



NORTH EAST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Date: April 13, 2026

Presenter: Deb Caldwell
Bill Harrison
Executive Director of Transportation

Subject: Senate Bill 546 (89R)
School Bus Seat Belt Requirements

Related Page(s): Attachments

ACTION ITEM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Senate Bill 546 (89R) requires all school buses operated by or contracted for use by a school district be equipped with three-point seat belts for every passenger, including the driver (Transportation Code, §547.701).

Previously, only buses purchased after 2017 were required to have seat belts, and districts could opt out of the requirement. Districts are required to be fully compliant with the three-point seat belt standard by September 1, 2029. Compliance can be reached by retrofitting buses and/or purchasing buses with 3-point seat belts.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION

The Board of Trustees is responsible for determining whether the district's budget can support purchasing buses equipped with three-point seat belts as required by Texas Transportation Code 547.701(e)(1). If a school board determines that the district's budget does not allow for the purchase of buses equipped with three-point seat belts, the district must present a report in a public board meeting that includes the number of buses operated by or contracted for use by the district that:

1. Are not equipped with seat belts.
2. Are equipped with two-point seat belts.
3. Are equipped with three-point seat belts.
4. The estimated cost to the district to equip all buses with three-point seat belts.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATION

The estimated cost to retrofit buses with three-point seat belts is \$19,953,600 (fleet of 351 buses). The 2025 Bond Program includes the purchase of 60 buses with a 72-student seating capacity, 16 buses with a 39-student capacity, 16 buses with a 14-student capacity, and 8 "white" buses with a 14-student capacity. Buses purchased under Bond 2025 will comply with SB 546 (89R).

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

In order to comply with SB 546 (89R), staff recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the attached resolution.

BOARD ACTION REQUIRED

Approval/Disapproval