

# Making the Case for Digital Resources: How-to for Librarians

Shelby County Schools





# Who Are We?

## Shelby County, Alabama

- ❖ Foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, just south of Birmingham
- ❖ Temperate climate with dramatic landscape
  - Oak Mountain State Park
  - Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum
  - American Village Civic Education Center
  - Cahaba River.

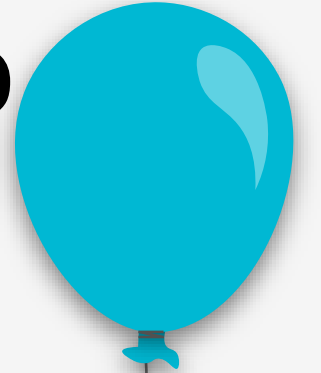
## Shelby Co. Schools

- ❖ Largest employer in Shelby County
- ❖ 10th largest employer in the Birmingham metro area
- ❖ Continued growth of the county and close proximity of several colleges
- ❖ Perfect place for individuals planning to advance in their careers.

## Whitney Howton


- ☐ She/Her
- ☐ 11th year as Librarian
- ☐ 3 yrs. in K-2 Pinson Elem.
- ☐ 7 yrs. in 6-8 Oak Mt. Middle
- ☐ System Coordinator of Sora
- ☐ Sora Purchasing Queen
- ☐ Mom of a 5 year old daughter and an 11 year old “schnoodle” puppy
- ☐ Wife to T.C. Howton for 10 yrs. as of October 8th

# What I Walked Into




- ❖ Shared pre-existing contract and collection of tiny collection of ebooks and a few audiobooks
- ❖ Old system of account creation (“I am under 13” tiny link to get an account)
- ❖ A “no cell phone” school policy
- ❖ No State library funding
  - Cost for platform as well as content

# “If You Build It...

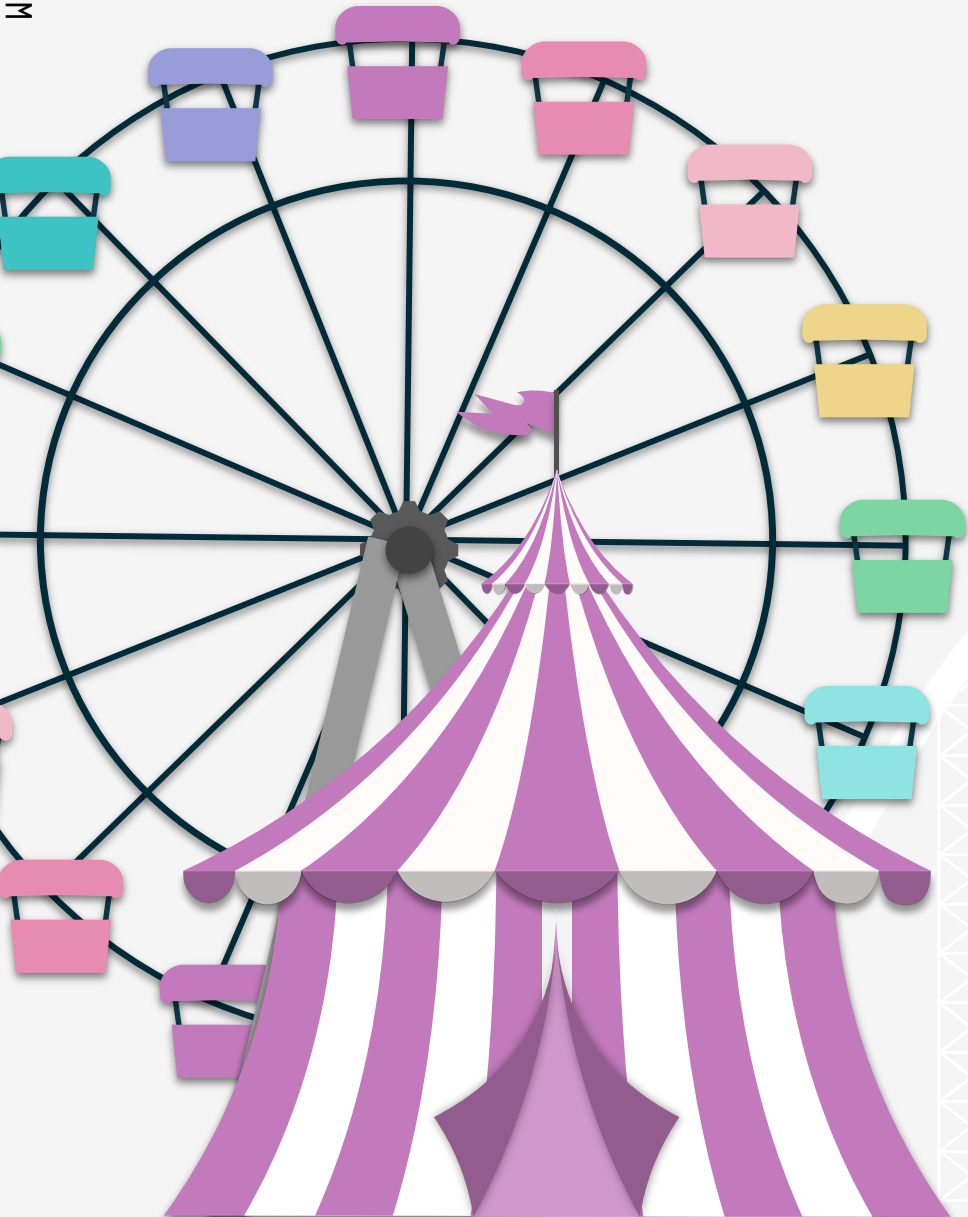
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- A stylized illustration of a Ferris wheel with colorful baskets (purple, pink, yellow, green, and teal) and a yellow and white striped tent in the foreground. A yellow balloon is tied to the tent's pole on the right side.
- ❖ Asked parent organizations for funding
  - ❖ Overdrive changed their pricing and platform policies
  - ❖ Used most of the content credit for audiobooks
  - ❖ One on one reference interviews for student use
  - ❖ Physically helping students create accounts on their device and check out books

