



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Jefferson County Schools Team Up with Public Libraries in Jefferson County to Modernize Reading and Literacy Through Ebooks and E-audiobooks**

*Shared goal to promote digital learning in the community*

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – January 7, 2020** – In this mobile age, technology has become increasingly valuable in supporting new generations of lifelong learners and readers. Now, Jefferson County Board of Education, Homewood City Schools, Hoover City Schools and Public Libraries in Jefferson County have formed an innovative new partnership using ebooks and e-audiobooks to modernize access to reading materials for students. This unique collaboration strives to promote literacy and digital learning by providing unprecedented access to both the schools' and the library's digital reading resources in one app. The combination of convenience, ease of reading on-the-go, and the inherent popularity of technology inspires students to learn anytime, anywhere.

The city partnership provides safe access to thousands of age-appropriate titles for students' use inside the classroom, at home and anywhere 24/7. Through [Sora](#), the new student reading app for Jefferson County Board of Education, Homewood City Schools and Hoover City Schools, students can borrow the school's collection of classroom and pleasure reading, and also access Public Libraries in Jefferson County's juvenile and young adult digital collection. In addition, Sora supports teachers by offering education-specific tools like achievements, exportable notes, and reading progress that encourage individualized learning.

"Public libraries are premised on the ideals of literacy, education and service and are critical resources for the entire community," said Tobin M Cataldo, Executive Director of Jefferson County Library Cooperative. "With the School-Library Partnership through OverDrive, our goals are to simplify access to these critical resources for our children and to grow community partnerships. As the public libraries in Jefferson County have experienced over the last 41 years, cooperation and resource sharing are cost-effective and have wide ranging benefits; this is a message we stand ready to share. The Public Libraries in Jefferson County are exceedingly

pleased to explore another opportunity for partnership and look forward to doing our part to help strengthen and support our community.“

Jefferson County Schools Curriculum Specialist Angela Belrose added, “Students and staff in Jefferson County Schools will have access to Jefferson County Public Libraries digital books using the Sora app from OverDrive, and we are thrilled to be able to offer our students and staff this expansive collection. According to research conducted by the Reading Agency, reading for pleasure not only improves educational outcomes but improves overall wellbeing, including increased empathy, better interpersonal relationships and decreases incidents of depression.”

The Sora app was named one of [TIME’s Best Inventions 2019](#) and is available for Jefferson County Board of Education and Homewood City Schools students to download through the Apple App Store and Google Play Store, and on Chromebooks that support the Google Play Store. It is also available for use in web browsers at <https://soraapp.com> on any computer.

The entire Jefferson County community can access Public Libraries in Jefferson County’s complete ebook and e-audiobook collection through the award-winning [Libby app](#). Readers can use Libby on any major device or computer, including Apple<sup>(R)</sup>, Android<sup>TM</sup>, Chromebook<sup>TM</sup> and Kindle<sup>(R)</sup> (US only).

Both reading apps are built by OverDrive and OverDrive Education. To learn more, visit <https://meet.soraapp.com/> and <https://meet.libbyapp.com/>.

#### **About Jefferson County Board of Education**

Jefferson County Schools are the second-largest school district in Alabama serving over 36,000 students in 57 different schools located throughout Jefferson County. Our vision of the Jefferson County School District is to be characterized by the use of best practices resulting in effectively providing for the diverse needs of all learners. It is our mission to ensure rigorous learning for all through engaging, innovative instruction, responsible resource management, and meaningful community and family collaboration **focused on student success**. We strive to enlighten, engage, and empower!

#### **About Public Libraries in Jefferson County**

The Public Libraries in Jefferson County proudly present 41 Libraries . 1 County . 1 Card, a cooperative library service benefitting the residents of Jefferson County. Discover your public library and the power of collaboration at <http://publiclibrariesinjc.org>.

#### **About OverDrive and OverDrive Education**

OverDrive is the leading digital reading platforms for libraries and OverDrive Education is the leading global digital reading platform for K-12, both offering the industry's largest catalog of ebooks, audiobooks, magazines and streaming video. As a 100% digital company serving 43,000 libraries and schools worldwide, OverDrive combines technology with content to support learning and reading in the classroom, library and home. With an easy-to-use central platform, students get the right titles at the right time, online or offline, on all major devices, including iOS®, Android™, Chromebook™ and Kindle® (US only). Founded in 1986, OverDrive and OverDrive Education are based in Cleveland, Ohio USA.

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