



**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL OFFICE**  
**Fiscal Note**

Fiscal Note On: **HB 518** HLS 22RS 954  
 Bill Text Version: **ORIGINAL**  
 Opp. Chamb. Action:  
 Proposed Amd.:  
 Sub. Bill For.:

<b>Date:</b> March 10, 2022 9:41 AM	<b>Author:</b> CARTER, ROBBY
<b>Dept./Agy.:</b> Education	
<b>Subject:</b> Occupant restraint systems in school buses	<b>Analyst:</b> Garrett Ordner

MTR VEHICLE/BUSES OR INCREASE LF EX See Note Page 1 of 2  
 Provides with respect to occupant restraint systems on school buses

Proposed law requires every new bus used primarily for transportation of students that is placed into service after January 1, 2023, to be equipped with occupant restraint systems.

<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>	<b>5 -YEAR TOTAL</b>
State Gen. Fd.	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	SEE BELOW	
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Local Funds	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	INCREASE	
<b>Annual Total</b>						
<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>	<b>5 -YEAR TOTAL</b>
State Gen. Fd.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Local Funds	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

**EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION**

There will be an increase in expenditures by local school districts to include restraint systems on new buses placed in service. The cost will depend on the number of buses purchased and the type of restraint system installed.

Restraint systems include compartmentalization, lap belts, and 3-point lap/shoulder belts. Per the Task Force on Student Transportation and School Bus Passenger Safety report (SR 122 of 2016), "[a]lthough most school buses in Louisiana are not equipped with seat belts, all passengers in Louisiana school buses are protected by some form of occupant restraint system." Federal law requires seat belts in school buses with a gross weight of 10,000 pounds or less, school buses that transport Head Start passengers and other pre-school age children, and restraint systems for children with special needs who require assisted seating. School buses with a gross weight more than 10,000 pounds are equipped with compartmentalized seating. Compartmentalization is a design method by which seats with higher, thicker backs absorb crash forces and protect the child. For the purposes of this fiscal note, the LFO assumes the term "occupant restraint system" refers to seat belts.

The proposed legislation will only apply to new buses placed in service after January 1, 2023. Based on bus inventory data provided by the Department of Education and survey data from the HCR 20 Task Force report (HCR 20 of the 2020 Regular Session), school districts own an estimated 4,870 school buses without seat belts. If each school bus is in service for the maximum operational life allowed by law (25 years), an estimated 195 district-owned school buses must be replaced each year.

The LFO has obtained estimates detailing that the cost of a new school bus with installed lap belts ranges from \$1,000 to \$4,000 more per bus compared to those without. If all new buses are equipped with lap belts, the cost to districts would range from \$195,000 to \$780,000 per year for 195 buses statewide. **However, R.S. 17:164 states, in part, "a school bus body, chassis, or equipment shall meet the latest revised minimum standards for school buses adopted and recommended by the National Congress on School Transportation." The most recent version of these standards states that, "lap belts shall not be installed on passenger seats in large school buses (over 10,000 pounds [gross vehicle weight rating])..."** If school districts choose to acquire buses with three-point seat belts installed, the cost will be higher than if installed with lap belts. Based on a survey by the National Conference of State Legislatures, a large school bus with three-point belts could cost between \$7,000 and \$10,000 more per bus. Acquiring buses with three-point belts would result in **annual costs to districts ranging from \$1.4 M to \$2 M for 195 buses statewide**, although actual costs will depend on the number of buses purchased each year and their capacity.

**SEE EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO**

**REVENUE EXPLANATION**

There is no anticipated direct material effect on governmental revenues as a result of this measure.

Senate  
 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}  
 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}

House  
 6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}  
 6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}

*Evan Brasseaux*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
**Evan Brasseaux**  
 Interim Deputy Fiscal Officer



# LEGISLATIVE FISCAL OFFICE Fiscal Note

Fiscal Note On: **HB 518** HLS 22RS 954  
Bill Text Version: **ORIGINAL**  
Opp. Chamb. Action:  
Proposed Amd.:  
Sub. Bill For.:

<b>Date:</b> March 10, 2022 9:41 AM	<b>Author:</b> CARTER, ROBBY
<b>Dept./Agy.:</b> Education	
<b>Subject:</b> Occupant restraint systems in school buses	<b>Analyst:</b> Garrett Ordner

**CONTINUED EXPLANATION from page one:**

**EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE**

While some districts currently utilize school bus monitors on elementary school buses, it is unclear whether implementation would necessitate an increase in the number of monitors. The proposed legislation does not contemplate this provision; therefore, it will likely depend upon individual school district policies. Districts may incur additional training costs for transportation personnel to ensure proper seat belt usage and monitoring, as well as procedures for emergency situations. Finally, transportation maintenance staff may experience additional workload to provide repairs and upkeep of the new restraint systems.

Private carriers that contract with local school systems are also subject to the proposed requirements. Local school districts would also be required to monitor contractors to ensure their buses comply with the proposed legislation. Districts may experience increased contract costs due to the use of more expensive buses. To the extent carriers do not meet the proposed standards, districts would be required to provide transportation services directly, which would further impact costs to comply with the legislation.

**State-operated schools may experience additional SGF expenditures due to increased contract rates with private carriers; however, these costs are indeterminable.**

Senate      Dual Referral Rules  
 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}  
 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}

House  
 6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}  
 6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}

*Evan Brasseaux*  
**Evan Brasseaux**  
Interim Deputy Fiscal Officer