

SREB

Interstate Cooperation —

Multiplying Benefits, Dividing Costs

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

2001 ANNUAL REPORT

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CHAIRMAN ROY E. BARNES

Roy E. Barnes, Georgia's 80th governor and chairman of the Southern Regional Education Board, has focused on improving education. A law signed on April 25, 2000, requires smaller class sizes and more accountability and gives parents, teachers and principals more control over their schools.

Using technology in education is first and foremost about education and much less about the technology itself. As SREB chairman, I am proud to report on three educational technology actions we have taken this year. While they all are based on technology, their number one aim is to improve education.

Learning Connections for SREB states, which builds on the Georgia Learning Connections model, uses Internet technology that incorporates some of today's most sophisticated software infrastructure. However, the reason that Learning Connections is so important is that it can provide teachers in all SREB states with instant access to proven lesson plans shared by teachers who have taught the same topics. The lesson plans will cover all grades and all subjects. Each state participating in Learning Connections can contribute lesson plans that meet its academic standards and can link to lesson plans from other states with the same or similar standards.

Each state multiplies the teaching and learning tools available to its teachers and students and links these to its own academic standards. States do not duplicate the work that other states have done or are doing. States also

save by dividing the costs of the technology that SREB will use to coordinate the effort. No single state has "to reinvent the technology wheel."

We intend to have the expanded Learning Connections operational in 2001. This can help the SREB states leap ahead of others in the key area of academic standards. Georgia's willingness to share Learning Connections — knowing that, by sharing, Georgia also will gain — makes it possible for our states to build this expanded version of Learning Connections. No other region in the country could have done so, because no other region has SREB, the Educational Technology Cooperative and more than 50 years of experience in building multi-state programs.

The *Electronic Campus* reached yet another milestone this year. Created by 350 of our region's colleges and universities, it already is one of the nation's most successful marketplaces of distance learning courses. In less than four years, the *Electronic Campus* dramatically multiplied the courses and programs that residents of the SREB states can bring right into their own homes. This year, 5,000 courses and 200 degree programs are available via the

Electronic Campus. When the *Electronic Campus* began in 1998, there were 104 courses and no degree programs available.

The technology upon which the *Electronic Campus* is built is impressive, but, again, its real success is less about technology than about the agreements and policies that leaders in our states have reached through our SREB connections. It is important that this year we revamped and updated the Internet infrastructure upon which the *Electronic Campus* operates. The new electronic platform will enable the *Electronic Campus* to function effectively and efficiently for years. The platform has been given to every SREB state that has requested it to incorporate into its distance-learning operations. This makes our connections even stronger.

The American TelEdCommunications Alliance is the third and newest technology-related education initiative. The Alliance is a team effort involving SREB, the nation's three other regional compacts for education and MiCTA, a national nonprofit telecommunications agency with an impressive track record over nearly two decades.

The American TelEdCommunications Alliance's mission is simple but offers substan-

tial short- and long-term benefits. The Alliance will provide low-cost access to top-quality telecommunications programs and give education an organized way to exert leadership in building technology policies and standards.

The Alliance will arrange effective contracts for basic and advanced telecommunications services in support of schools, colleges and libraries. These contracts will be aimed at providing low costs, wide access and high quality. Schools, colleges and universities, libraries, and other nonprofit groups can have these services by joining the AmericanTelEdCommunications Alliance for an annual fee of only \$75. It is a genuine bargain.

I am proud of what we have accomplished this year with Learning Connections, the *Electronic Campus* and the American TelEdCommunications Alliance. Each has major benefits and outstanding potential for 2002 and beyond.

Together, they signal the huge impact for our states when we combine SREB's historic sharing agreements with the newest technologies.



PRESIDENT MARK MUSICK

Mark Musick is president of the Southern Regional Education Board, an organization he has served for more than 20 years. He came to SREB from Virginia, where he served in the governor's office and with the Virginia Community College System and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. Mr. Musick holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University.

Help states achieve together improvements in education that they cannot achieve individually — this is interstate cooperation at SREB, America's first education compact.

Interstate cooperation can sound a bit abstract. At SREB interstate cooperation comes alive in dozens of real ways that improve the lives of people of all ages and help state leaders provide more and better education.

SREB helps states multiply benefits and divide costs. This is the best and simplest description of interstate cooperation and how SREB works for states.

Multiply benefits and divide costs. Help states achieve together improvements in education that they cannot achieve individually. These are the simple but powerful ideas behind SREB's very first service as well as its newest services for states.