# (It will Take a While...

- 
- A stylized illustration of a Ferris wheel with colorful baskets (purple, pink, yellow, green, blue) and a green and white striped tent in the foreground. A green balloon is tied to the tent's pole.
- ❖ State Library Enhancement funding was budgeted and received!!!
    - We verified that we could use state funding for digital products
  - ❖ SORA was created!!!
  - ❖ We bought audiobooks teachers needed for class instruction digitally and taught them how to use the service.



# ...And A Lot of Effort,)



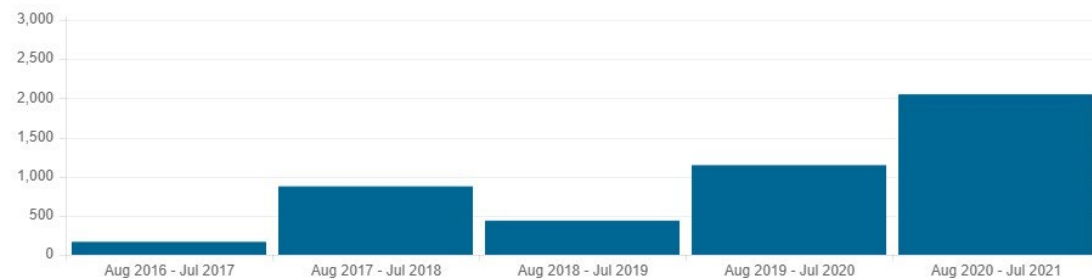
- ❖ County Tech System Coordinator laid down a cease and desist mandate because of student privacy
  - We fought but she never gave in...she retired the next year!
- ❖ We then got permission from new Tech coordinator with Overdrive's help in privacy policy and student data use info
- ❖ Started whole class instruction of how to access Sora and check out books and audiobooks

# They Will Come!!!”



- ❖ 9th year with Overdrive added 2 more schools
- ❖ Greatly increased our collection
- ❖ COVID pandemic and promotion = dramatic rise in circulations
- ❖ Continued whole class instruction

Checkouts: Year over year





Last call for the  
Tablet Raffle!

