the critical importance of human resource management is the administration and monitoring of personnel, benefits, professional development, labor relations, employment agreements, and the fostering of human relations.

Human resource management, while involving many day-to-day practical considerations, also requires an understanding of both theory and practice, recognizing that theory often determines practice. School business officials cannot fulfill their human resource management role efficiently and effectively without being aware of relevant management concepts and theories as well as local and national rules and regulations.

Personnel and Benefits Administration

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Coordinate the development and management of an appropriate personnel database to provide seamless integration with payroll and other school district functions.
- Manage and continually evaluate the effectiveness of the school district's payroll operations.
- Administer employment agreements including interpreting contract language, considering the concepts of "past practice," "just cause" provisions, and grievance procedures.
- Assist with the processes related to the recruitment, selection, orientation, assignment, evaluation, and termination of school district personnel.
- Ensure the selection and hiring of the most qualified individuals for positions, adhering to all local and national rules and regulations.
- Research and explain various compensation arrangements including salaries and wages, employee health care benefit programs, and retirement options.
- Coordinate the procedures for termination of employment including the concept of "due process" and an awareness of the procedures, usually governed by collective bargaining agreements, with respect to reduction in work force.

Professional Development

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Conduct needs assessments to identify areas and content for training and development.
- Build a professional development system, based primarily on adult motivation research, to improve the performance of staff members and to assist staff in meeting the educational objectives of the school district.
- Ensure all staff meet training and continued education requirements to comply with local and national rules and regulations.
- Identify appropriate procedures for the management and evaluation of professional development programs.
- Involve all school district staff in determining their professional development needs that can significantly enhance the effectiveness of employee training and development programs.

Labor Relations and Employment Agreements

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Analyze jurisdictional and governmental laws and regulations with respect to employment agreements.
- Continually conduct and analyze benchmark surveys to assess the cost of current salary and employee benefit packages and proposals.
- Analyze current employment contracts and/or collective bargaining agreements and develop comparative reports with local and national agreements.
- Identify and monitor compliance with the grievance procedures as set out in employment agreements and local and national law.
- Review local and national laws and regulations with respect to impasse procedures such as mediation, voluntary arbitration, and binding arbitration.

Human Relations

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Diagnose, maintain, and when necessary, improve organizational health/morale, including increasing focus on employee wellness programs.
- Develop policies and procedures for the management of school district personnel.
- Develop employee assistance programs and evaluate their impact on the school district's staff morale.
- Frequently monitor performance through constructive evaluations, including a comparison of standards and goal-setting to ensure accountability.
- Identify and implement procedures for conflict resolution and team building to enhance morale and productivity.
- Help create a high performance work system by fostering open communication and feedback throughout all levels of the district.
- Recognize and promote compliance with standards of ethical behavior and standards for professional conduct applicable to all school district staff.
- Stay current with management theory and leadership styles including concepts of behavioral science, organizational structure theory, developing and maintaining organizational culture, and managing organizational change.

FACILITY MANAGEMENT

Research on learning has validated the effect of environmental stimuli on the learner. Factors such as sound, light, temperature, and the design of space affect the ability of individuals to learn and work. Hence, effective and efficient facility management contributes to the educational process by providing the environment in which instructional programs are delivered. Expertise in areas such as physical plant planning, accountability for capital resources, and administration of the substantial public investment in schools are basic performance competencies for school business officials.

Planning and Construction

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Develop a long-range facility plan that includes demographic data and serve as an integral member of the planning team.
- Develop a working knowledge of funding sources and issues related to school construction, including bond ratings, the rating process, and bond election processes.
- Develop appropriate procedures for selecting architects, engineers, construction managers, and other professionals.
- Apply the steps and procedures involved in developing and using education specifications for selecting school sites.
- Review the legal and administrative responsibilities for advertising, awarding, and managing construction contracts.
- Recognize the impact of energy and environmental factors on the learning process
- Meet the requirements of local and national agencies regarding construction and renovation of school facilities.
- Communicate financial implications of unanticipated issues during the construction process to appropriate personnel in order to guarantee project solvency.
- Involve appropriate existing district/agency personnel who have experience with local energy demands, materials choices, and contractor regulations to share their concerns during construction job progress meetings.