More than 50 years ago SREB began multiplying benefits and dividing costs through its contract program for students in health professions. States without schools for veterinary medicine, optometry, dentistry or osteopathic medicine got guaranteed spaces for their residents in other states' schools. The states providing the spaces benefited by getting top-notch

students and extra dollars in contract fees from the other states to upgrade their programs and defray fixed costs.

One of best examples of multiplying services and benefits while dividing costs is *High Schools That Work*. More than 1,100 high schools get leadership for detailed, structured school improvement in a network that achieves economies of scale to provide the necessary assistance and services to improve education. *High Schools That Work* is America's most recognized school-improvement program through independent evaluations, congressional designations and foundation grants.

Some of the newest SREB services use sophisticated technology to help states multiply benefits and divide costs. Learning Connections is one of these. Teachers in each state will be able to develop and evaluate lesson plans keyed to their state standards and then share these lesson plans with teachers in other states. The Learning Connections technology makes it possible to link lesson plans for states' standards that are identical or very similar so that teachers in every grade and in every subject will have access to many more lesson plans and materials than can be generated in one state. The lesson plans and teaching materials

will be multiplied, while the costs for Learning Connections will be divided among states.

SREB's research and dozens of publications each year also multiply benefits and divide costs. SREB's new *Fact Book on Higher Education* provides the most recent data from all 16 SREB states and national sources. No single state could compile this information. The SREB-State Data Exchange, created by SREB states, makes this possible.

This Annual Report describes many other SREB programs that multiply benefits and share costs. The Academic Common Market enables states to share access to certain graduate and undergraduate programs — and now to do so electronically. The *Electronic Campus* links students to courses and programs at 350 colleges and universities throughout the SREB states. The Educational Technology Cooperative, in which all the SREB states' agencies for education and higher education participate, shares the latest information about the uses of technology in education. Soon the Cooperative will offer an online algebra course for teachers throughout the region to improve their knowledge of the content and to learn effective ways to teach algebra to more stu-

dents. An online course in reading instruction for teachers in the middle grades and high school also will be operational in 2001. The Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing gives all SREB states a forum for addressing the important issues that face collegiate nursing programs.

These are a few of the SREB programs that multiply benefits and divide costs. Tens of thousands of students have been served by the Academic Common Market, the Regional Contract Program and the *Electronic Campus*. Tens of thousands of educators are involved in *High Schools That Work*.

Thousands of government and education leaders are served by SREB's information and research programs. They will be particularly interested in next year's results of SREB's work on Goals for Education 2010. The last decade's progress and the need for significant gains in many areas will be the center of a special SREB report in 2002. Based on the success in 2001 and before, education and government leaders can testify that interstate cooperation has very real, tangible and personal effects on the lives of residents of the SREB states.

STATE SERVICES

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Serving member states is the aim of all SREB programs. State services are at the heart of all the things that SREB does best.

Staff who head those programs designated “state services” often are SREB’s initial link to executive and legislative officials and staff in the 16 SREB states. They respond to numerous questions and prepare reports geared to pressing issues. *Beyond Salaries: Employee Benefits for Teachers in the SREB States* was an important one this year. This report was aimed at answering a key part of the question “What do SREB states need to do to develop a dedicated, well-qualified teaching force?”

SREB is known for its commitment to helping policy-makers accurately analyze trends and issues. *Legislative Reports*, prepared during legislative sessions, are shared with officials across the SREB region and are available immediately upon completion on the SREB Web site (www.sreb.org).

Policy-makers in SREB states receive thorough examinations of governors’ legislative and budget proposals. And State Services staff prepare reports showing final legislative actions in the SREB states.

State Services staff work closely with the SREB Legislative Advisory Council, which is made up of state senators, representatives and delegates from all SREB states. The State Services staff regularly make presentations to legislative and educational groups and also coordinate the annual Legislative Work Conference and the legislative and executive staff meeting.

Accountability is a focal point for State Services staff. A continuing series of publications help policy-makers with decisions they face about accountability programs. State leaders and staff get similar assistance from the *Legislative Briefing*, a topical summary of legislative sessions, and *Focus* reports on issues that are on several states’ agendas or soon will be.

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK AND MAKING SCHOOLS WORK

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High Schools That Work is the nation's largest and fastest-growing approach to combine challenging academic courses and modern career/technical studies to raise the achievement of high school students. It has expanded to more than 1,100 schools in 26 states, including all SREB states.

