



# MARBLE FALLS

Independent School District

**Meeting Date:**

**Meeting Type:**

**LOVE & INSPIRE**

Marble Falls ISD has an unyielding commitment to love every child and inspire them to achieve their fullest potential.

Marble Falls ISD

# Transportation Updates



March 23, 2026

# Senate Bill 546

Senate Bill 546 amends Texas Law to strengthen and expand seat belt requirements for buses that transport students to/from school. This legislation replaces the existing Transportation code 547.701, which required seatbelts only on buses manufactured in 2017 or later- and only if the school district could demonstrate financial feasibility. This new amendment currently removes that limitation and broaden the requirement to ensure increased student safety across applicable school transportation.

## Seat Belt Requirement Expanded

- All school buses ,school activity buses and multifunction school activity buses for use by a public school district must be equipped with three-point seat belts (lap and shoulder) for each passenger and driver.

## Exceptions and Flexibility

- A district's Board of Trustees may determine that its budget does not permit immediate compliance with the seat belt requirement. This must be done through a formal determination and documented in a public meeting.
- A bus may be exempt if installing seat belts would void the vehicles warranty.

## Compliance Deadline

- Districts are not required to be fully in compliant with the three-point seat belt standard until **September 1, 2029**. This provides districts with multi-year transition period to plan, budget and phase in necessary fleet upgrades to meet the new requirements.

# Reporting Requirements

SB 546 establishes detailed reporting requirements for school districts and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) so the state can track compliance challenges and estimate financial needs.

## Districts Responsibilities:

- Prepare report presented at a public board meeting that includes:
  - The number of buses the district owns that are:
    - Not equipped with seatbelts
    - Equipped with 2 point (lap) seat belts
    - Equipped with three-point (lap and shoulder) seat belts
    - Estimated cost to equip all applicable buses with three point seat belts.
- Reports must be submitted to TEA through Sentinel
- Documents required to submit include board agenda / minutes proving public meeting.

# MFISD FLEET INVENTORY

## Current Fleet:

- 77 passenger school buses: 40
- 54 passenger school buses (W/C lift) : 10
- 14 Passenger Collins school bus: 1
- 12 Passenger multi-function school bus: 1

**Total Buses in Fleet: 52**

## Buses with 3 point seatbelts (lap/ shoulder):

- 77 Passenger: 28
- 54 Passenger (W/C): 8
- Collins: 1
- MFASB: 1

**Total Buses with 3 point (lap/shoulder) belts: 38**

## Buses with lap belts only:

- 54 passenger school buses (W/C lift) : 2

**Total Buses with lap belts only: 2**

## Buses withOut Seatbelts:

- 77 passenger school buses: 12

**Total Buses without seat belts : 12**

**Total buses out of compliance per SB546:**

**14\***

# Retro Fitting vs New Purchase

## Retrofitting Seats

2017 OR NEWER - Are only eligible for seat back replacements.

Older buses would require full seat replacements due to age.

\*Bus floors must meet requirements or buses would not be eligible.

Of the 14 that we need to replace 12 have met full depreciation and are older than 2017.

Cost to retrofit 2 buses: (2017 models)

Longhorn Bus Sales : \$71,964.00

Bucks Wheel & Equipment \$ 44,024.24



## New Purchase/ Total Replacement

11 of the 13 needing seatbelts have met full depreciation.

EPA emissions increase by 2027 estimated increase for diesel engines \$5K-pushed back 1 year

Purchasing new increases student safety and modernizes fleet with reliable buses

Current Average Bus price:

W/C Bus: \$168,000 each  
77 Passenger: \$159,000 each

# Replacement Recommended Plan

- Replacement of 14 Buses total price would be:
    - 2 W/C Buses- \$336,000.00
    - 12-77 Passengers - \$1,908,000.00
- Total Replacement Cost: \$2,244,000.00  
Utilize approved bond funds \$3,200,000.00

Implement a multi- year bus replacement schedule leading up to 2029  
Prioritize replacement of :

- Highest mileage units
- Buses with the greatest Maintenance needs
- Sell the old buses on online auctions - Avg \$1500 per bus
- TEA has not released grant information at this time - but there has been discussion that this could be available.



Texas Education Code 34.013:

A school district shall require to wear seat belt is the bus is equipped with seatbelts.

**Current Seat Belt Enforcement Practices:**

Drivers are required to announce seatbelt usage before departure of location.

Seatbelt violations are in line with bus referral notices that are handled at the school level.

Seat Belt expectations are outlined on Bus Rider eligibility information that is given to students in person and is found online.