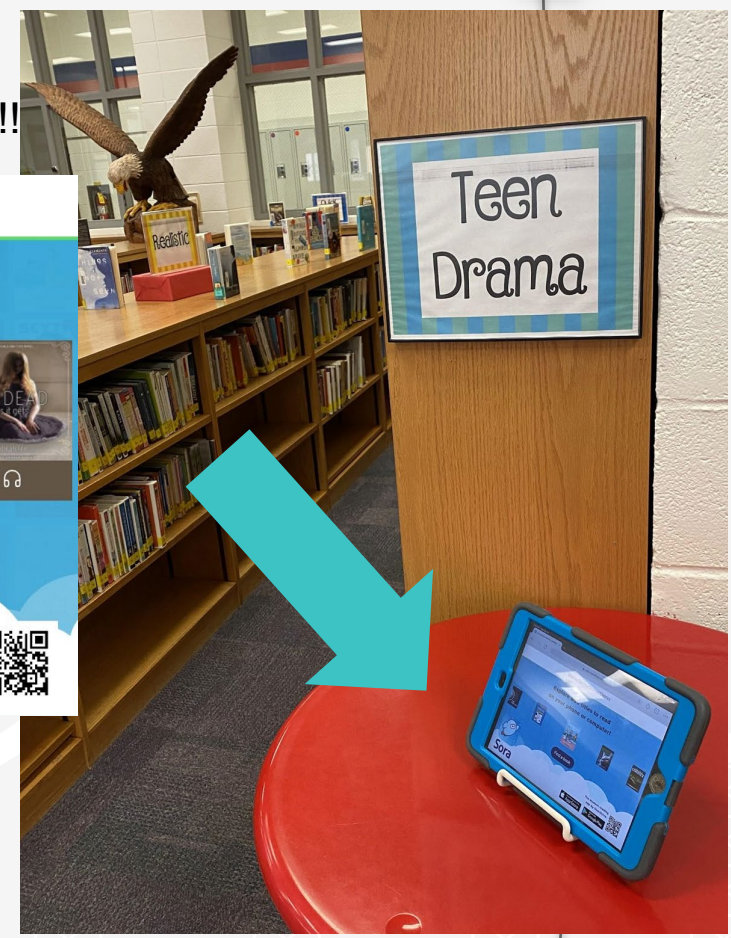


# What We Are Doing Now?

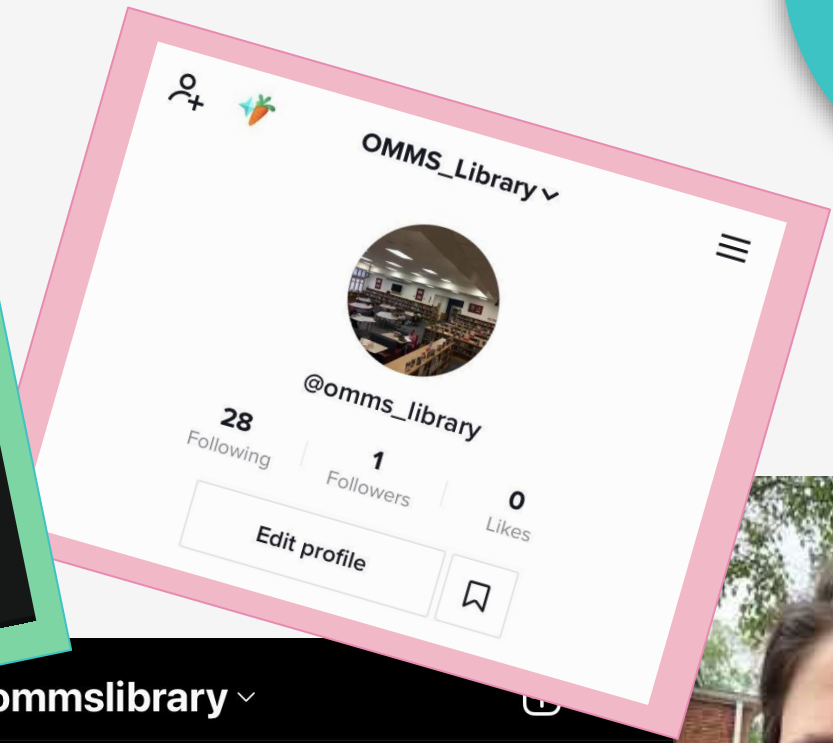
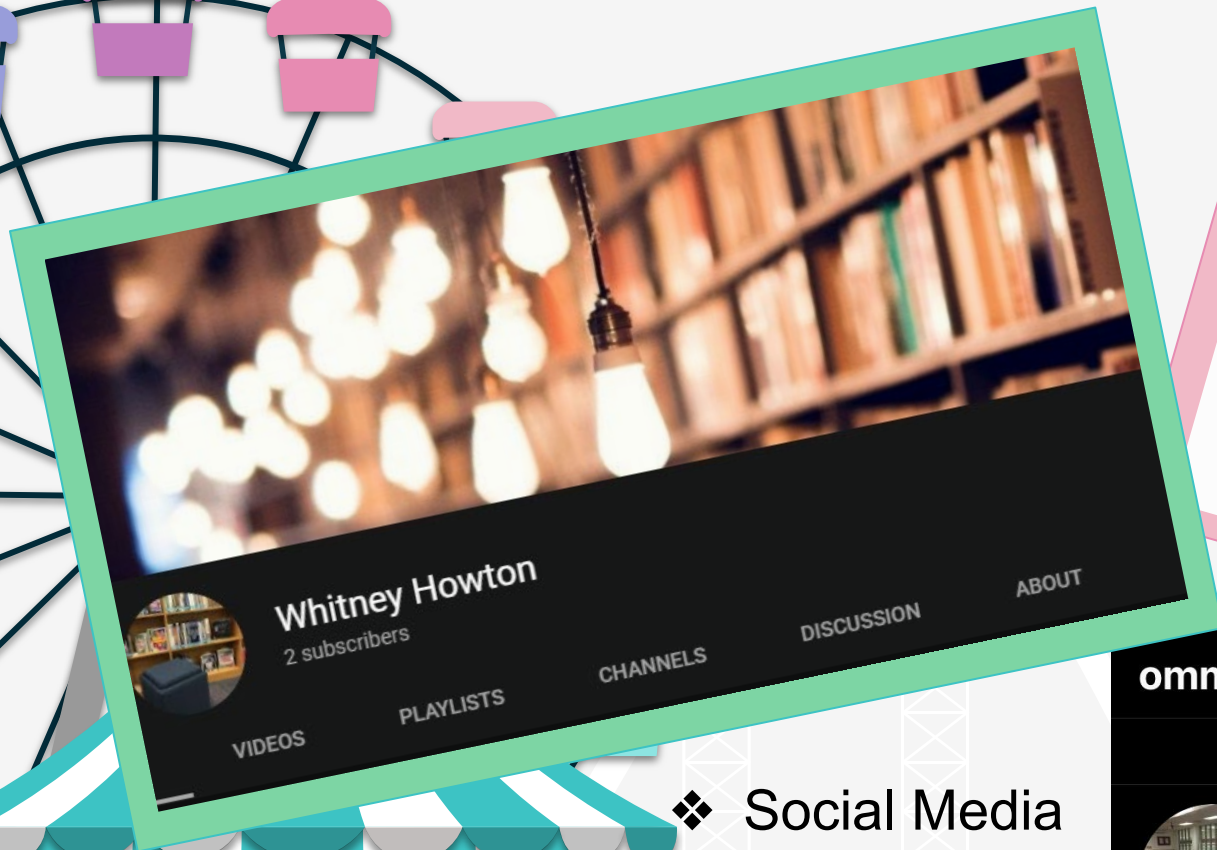
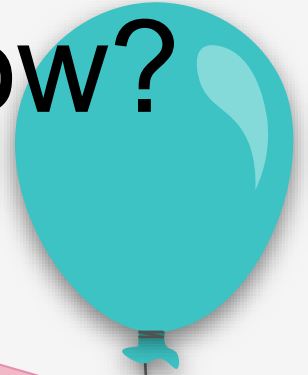