Each school implements key practices to change what is expected of students, what they are taught and how they are taught. *High Schools That Work* is "results-based" and provides states and schools with staff development, publications, technical assistance visits and the findings from the visits in straightforward reports. Student learning is the most important result, and *High Schools That Work* has a rigorous testing program that all member schools use. This assessment helps schools learn the most successful ways to increase student performance in reading, mathematics and science.

High Schools That Work, a powerful example of a long-term SREB initiative, is America's most recognized school-improvement program. Its success is indicated by results of independent evaluations, congressional designations and foundation grants.

A new initiative building on the success of *High Schools That Work* is Making Schools Work, a comprehensive effort to improve the middle grades and high schools in clusters of rural schools. Making Schools Work provides these schools with hands-on assistance in implementing key practices that have been shown to promote higher achievement. A primary goal is to provide all students with a rigorous academic core of courses.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY COOPERATIVE

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Every education and higher education agency in the SREB states is multiplying benefits and dividing costs as a member of the SREB Educational Technology Cooperative.

The cooperative works to improve the affordability and efficiency of technology's use in education. The cooperative was the springboard for SREB's *Electronic Campus* and helped make possible the interstate agreements creating the expanded Learning Connections (described by Georgia Governor Roy Barnes, SREB chairman, in this Annual Report) and American TelEdCommunications Alliance. Other successes include:

- A comprehensive, online course in algebra is now ready for teachers of middle grades and high school mathematics who need additional professional assistance in teaching algebra to all students. SREB states will have free access to this course funded by the AT&T Foundation and SREB.
- EvaluTech provides schools, teachers, parents and students with free online evaluations of software and other educational materials through an arrangement with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Evaluations are added regularly. This year there were more than 1,500 new reviews.
- The AP Nexus Project involves SREB and the departments of education in Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee. AP Nexus provides Advanced Placement courses online as part of the overall SREB effort to expand the availability of online courses in all SREB states.

Working with states that are developing virtual high schools or planning distance-learning high school programs, especially for rural areas, is a priority for the cooperative.

ELECTRONIC CAMPUS AND DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY LABORATORY

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Each SREB state is making an investment in distance learning in higher education. The *Electronic Campus* of the Southern Regional Education Board gives SREB colleges and universities the opportunity to participate in an “electronic marketplace” of courses, programs and services for the distance learner.

The *Electronic Campus* has more than 5,000 credit courses and 200 degree programs offered by 350 colleges and universities from all SREB states. Last year, the *Electronic Campus* had 3,200 courses, 125 degree programs and 250 participating colleges and universities. More than 136,000 prospective students have visited the *Electronic Campus* at www.electroniccampus.org.

In the last year, SREB invested in a major upgrade of the *Electronic Campus*’ infrastructure to a level of sophistication that will carry it well into the decade ahead. The six-month effort by a highly regarded consulting firm ensures the technical integrity and future stability of the *Electronic Campus* infrastructure.

The *Electronic Campus* will continue to expand ways for colleges and universities to provide services to students taking distance learning courses. The *Electronic Campus* also will continue working to eliminate policy barriers to distance learning through SREB’s Distance Learning Policy Laboratory.

The goal of the policy laboratory is to help more people have access — real access to education. Work is under way in several areas. Two high-priority areas are tuition and academic credit transfer for distance-learning courses.

Pricing is a real barrier in distance learning, particularly arbitrary pricing that uses in-state and out-of-state tuition. SREB has proposed “electronic tuition rates” to help alleviate this problem. Transferring credit earned through distance learning is also a barrier; a subcommittee of the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory will recommend an innovative, regional agreement to help institutions and students solve more of these credit-transfer problems.

FACT BOOK AND SREB-STATE DATA EXCHANGE

Contact:

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The Southern Regional Education Board's *Fact Book on Higher Education* has more than 75 tables of comparative information about each SREB state on a range of important topics in higher education, including enrollments, degrees, college costs, faculty salaries and demographics.

The biennial *Fact Book* has been an important resource for policy-makers, educators and journalists for more than 40 years. The 2001 edition of the 200-page *Fact Book* continues the tradition of providing comparative national and regional data and highlighting trends that affect colleges and universities in the SREB states.

Important developments and trends in the past decade underscored in the *Fact Book* have implications — some major — for SREB states.

- Virtually all of the nation's growth in bachelor's degrees was in the SREB states.
- Nearly half of the nation's new jobs in the 1990s were in the SREB states (more than 7 million new jobs, 44 percent of the U.S. total).
- Eleven SREB states had more college students — an increase of 139,500. Only 27 states in the country had more college students, and 11 of these were SREB states.

