**[Helen Lu](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/helen-lu)**

High school student from Houston, Texas

**Computers Don't Belong in Classrooms**

Posted: 02/20/2014 2:43 pm EST Updated: 02/20/2014 2:59 pm EST

[**Learning Technology**](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/learning-technology/)[**Teens and Technology**](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/teens-and-technology/)[**Teen Blogs**](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/teen-blogs/)[**Teens and Computers**](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/teens-and-computers/)[**Computers in Classrooms**](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/computers-in-classrooms/)[**Teen News**](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/Teen/)

Give students computers and they will learn more seems to be the basis behind Terry Grier's Houston Independent School District PowerUp initiative.

The idea came to Superintendent Grier after his visit to a series of small schools who have [issued iPads or laptops](http://www.chron.com/neighborhood/bellaire/news/article/PowerUp-laptops-A-new-horizon-at-Bellaire-High-5224898.php%22%20%5Ct%20%22_hplink) to all of their students. At Bellaire High School, a large, inner city school with around 3,550 enrolled students, the computers were issued on January 31. At first the idea seemed great to me: a free computer, free Internet access and jurisdiction to use it in class. I thought maybe class would be more exciting if I could surf the web for a while.

Then, the tech representatives came and introduced everyone to the $25 non-refundable safety deposit for the computer and the Internet blocks. For $25 I was going to look into the program, and I began to wonder how useful these computers really are in class. I already had my trusty laptop sitting at home and have never felt the need for one at school.

First of all, a laptop would only make it harder for the teacher to control the class. With classes of 30-40 kids and possibly 30-40 screens, it will be impossible to monitor what site each kid is at and if they are doing to assignment. It's just too easy for the Internet to distract high school students. The screen is also conveniently large enough to hide your phone behind, so the obvious under the desk glancing can be avoided.

The addition of a laptop would replace handwritten notes, proven to facilitate memorization of the material, which would also make it easier to send notes around and promote sharing work. In order for class lessons to even tie in computers, teachers need to suddenly become tech savvy and change lesson plans that have worked and have been more or less the same for years.

Also I guess we can say goodbye to the already little teacher-to-student interaction. Face-to-face teaching has always helped me maybe because it shows that the teacher actually cares, but thanks to the program we will be building better relationships with a computer. A computer that we will be expected to lug around with us to every class every day. This is starting to sound like the storyline of the movie *Her*. Did I mention the battery life that only lasts one day? So, charging this laptop will be extra homework. Great.

Maybe this has worked with small schools but put laptops in the hands of 3,400 students and you have a mess of repairs and cases of lost and stolen laptops. Apparently, the Houston ISD Board has also forgotten how long a student already spends straining their eyes behind electronic screens. Once again the intentions may be good with this program but the practicality is severely lacking.