

## Edtech Soft Labs to be Expanded to Nine to Foster an Public Education-Centered Edtech Ecosystem

- 2024 Edtech Soft Lab Project Framework Plan is announced.
- Primary/secondary education soft labs increased from 3 to 5 to enhance public education.
- A higher education soft lab is launched to revitalize digital innovation for fundamental disciplines.

The Ministry of Education (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Lee Ju-Ho) announced the 2024 Edtech Soft Lab Project Framework Plan on February 23. On open call for the Edtech Soft Lab project will begin on February 29.

Edtech Soft Lab is a specialized organization established in 2021 to develop educational technology suitable for public education and support schools in its effective utilization. It operates in three regions: Gyeonggi (Gyeonggi University), Daegu (Daegu Digital Innovation Promotion Agency), and Gwangju (Gwangju National University of Education). By verifying the suitability of edtech for school classrooms through teacher evaluation, Soft Lab connects edtech companies with schools and collaborates with them to develop and guide class casebooks and utilization guides.

Over the past three years, Edtech Soft Lab has verified and improved 74 edtech solutions for public education, while conducting training and education programs for over 9,100 individuals, including teachers, students, and corporate officials. It has also provided usage guides for more than 150 types of edtech to schools, acting as a bridge between education and technology.

※ Examples of verification and improvement: Utilizing edtech for learning in actual classes; strengthening functions for teachers to support students (e.g. analyzing student data, providing similar problems, adding teacher interfaces)

Recognizing the growing importance of digital transformation in education, the Ministry of Education has established the 2024 Edtech SoftLab project Framework Plan to upgrade the program and position Edtech Soft Lab as a central pillar of the public education edtech ecosystem. The plan focuses on the following key areas:

### 1. Strengthening Edtech Soft Lab's Public Education Support Functions:

-Prioritizing educational factors such as curriculum alignment, student engagement, and classroom utilization during the edtech verification and improvement process.

-Introducing programs to analyze the impact of edtech on student learning outcomes.

-Providing training to teachers to build their capacity for participating in edtech planning and development, enabling them to take a proactive role in shaping the edtech ecosystem.

-Supporting and monitoring collaboration between teachers and companies to ensure healthy and productive partnerships.

-Analyzing the contributions of participating companies to public education, fostering the growth of edtech companies with high public educational value.

### 2. Expanding Edtech Soft Lab Network:

-To address the growing demand for Edtech Soft Labs in various regions, the Ministry of Education will establish five additional labs specifically for elementary and secondary education. Currently operating only in Gyeonggi, Daegu, and Gwangju, these labs will expand nationwide to eight provinces, enabling broader participation from teachers across the country. The Ministry plans to collaborate closely with provincial education offices to ensure the labs cater to local needs.

### 3. Collaborative Edtech Development for Vulnerable Groups and Teacher Workload Reduction:

The Ministry will promote collaborative projects between teachers and companies to develop edtech solutions in areas of high public education demand and potential effectiveness, but lacking sufficient market interest. These areas include education for vulnerable groups (special education students, multicultural students, etc.) and reducing teacher workload. Two to three project teams in each of these areas will be selected through a public competition and receive support for two years (up to 3.6 billion KRW annually).

### 4. Launching Higher Education Edtech Soft Lab:

