Lap-Shoulder Seat Belts
On School Buses

Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation
Columbus, IN

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Background

• 100 bus fleet

• 2010: Initial order of 6 buses with lap-shoulder belts

• Currently 41 buses in fleet with lap-shoulder belts
Benefits - SAFETY

• 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

• Behavior on l/s buses greatly improved
• 90-95% less write-ups
• Video taped behavior before and after l/s belt installation
Benefits - DRIVER SATISFACTION

Beginning

• Drivers were negative

After

• Improved behavior: Happier drivers
• Less distracted drivers: Easier to keep eyes on the road
• Drivers now request l/s buses
Impact - SEATING CAPACITY

- 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

• 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

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

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.

If belts are on bus. They must be worn.
Overall - TREMENDOUS SUCCESS

• 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