



TORNILLO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Maintenance Department

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Trustees
From: Rene Estrada, Maintenance / Transportation Director
Subject: SB 546 Resolution
Date: April 29, 2026

HISTORY:

Senate Bill 546 was approved during the 89th Texas Legislature requiring all school buses to be equipped with three-point seat belts.

RATIONALE:

The district has 12 buses and 7 are out of compliance. All seven are manufactured by Blue Bird, who is recommending that there be no modifications to the bus seats.

If the modifications were allowed, the cost for the seat belts would be \$95,851 not including labor cost. Since no modifications will be done, the cost to replace buses would be approximately \$644,500.

BUDGET IMPACT:

There will be no budget impact since we are requesting an exemption due to financial inability.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

The recommendation to the Board of Trustees is to approve the resolution as presented.

Resolution of the Board of Trustees of Tornillo Independent School District SB 546 Seat Belt Requirements – Financial Inability Determination

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 546 (89th Texas Legislature) requires that 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 operator, with full compliance required no later than September 1, 2029; and

WHEREAS, Tornillo ISD currently operates a fleet that includes a significant number of buses that do not meet the newly mandated safety equipment requirements; and

WHEREAS, the estimated cost to replace or retrofit the non-compliant buses creates a substantial financial burden on the District, and current budget conditions do not permit full compliance within the required timeframe; and

WHEREAS, SB 546 authorizes a school district to determine, through Board action, that the District's budget does not permit the purchase of compliant buses or retrofitting of non-compliant buses at this time, provided that required reporting to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is completed; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees has reviewed the fleet inventory, cost projections, and multi-year capital replacement requirements and finds that full compliance by the statutory deadline is not financially feasible under current funding conditions; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Board of Trustees of Tornillo ISD hereby determines that the District's current budget does not permit full compliance with SB 546 by September 1, 2029.
2. The Board directs the Superintendent to submit the required SB 546 reporting to the Texas Education Agency, including the fleet inventory, cost estimates, and this Resolution.
3. The Board further directs the Superintendent to develop a phased, fiscally responsible replacement and/or retrofit plan and to provide updates to the Board as part of annual budget planning.

Adopted and approved on this 29th day of April, 2026 by the Board of Trustees of Tornillo Independent School District.

Rosy Vega-Barrio, Superintendent

Marlene Bullard, Board President