Maintenance and Operations

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Administer procedures required to keep schools clean, safe, and secure through effective custodial services and preventive maintenance.
- Manage energy consumption and environmental aspects.
- Determine resource allocation for maintenance and operations.
- Develop a crisis management plan.
- Maintain a positive working relationship with staff, contractors, and suppliers.
- Be knowledgeable of sources of alternative revenue (other than debt or tax levies) such as grant revenue to meet facility needs.
- Be able to effectively form partnerships with the private sector to enhance resources available to the district in regard to facilities and equipment.
- Utilize technology to improve facilities through data management.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT

Effective acquisition of property, materials, equipment, and services requires a systematic purchasing system, operated by established procedures, and managed by competent professionals. Acquiring the products and services needed for the educational enterprise is an integral part of the instructional program. Accountability in education begins with the procurement of school property and materials. Effective, efficient, and proper procurement of property, materials, equipment, and services supports accountability in education. School business officials coordinate the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of property acquisition and management according to appropriate laws and ethical practices.

Purchasing

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Develop and implement an integrated purchasing process that complies with all government regulations.
- Adhere to a strict code of purchasing and procurement ethics.
- Develop and implement a bid procurement system that complies with all government regulations.
- Analyze and, if feasible, implement an e-procurement system that complies with all government regulations.
- Obtain good value for each procurement.
- Properly and effectively apply the rules, regulations, and statutes that govern school procurement.
- Determine and produce the most appropriate method of source selection for each procurement.
- Formulate competitive procurement solicitations that are fair and reasonable and that promote open competition.
- Conduct all procurement without conflict of interest, impropriety, or any attempt to obtain personal gain.

Supply and Fixed Asset Management

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Develop and implement a system to manage and track supply inventories and distribution.
- Develop and implement a program for the effective current and long-range acquisition, maintenance, and repair of equipment.
- Develop a system to reallocate and/or dispose of surplus, scrap, and obsolete materials and equipment.
- Develop and implement a system for the proper valuation, classification, and depreciation of fixed assets.
- Develop and implement a system to adequately control and account for capital assets.

Real Estate Management

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to:

- Coordinate with other government agencies regarding zoning, land use, and other real estate issues.
- Develop and implement procedures for the acquisition and disposal of land and buildings.
- Develop and implement a use of facility system that complies with all government regulations.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

In a technological environment where information flows to and from school organizations in gigabytes per second, the prerequisite competencies to direct, protect, analyze, and update this information has become a primary focus for school business officials. Ultimately, information management is more than simply overseeing technical data; it also involves the presentation and articulate communication of information to key decision-making individuals and groups in the school environment.

Strategic Planning

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Participate in administrative and employee teams in the identification of short- and long-term goals in all aspects of school district activities.
- Assist with the development and communication of a vision of the preferred future of the school district, drawing from current research and best practice.
- Assist in the development of a strategic plan that will move the district toward the achievement of its mission and goals.
- Assist in providing the data required to facilitate the strategic planning process.
- Assist in the implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and revision of a strategic plan.

Instructional Support Program Evaluation

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Apply a practical and research-based knowledge of the components and skills to evaluate programs and business services.
- Identify various economic and cost factors inherent in program operation and evaluation.
- Develop and apply procedures for the systematic evaluation of instructional support programs.
- Analyze, develop, and apply various methods of measuring instructional goals and program effectiveness.
- Effectively manage a change process when evaluation determines that instructional support programs must be improved.

Instructional Program Evaluation

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Support the components of the instructional programs within the school district.
- Participate in the planning and implementation of instructional program improvement.
- Analyze the various economic factors associated with the delivery and evaluation of instructional programs.
- Develop procedures for the evaluation and reporting of the cost effectiveness of instructional programs.
- Utilize evaluation data toward the development of instructional program changes.
- Effectively participate in the change process when instructional programs must be improved.

