

SB 546 Reporting on School Bus Seat Belt Costs Quick Start Guide



Appendix B

Office of School Safety and Security

Purpose of the Study

This study is being conducted in response to Senate Bill 546, which amended Transportation Code §547.701(f) and requires that all school buses transporting children be equipped with three-point seat belts for every passenger. As part of this legislation, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will gather data from each school district regarding their current bus fleet and the estimated cost to retrofit those buses with three-point seat belts.

GETTING STARTED WITH SB 546 REPORTING

Step 1: Board Determines Financial Feasibility

The board must first decide whether purchasing buses equipped with 3-point seat belts fits within the district’s budget and plan for the purchase. If the board determines it is financially feasible and plans to proceed, reporting can be completed in Sentinel at this stage. *If not, continue to Step 2.*

Step 2: Seat Belt Inventory

Identify the number of buses in the fleet (district-owned or contracted) that fall into each category:

- Fully equipped with 3-point seat belts
- Equipped only with lap belts (2-point)
- Mix of 3-point and lap belts
- Some seats with 3-point, others with no seat belts

Plan for reporting and ensure you don't miss deadlines. Scan the QR code to add important dates to your calendar.



Step 2a: Retrofit Cost Estimate (District-Owned Buses)

Request an itemized estimate to retrofit buses that require installation of 3-point seat belts to comply with **Transportation Code §547.701(f)**.

Step 2b: Cost Estimate (Contracted Bus Services)

Confirm that the bus service contract explicitly requires all buses used for student transportation to have every seat equipped with 3-point seat belts.

Step 3: Present to Board

In a public board meeting, present:

- The number of buses operated by or contracted for use by the district that:
 - Are not equipped with seat belts
 - Are equipped only with two-point seat belts
 - Are equipped with three-point seat belts
- The estimated cost to equip all buses with three-point seat belts

Step 4: Report to Agency

Report counts, costs, and board documentation in Sentinel by **May 30, 2026**.

Quick Checklist

- Step 1: Confirm Financial Feasibility**
Determine if the budget allows for purchasing buses with 3-point seat belts and plan accordingly.
- Step 2: Gather Inventory and Cost Estimates**
Determine seat belt types in current fleet and obtain an estimate to retrofit buses with 3-pt seat belts.
- Step 3: Present to the Board**
Share inventory and cost estimates in a public meeting; retain agenda and minutes for reporting.
- Step 4: Report to Agency**
Complete the required reporting within the Bus Reporting Module of Sentinel by May 29, 2026.

Office of School Safety and Security
October 2025

SB 546 Seat Belt Costs Reporting Form (SAMPLE)

Step 1: Initial Determination

Does your Local Education Agency provide buses for students (owned or contracted)?

Yes No

(If No, stop here and close the study.)

Step 2: Bus Compliance

Are all buses used to transport students, whether contracted or owned, fully equipped with 3-point seat belts as required Texas Transportation Code, §547.701?

Yes No (If Yes, confirm on pop-up and close study)

Step 3: Board Determination

Has the district's board determined that purchasing buses equipped with 3-point seat belts fits within the district's budget and plans to proceed with purchasing buses to come into alignment with Transportation Code §547.701(f)??

Yes No *(If Yes, upload agenda/minutes from board meeting. Close survey)*

Upload agenda/minutes: [Attach File]

Step 4: Bus Ownership

Select ownership type:

Owned Contracted Both

Step 5: Bus Type and Seat Belt Status

Enter the number of buses in each category:

- Fully equipped with 3-point seat belts: _____
- Equipped only with lap belts (2-point): _____
- No passenger seat belts: _____
- Mix of 3-point and lap belts: _____
- Some seats with 3-point, others with no seat belts: _____
- Some seats with lap belts, others with no seat belts: _____

Step 6a: Cost Estimates – Owned Buses

- Total retrofit cost (whole dollars): \$ _____
- Number of buses affected if warranty voided: _____
- Upload retrofit cost estimate (PDF): [Attach File]

Step 6b: Cost Estimates – Contracted Buses

- Annual cost difference for revised contract: \$ _____
- Upload cost documentation: [Attach File]

Step 7: Board Presentation Documentation Upload

- Upload agenda and minutes from public board meeting: [Attach File]