## ❖ Sora Kiosk Tablets

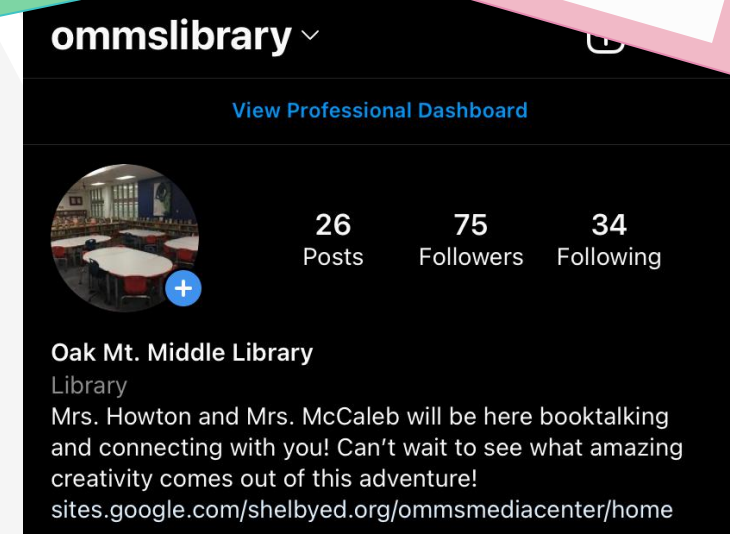
- We've been waiting on this for forever!!!!



