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Policy Alert: SB 546 on Three-Point Seat Belts

1 message

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Senate Bill 546 on Three-Point Seat Belts

February 5, 2026

To: District Superintendent, Superintendent's Administrative Assistant, and Policy Contact

Administrative Action: Yes

- Review the included information.
- Submit a report to TEA relating to SB 546 if the district's budget does not permit compliance.

Board Action: Yes

- Consider specific information about bus seat belts at a public meeting.
- Take action if the district's budget does not permit compliance with SB 546.

Deadline:

- Review the information included as soon as possible.
- Comply with SB 546 by **May 29, 2026**.

Background

Senate Bill 546 from the 89th Legislative Session requires board action on the items listed above before the end of the school year. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has opened the relevant reporting period, and all submissions must be finalized by **May 29, 2026**.

SB 546 amends Texas Transportation Code section 547.701, which requires that school buses be outfitted with certain equipment. Previous law required a bus operated by or contracted for use by a school district for the transportation of schoolchildren to be equipped with a three-point seat belt for each passenger, including the operator. SB 546 eliminates an exception for a bus purchased by a school district that is a model year 2017 or earlier. Now the requirement for seat belts does not apply to a bus:

1. If the board determines that the district's budget does not permit the district to purchase a bus that is equipped with the required seat belts, or
2. For which the warranty would become void if the bus were equipped to comply with the law.

After a public presentation, if your board determines that the district's budget does not allow for the purchase of new buses or retrofitting existing buses, you must submit a report to TEA not later than May 29, 2026.

TEA has created a detailed and helpful [Guidebook](#) for compliance with SB 546.

Action Needed

If your board determines that the district's budget does not permit seatbelts for every seat on every school bus, you must submit a report to TEA through Sentinel not later than May 29, 2026.

The submission must include the board meeting agenda and minutes from a meeting at which the board received a public report with specific information on seat belts and costs, then made a formal determination that the budget does not allow for the purchase of buses with three-point seat belts.

Need help?

If you have questions, please contact your [policy consultant](#) for assistance.

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