The *Fact Book* exemplifies the SREB approach to comparative data: compile and evaluate related trends and measures and encourage the examination of noteworthy findings. Comparative information frequently raises questions and shows that answers can be complex. Pursuing these questions often leads to better state policies and better data.

The most recent information in the *Fact Book* comes from the SREB-State Data Exchange. State higher education agencies created the Data Exchange to share up-to-date information from their states; this information forms the backbone of the *Fact Book*. The *Fact Book* databases are available around the clock on the SREB Web site, www.sreb.org.

Fact Book Bulletins provide snapshots of the latest updates of comparative data throughout the year.

DOCTORAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

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The 100th graduate of the SREB Doctoral Scholars Program received her Ph.D. this year — representing a remarkable accomplishment for minority students and another step toward increasing the small number of minority faculty at colleges and universities.

The Doctoral Scholars Program aims to create a self-sustaining program that will help minority students who are admitted by universities into Ph.D. programs to earn Ph.D.s and become college faculty members.

The SREB Doctoral Scholars Program works. After eight years, the program has a 90 percent retention and graduation rate, and nearly three-fourths of the graduates have begun academic careers, most of them as full-time teaching and research faculty.

The Doctoral Scholars Program is succeeding at what it set out to do: identify students committed to faculty positions and work with institutions and students to ensure success in graduate study.

Scholars participate in professional-development activities, including an annual Institute on Teaching and Mentoring to strengthen their skills, knowledge and determination to succeed. The Institute brings hundreds of these Ph.D. students together to share personal experiences and learn the “basic mechanics” of conducting research, writing proposals and securing faculty positions.

Students from all 16 SREB states are involved in the Doctoral Scholars Program.

REGIONAL CONTRACT PROGRAM AND ACADEMIC COMMON MARKET

Contact:

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The Regional Contract Program enables states to share costly professional programs and to postpone — or even avoid — duplicating some of these programs. The Regional Contract Program, which began in the early years of the Southern Regional Education Board, soon was a model for education compacts in the western United States and New England.

Thanks to the SREB Contract Program, thousands of people in states without schools of dentistry, optometry, osteopathic medicine, podiatry and veterinary medicine have earned degrees at nationally recognized colleges and universities. More than 15,000 students benefited from the program in the 1990s alone.

The Regional Contract Program is a “win-win” situation for states and is a classic example of SREB’s commitment to maintaining important programs over a long period of time.

- States contracting for spaces for their qualified residents avoid the expenses of a new program.
- Students residing in states without programs are given the opportunity to enroll in another state’s program.
- States and universities providing the spaces in these health-profession education programs receive per-student subsidies from students’ home states. These fees are in addition to tuition and help maintain operations and strengthen programs.

The Academic Common Market is another program that effectively multiplies benefits and divides costs, allowing students from participating states to enroll in specialized graduate and undergraduate programs offered by institutions in other SREB states. The students pay in-state tuition and fees. States benefit because they can use the Academic Common Market students to increase enrollments. States can increase the efficiency of the specialized programs that they do create and can avoid creating others that are available to their residents through the Academic Common Market.

LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

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SREB’s new Leadership Initiative is designed to prepare educational leaders to meet the changing demands brought on by the growing emphasis on accountability and higher standards.

There are serious concerns in SREB states — and across the nation — about the availability of high-quality leaders for schools and school systems. The Southern Regional Education Board has demonstrated its ability to keep a results-oriented initiative for school improvement alive and visible for the long term and is well-positioned to help solve this problem.

One of the first priorities is to design a curriculum based on what successful school leaders will need to know and be able to do. SREB’s strategic objectives for its Leadership Initiative are:

- work with educational leaders in SREB states — and specifically with the Georgia Board of Regents — to test a leadership-preparation prototype outside the traditional university setting;
- create a network of colleges and universities that will develop and deliver redesigned leadership preparation within their traditional settings;
- work with a network of state leadership academies to link their programs more closely to state learning priorities, to teach leadership in education programs that tackle real-world problems, and to manage an SREB model of a leadership academy; and
- establish regional indicators for tracking states’ progress in creating school leaders who will meet higher standards that are being set for students and schools.

The Leadership Initiative will bring together education leaders and policy-makers in an intensive, continuing process using SREB state and institutional contacts and programs.

COUNCIL ON COLLEGIATE EDUCATION FOR NURSING

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SREB states benefit from the Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing, the nation's only regional organization for improving nursing education in colleges and universities.

