

# Lap-Shoulder Seat Belts On School Buses

**Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation**  
Columbus, IN

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# Background

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- 100 bus fleet
- 2010: Initial order of 6 buses with lap-shoulder belts
- Currently 41 buses in fleet with lap-shoulder belts



# Benefits - SAFETY

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- **Pre-seat belt accident:**

- Bus attendant injured by slipping off seat
- Cost the district dearly in hospital, worker's comp, and substitute time

- **With lap-shoulder belt accident:**

- Comparable accident
- Belts kept students in their seats
- No bumps, no bleeding
- Students stayed calm, order maintained inside bus



# Benefits - BEHAVIOR

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- Behavior on I/s buses greatly improved
- 90-95% less write-ups
- Video taped behavior before and after I/s belt installation





# Benefits – DRIVER SATISFACTION

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## Beginning

- Drivers were negative

## After

- Improved behavior: Happier drivers
- Less distracted drivers: Easier to keep eyes on the road
- Drivers now request I/s buses



# Impact – SEATING CAPACITY

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- Transportation directors rarely plan 100% capacity
- We lost one seat per bus (3 students per bus)
- Net result: Did not impact our bus capacity



# Impact - FUNDING

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- Cost is largest stumbling block
- Spending priorities:
  - We chose seat belts over air conditioning
  - Recommend purchasing convention buses over transit buses - allows more funds for technology
- Safety should be the priority



# Implementation - EDUCATION

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- School Board
- Community: Newspaper, buses on display
- Parents: Letters
- School Principals
- Police: Evacuation training
- Students: In school training



# Implementation – USAGE POLICY

If belts are on bus.  
They must be worn.

## Involved all participants

- Lawyers - liability
- School principals
- Letters to parents - discipline plan
- Student training
- ***District received complete parental support in disciplinary action if students don't buckle up.***



# Overall – TREMENDOUS SUCCESS

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- Unexpected Surprise - Discipline went down by 90-95%
- Improved Safety – No injuries
- Driver Attitude – Complete turn-around – now asking for buses with lap-shoulder belts

