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June 23, 2016

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Future Ready Schools Announces New Project to Help Recognize School Librarians As Leaders in School Transformation

Future Ready Librarians Highlights Critical Role Librarians Play in Supporting the Future-Ready Goals of Schools and Districts

WASHINGTON, DC—Today, Future Ready Schools (FRS)—led by the Alliance for Excellent Education (the Alliance) in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education—announced Future Ready Librarians, an expansion of the Future Ready initiative aimed at positioning librarians as leaders in the digital transformation of learning. The Future Ready initiative helps district leaders recognize the potential of digital tools and align necessary technologies with instructional goals to support teaching and learning.

“In today’s digital world, the school library has evolved from a place to merely check out books to one that offers opportunities for collaboration, project-based learning, and online access,” said Alliance for Excellent Education’s President Bob Wise. “Similarly, librarians are now playing central roles in school leadership and working daily with students, teachers, and administrators. Through Future Ready Librarians, school librarians will be better equipped to support teachers in their transition to a digital learning environment while themselves becoming more future ready.”

Follett, the largest provider of educational materials and technology solutions to Pre-K–12 schools in the United States, will support the development of tools and resources to connect librarians and libraries in support of the Future Ready initiative and enable district leaders to better engage and empower librarians to support their Future Ready vision.

“Follett is thrilled to support the Future Ready Librarians initiative, as it aligns perfectly with our history and our vision for the future of education,” said Nader Qaimari, president of Follett School Solutions. “Through Project Connect and this initiative, we will continue to advocate for strong, empowered school librarians. Now we can be even more effective as we create new resources and services designed to position librarians as leaders in a digital transformation.”

A network of nationally recognized librarians, including Mark Ray, Chief Digital Officer for Vancouver Public Schools in Washington, will provide input on the development of strategies, tools and resources aligned with the Future Ready Framework. A former high school librarian, Ray has been nationally recognized for transforming the role of the school librarian into a technological innovator in schools.

“Future Ready librarians embrace change and innovation in education,” said Ray. “As teachers, they empower students as creators and digital citizens; as coaches, they collaborate with teachers as curators and guides. Future Ready schools require new kinds of leadership. The Future Ready Librarians initiative will help define what that leadership can be.”

“School librarians lead transformational learning through their instructional leadership in the digital learning landscape,” said Leslie Preddy, president of the American Association of School Librarians, a FRS coalition partner. “They support educators and prepare youth for informed living in a technology- and information-rich society. The expansion of the Future Ready initiative to include Future Ready Librarians re-affirms school librarians as critical to the transition and sustainability of effective digital learning.”

Future Ready Librarians builds on the Alliance's 2014 report, [Leading In and Beyond the Library](#), which first outlined the Alliance's belief that school librarians and libraries should play a key role in state- and districtwide efforts to transition to digital learning. The Alliance has also repeatedly stressed the importance of school librarians through Digital Learning Day, which the Alliance first created in 2012 to highlight great teaching practices and demonstrate how technology can improve student outcomes.

Today's Future Ready Librarians announcement comes during the [White House's National Week of Making](#) (June 17–23). The Maker Movement in schools is designed to provide physical spaces within schools where students can collaborate with their peers to build, create, and tinker. These maker spaces are frequently led by librarians and located within school libraries, which have been reconfigured and redesigned to include workstations where students work on projects involving coding and robots, inquiry-based building, and even 3-D printing.

"With skilled librarians leading the charge, school libraries evolve from quiet reading zones to active, flexible learning spaces for student collaboration and innovation," said Wise. "Such approaches move students to become designers and creators engaged in real-world applications of their learning who are better prepared for success in college and a career."

For more information on the Future Ready Librarians program, visit www.FutureReady.org/Librarians.

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***The Alliance for Excellent Education** is a Washington, DC–based national policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring all students, particularly those traditionally underserved, graduate from high school ready for success in college, work, and citizenship. www.all4ed.org*

***Future Ready Schools (FRS)** is a bold effort to maximize digital learning opportunities and help school districts move quickly toward preparing students for success in college, a career, and citizenship. FRS provides districts with resources and support to ensure that local technology and digital learning plans align with instructional best practices, are implemented by highly trained teachers, and lead to personalized learning experiences for all students, particularly those from traditionally underserved communities. FRS is led by the Alliance for Excellent Education alongside a vast coalition of organizations including the U.S. Department of Education. www.FutureReady.org*

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