Dear Superintendents and School Leaders:

We recently sent out a letter urging districts to submit their Commitment Letter for Edwin Teaching and Learning (ET&L) for the 2014-2015 School Year. We understand this time of year can be hectic for all. In light of that, we have decided to extend the submission timeline until June 15th.

For those of you who have already responded THANK YOU. Please do not feel like you need to reply to this email again.

We have been hearing questions from the field that indicate some misconceptions about ET&L and the Commitment Letter. Please take the time to read these brief notes where we attempt to clarify. We know how much you have on your plate right now. This tool is meant to help your teachers work more efficiently and effectively on behalf of students, and eventually save you money!

**Top 10 Misconception and Clarifications regarding Edwin Teaching and Learning**

1. **I'm being asked to commit to using the system; we aren't sure we can commit to this.** Forgive the unfortunate use of the label “commitment.” This form is only to convey the intent of your use of the system in School Year ‘14-’15. Since the state is paying the vendor, documenting your intent to use the system is only for the state’s records. You are not being asked to “commit” to anything other than the fact that you will use the tool. How your district uses it is up to you.

2. **We have too much going on right now with competing priorities.** There is no required reporting or “deliverable” that needs to be submitted to the state for using Edwin Teaching & Learning. Edwin Teaching and Learning is designed to help teachers work efficiently, save the district money, and help address many of the initiatives like DDM (District Determined Measures) creation and administration; and evidence for educator evaluations, curriculum, development, mapping and assessments. ET&L can also provide student progress monitoring and planning for differentiation and targeted supports

3. **We don’t know that we can “actively” use this system yet.** Active use is defined as: some or multiple parts of the system are being used by educators in your district as it meets your needs. If you need help in getting more of your educators on board and using the tool please contact us at the EdwinT&L@doe.mass.edu account and we can work with you. Keep in mind this is a great tool to enhance collaboration in your district. Teachers and staff can elect to share their content (units, lesson, resources, and assessments) with other district personnel using this tool.

4. **We already have tools we have purchased that do what much of this system does.** The state is covering the cost of Edwin Teaching and Learning during the 2014-2015 School Year. Subject to appropriation, the Executive Office of Education intends to cover the cost in years beyond that. Wide adoption and usage will aide in this effort. In the event appropriations are not available to cover the costs, the per-pupil cost will be anywhere in the $3-6 range depending on the total number of districts using the tool at that time. If Edwin is not free to you, we remind you that the per-student cost could be recouped from the discontinuation of a
multitude of other tools you are using. This will be a one-stop shopping tool, with one sign-on to access a variety of tools.

5. **This is going to cost me more than our current curriculum mapping software does.** Edwin Teaching & Learning is more than a curriculum mapping tool. It is an integrated solution that provides “one stop shopping” for the busy educator who is working to transition to the Common Core and new curriculum, building and administering new assessments, finding high quality digital content aligned to these standards while tailoring education to best meet their students’ needs. High quality state vetted assets have been also included to use with the system.

6. **We cannot implement 100+ Model Curriculum Units (MCU) in our district.** There is no expectation or requirement that schools and districts will implement any of the MCUs unless they choose to do so. MCUs are being provided as an aide and a support for the transition to the Common Core. Using Edwin Teaching & Learning, districts, schools and teachers can make use of MCUs, input their own curricula, or modify MCUs for local use. They can also keep records of their curriculum work in the tool as evidence for the educator evaluation process.

7. **With PARCC coming we don’t need MCAS items.** While we understand the need for “PARCC-like” items, the MCAS items are well written, statistical, and reliable questions released from the Department’s Assessment team. They provide teachers well drafted questions for use in the transition to the common core. The use of these items in online assessments will also help prepare students for taking assessments online.

8. **We would like PARCC items in the assessment bank.** One of the ways to prepare our students for online testing is to have them actually take assessments online, which Edwin Teaching and Learning offers. Additionally, PARCC items are on the roadmap for Edwin Teaching and Learning assessments in the future. As soon as PARCC releases sample items to Thinkgate, we will have them available in the tool. In the meantime, Thinkgate offers two add-on options: NWEA and Key Data Systems. Both of these options can be used in conjunction with your other assessments banks. NWEA offers a plethora of assessment items. Key Data Systems offers pre-built assessments as well as PARCC-like technology enhanced items.

9. **We already use Edwin Analytics.** Edwin is an integrated instructional improvement system which blends the use of two tools; Edwin Analytics (longitudinal data and reporting) and Edwin Teaching and Learning (curriculum, resources, and assessment including state assets such as Model Curriculum Units, released MCAS items, PBS Learning Media content all aligned to the Curriculum Frameworks essentially a “one stop shopping” experience with a single login). If you are using Edwin Analytics, your district will derive benefits from using Edwin Teaching and Learning in conjunction with it.

10. **I can access PBS Learning Media content on their website without going through Edwin Teaching and Learning, so what is the value of having PBS Learning Media access in Edwin Teaching and Learning?** Access to PBS Learning Media through Edwin Teaching and Learning includes both correlation to MA Frameworks for each resource and the ability to search for resources by standards again via a single login, making it more efficient for educators who may be working on curriculum development to search for relevant digital resources. Content available directly from the PBS website is aligned to national standards, not the state standards.

Again, we understand this time of year can be hectic for all. In light of that, we have decided to extend the submission timeline for the Commitment Form until June 15th. You will find the Commitment Form attached to this email should you need another copy.

Should you choose NOT to continue with Edwin Teaching and Learning, please send us a brief response with your top 3-5 reasons with explanations for your decision to stop participating in ET&L. As a federally funded tool, we need to be able to report back to the U.S. Dept. of Education (USED) the reasons a district makes such a decision.

Thank you for your time,
The Edwin Teaching and Learning Team