# What We Are Doing Now?



- ❖ Social Media
  - Instagram
  - YouTube
  - TikTok





# What We Are Doing Now?

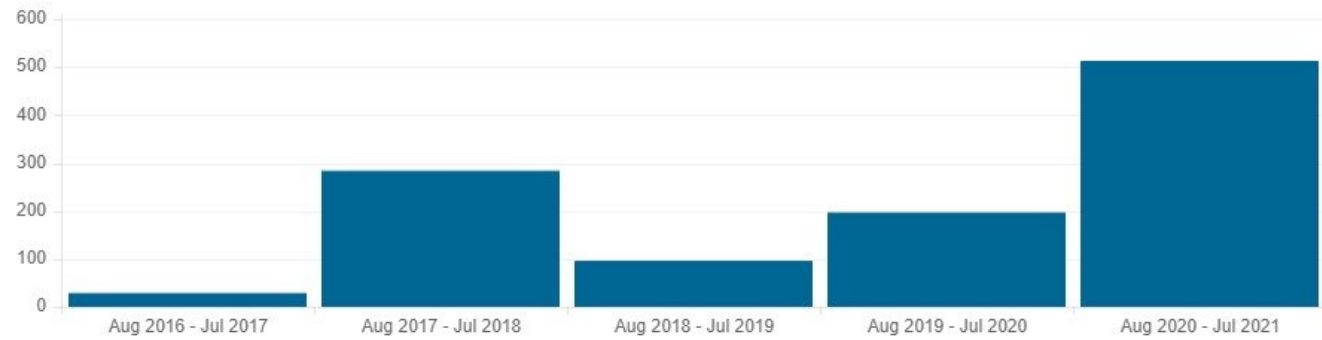


- ❖ Canva created newsletters
  - Teacher access to Sora
  - Links to Social Media booktalks
  - Circ Stats for Sora
- ❖ Sora is teacher Bitmoji classrooms



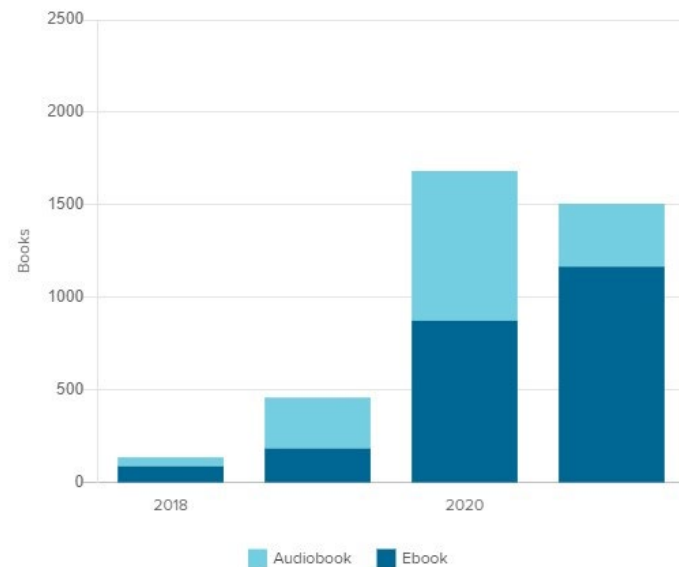
# Is It Working?

Unique users: Year over year



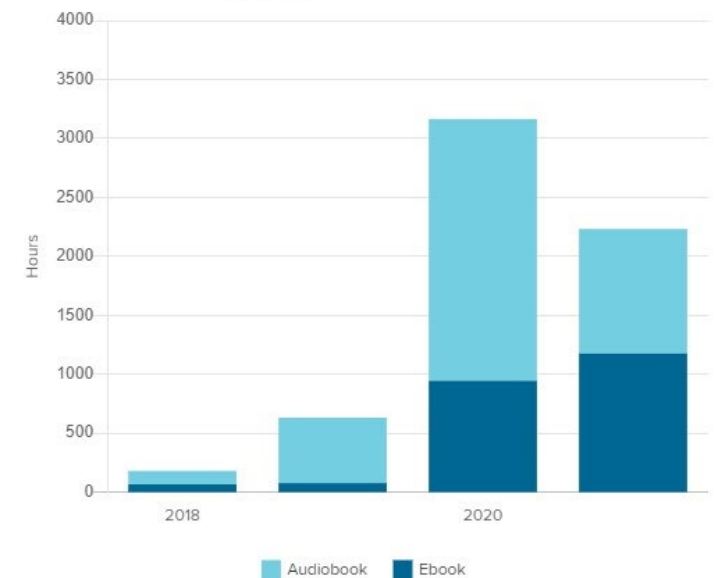
Total books opened

Total number of books **3,784**



Total time read

Total number of hours **6,205.18**



# Any Questions?

## ❖ Contact Info

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