- Assist in directing and facilitating the allocation of resources within the school district toward the improvement of instructional programs.
- Assist in directing and promoting the allocation of resources for professional development leading to improved instructional programs.

Communications

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to:

- Comprehend effective communication strategies and techniques related to mass and interactive communications.
- Identify the primary components of public information management and public relations.
- Develop a clear understanding of the major constituencies within the school district.
- Present financial data to various school and community groups in written, oral, and multi-media formats.
- Assist in the development of a plan for a positive school community relations program for the business office and the school district.
- Assist in the development of procedures for the management of public information programs and departments that relate to school-community relations.

Management Information Systems

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Direct or develop management information systems.
- Apply the most current technology to the storage, analysis, and communication of data (fax, electronic mail, administrative and educational computer systems, etc.).
- Evaluate the cost benefits and organizational value of producing information.
- Develop, maintain, and validate a records management system using appropriate technology that complies with all legal requirements.
- Develop and maintain an accurate database to facilitate management decisions using current information management techniques.
- Administrate a computerized management information system.
- Ensure that appropriate data security and privacy of records are maintained.
- Assist in the integration and gathering of information for public relations purposes.
- Assist in and coordinate the gathering and reporting of information for government reports.
- Maintain and protect the historical records archive of the school district.
- Assist in the development and implementation of technology in the business office and the classroom environment.
- Maintain a working knowledge of the technology and software available for school and business office use.
- Direct or develop specific plans for secure student and employee access to the Internet.
- Evaluate the cost of Internet access options for the school district.
- Evaluate and apply various technology tools for use in the school and business office.
- Assist in the development of long-range technology planning for the school district.
- Promote and assist in the development of technology training for all staff.
- Allocate appropriate resources toward the purchase and installation of technology and technology infrastructures in the business office, the school office, and the classroom.
- Develop appropriate specifications for purchasing technology and contracting for technology infrastructure for the school district.

ANCILLARY SERVICES

Risk Management

All schools risk suffering loss or damage to their property, personnel, and reputation, which may affect their ability to deliver services. Risk management and contingency planning can be used to anticipate and limit those risks that may affect the activities of the school.

Risk management also plays a role in developing standards of benchmarking, best practices, and performance measurement. Financial standards such as claim statistics and cost-of-risk analysis are important measures of efficiency but are not true measures of risk management effectiveness when used alone. Other areas that need to be measured include strategies to contain costs of workers' compensation, litigation management, employee relations, loss control, and cost containment.

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Ensure that a comprehensive risk management program is in place.
- Ensure the risk management program addresses safety and security.
- Assess risk management programs and recommend changes consistent with district needs.
- Identify and apply models for the evaluation of potential risk management programs.
- Identify and evaluate alternative methods of funding and managing risk.
- Communicate the risk management program to all stakeholders.
- Direct the process of selecting/employing an insurance consultant or risk manager.
- Adhere to legal requirements for insurance coverage.

Transportation

The transportation of children is a major logistical task for all school districts. In addition to getting the students to and from school, educational visits are an additional responsibility. In the United States, it is one of the largest public mass transportation systems. With the volume of vehicles, passengers, and miles traveled, problems are inevitable.

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Support and maintain a student transportation program that adheres to all legal requirements.
- Ensure (where appropriate) that the school bus maintenance and replacement program is established and maintained.
- Monitor the student transportation program for its safety, security, and efficiency and make adjustments as needed.
- Analyze alternative methods available for providing transportation.
- Ensure (where appropriate) an efficient and comprehensive routing system is developed and maintained.
- Ensure a comprehensive plan is in place that includes an analysis of what transportation requirements are and the basic features of a system to provide pupil transportation, and where appropriate, arrangements for screening, training, re-training and retaining bus drivers, paraprofessionals, and other essential transportation personnel.