The council has worked with SREB for more than a half-century, conducting regional projects that have strengthened nursing education programs in all SREB states. The council's primary purpose is to provide nurse educators at all levels with a forum to address issues and concerns related to nursing education and practice.

The nursing shortage in the SREB states — and particularly what states and nursing education programs must do to reduce the shortage — is a high priority for the council. A regional survey of all nursing education programs is under way to provide important data about collegiate nursing programs and the capacity to prepare nursing graduates. The findings and recommendations will be prepared for SREB.

MIDDLE GRADES INITIATIVE

Contact:

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Middle grades schools in 13 SREB states have created SREB's Middle Grades Initiative to implement comprehensive improvements, raise student achievement and ensure that all students leave the eighth grade ready for challenging high school studies.

The middle grades have been largely overlooked as improvement efforts and attention have focused on elementary and high schools. The problem demands state leaders' attention. More students fail the ninth grade than the first eight grades combined, and too many are unprepared for the tougher graduation requirements that many states have enacted.

The 34 participating schools have developed action plans to address 10 essential elements. Teams from SREB conduct technical assistance visits to provide further help. A comprehensive planning guide helps schools develop and revise action plans.

The Middle Grades Initiative is based on:

- a rigorous academic core of courses with performance standards;
- high expectations and assurance of extra help and time;
- classroom practices that actively engage students in learning;
- qualified teachers working together;
- support from parents;
- use of data and technology;
- strong leadership; and
- a belief that all students matter.

The Middle Grades Initiative, funded by a grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, has issued four reports: *Education's Weak Link: Student Performance in the Middle Grades*; *Raising the Bar in the Middle Grades: Readiness for Success*; *Improving Teaching in the Middle Grades: Higher Standards for Students Aren't Enough*; and *Leading the Way: State Actions to Improve Student Achievement in the Middle Grades*. *Middle Grades Message: A well-qualified teacher in every classroom matters* also was published.

AMERICAN TELEdCOMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE

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The Southern Regional Education Board, the nation's three other regional compacts for education and MiCTA, a successful nonprofit telecommunications organization that has a nearly two-decade-long track record, have created the American TelEdCommunications Alliance.

The Alliance will provide low-cost access to top-quality telecommunications programs and will give education a new way to exert leadership in building technology policies.

The Alliance will provide access to state-of-the-art wireless Internet services and will give SREB schools and colleges a tangible way to influence how telecommunications services are developed to meet educational needs as part of its services.

Any school, college, university, library or nonprofit group can join the American TelEdCommunications Alliance for a \$75 annual fee. All organizations affiliated with the Alliance will benefit from the opportunity to multiply their telecommunications and divide the costs with other organizations nationwide.

Internet access to the Alliance is available through the SREB Web site, www.sreb.org.

SREB GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES SUPPORT FROM THESE SOURCES:

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
Appalachian Regional Commission
AT&T Foundation
BellSouth Foundation
Board of Regents University System of Georgia
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
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Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education — USDOE
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Oklahoma

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South Carolina

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Tennessee

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	Peaches G. Simpkins, Nashville	2003
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Texas

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	Roderick R. Paige, <i>U.S. Secretary of Education</i>	2002
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Virginia

	James S. Gilmore III, <i>Governor</i>	2002
†	John H. Chichester, <i>State Senator</i>	2002
	Donald W. Jones, <i>Director of Minority Procurement Services</i> , University of Virginia	2004
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†	Kirk T. Schroder, <i>President</i> , Virginia Board of Education	2003

West Virginia

	Bob Wise, <i>Governor</i>	2005
†	Lloyd Jackson, <i>State Senator</i>	2004
	James J. MacCallum, <i>Member</i> , West Virginia Board of Education	2001
	Jerry L. Mezzatesta, <i>State Delegate</i>	2002
	Roman W. Prezioso Jr., <i>State Senator</i>	2003

† *Executive Committee member* — The Executive Committee has full power to act between Board meetings. It is composed of one board member from each state and several from the region at large.

* *Finance Committee member* — The Finance Committee, a subcommittee of the Executive Committee, prepares an annual budget and presents it and other financial policy matters to the Executive Committee.

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Lloyd Jackson, *Vice Chair*

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Amory, Mississippi

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Chapel Hill, North Carolina

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Each year, the Southern Regional Education Board is audited by an independent auditor in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and government auditing standards issued by the comptroller general of the United States. The audit report is mailed to board members and made available to others.

If you would like a copy of the audit report completed on Sept. 29, 2000, by Deloitte & Touche LLP, please write or call. Send your request to:

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