



December 4, 2023

F. Mike Miles  
HISD Superintendent of Schools  
4400 West 18th Street  
Houston, Texas 77092-8501

Dear Superintendent Miles,

As legislators representing families and students attending the Houston Independent School District, we are disappointed to learn of the district's decision to end the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program. This program, a partnership between Verizon and the non-profit, Digital Promise, provided *free* laptops and Wi-Fi to thousands of low-income students in school districts across the country – and until last month to Houston ISD.

It is our understanding that no other program has been procured to replace this sudden loss.

Study after study has demonstrated the importance of students having internet access in order to succeed academically, as well as the inevitability that they will fall behind their peers without it. It is unconscionable for us to allow this to happen when such great legislative efforts and expenditures have been made to close the digital divide.

The bedrock of your leadership has been "Destination 2035"; a commendable plan that aims, in your own words, "to significantly narrow achievement gaps and prepare students for a Year 2035 workplace and world." It would be an irony as thick as it is tragic to lose sight of that goal by allowing our most vulnerable students to fall behind by depriving them of the basic technology needed to succeed in 2023.

With our children's futures on the line, we urge you to either renew the partnership with Verizon or find an alternative vendor that can immediately provide free internet service for these students.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Penny Morales Shaw in blue ink.

Rep. Penny Morales Shaw  
House District 148

Handwritten signature of Carol Alvarado in blue ink.

Sen. Carol Alvarado  
Senate District 6

Handwritten signature of John Whitmire in blue ink.

Sen. John Whitmire  
Senate District 15

*Alma W. Allen*

Rep. Alma Allen  
House District 131

*J. Johnson*

Rep. Jarvis Johnson  
House District 139

*Jolanda "Jo" Jones*

Rep. Jolanda Jones  
House District 147

*Christina Morales*

Rep. Christina Morales  
House District 145

*Ron Reynolds*

Rep. Ron Reynolds  
House District 37

*Jon Rosenthal*

Rep. Jon Rosenthal  
House District 135

*Shawn Thierry*

Rep. Shawn Thierry  
House District 146

*Senfronia Thompson*

Rep. Senfronia Thompson  
House District 141

*Gene Wu*

Rep. Gene Wu  
House District 137