- Develop and maintain open and clear lines of communication with parents, staff, administration, state/provincial legislatures, and the public for the purpose of conveying the responsibilities, needs, and expectations of all stakeholders.

Food Service

International studies confirm that children who eat nutritious meals perform better academically, show improved behavior, and are physically healthier. Culturally, school districts use different approaches to ensure children are receiving nutritious meals/snacks. Breakfast programs, lunch programs, and afterschool meals/snacks are provided through contracted or provision of services. Funding of food services is nationally peculiar to the country and local governmental unit.

The school business official understands and demonstrates the ability to

- Establish procedures for the implementation and operation of the food service program.
- Adhere to the legal requirements, including local and national government guidelines of the food service program.
- Monitor the food service program and make adjustments as needed.
- Ensure the management systems for tracking meals and inventories are in place and identify participant status.
- Manage and control inventories and procurement.
- Ensure compliance with required nutritional value is in place.
- Analyze the methods available for providing food service and identify and recommend the most beneficial methods for a given situation.
- Interface with nutrition and regulatory agencies relative to planning, conduct, and reporting of catering service programs within the school.
- Ensure effective cash handling procedures and internal controls.

ASBO INTERNATIONAL'S CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Basic Beliefs

Members and associate members of the Association of School Business Officials International, including its affiliates, are committed to conducting themselves within the highest standards of professional and personal ethics, to continuing ongoing professional growth and development, and to developing these beliefs in others with whom they work.

Members assume the responsibility for providing professional leadership in their schools, communities, and organizations. This responsibility requires members to maintain standards of exemplary personal and professional conduct. To these ends, members subscribe to the following standards.

Ethical Standards

In all activities, members and associate members in good standing of ASBO International and its accredited affiliates shall

- Make the well-being of all students, staff, and fellow members a fundamental value in all decision making and actions.
- Fulfill professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity.
- Support the principle of due process and protect the civil and human rights of all individuals
- Obey all local, state, and national laws.
- Implement the policies and administrative rules and regulations of the employing organization (school district, private school and/or associated organization).
- Pursue appropriate measures to correct those laws, policies, and regulations that are not consistent with this code of ethics.
- Not tolerate the failure of others to act in an ethical manner and will pursue appropriate measures to correct such failures.
- Never use their positions for personal gain through political, social, religious, economic, or other influence.
- Honor all contracts until fulfillment or release.

Ethical Conduct

In all activities, members and associate members in good standing of ASBO International and its accredited affiliates shall demonstrate their adherence to the standards set forth above by

- Actively supporting the goals and objectives of the educational institution with which they work.
- Interpreting the policies and practices of their employer to the staff and to the community fairly and objectively.
- Implementing, to the best of their ability, the policies and administrative regulations of their employer.
- Assisting fellow members, as appropriate, in fulfilling their obligations.

- Supporting a positive image of the educational institution with which they work.
- Not publicly criticizing board members, superiors, administrators, or other employees.
- Helping subordinates achieve their maximum potential through fair and just treatment.
- Maintaining confidentiality of data and information.
- Accurately and objectively reporting data, in a timely fashion, to authorized agencies.

Expectations of Personal and Professional Integrity

In the conduct of business and the discharge of responsibilities, each member will

- Conduct business honestly, openly, and with integrity.
- Avoid conflict of interest situations by not conducting business with a company or firm in which the official or any member of the official's family has a vested interest.
- Avoid preferential treatment of one outside interest group, company or individual over another.
- Uphold the dignity and decorum of their office in every way.
- Never use their position for personal gain.
- Never accept or offer illegal payment for services rendered.
- Not accept gifts, free services, or anything of value for or because of any act performed or withheld.
- Support the actions of colleagues whenever possible.
- Actively support appropriate professional associations aimed at improving school business management, and encourage colleagues to do likewise.
- Accept leadership roles and responsibilities when appropriate.

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