Using Bookshare.org in MCPS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is Bookshare.org?

Bookshare.org is a web-based repository of thousands of digital books, including textbooks, literature, current popular reading, teacher recommended reading, reference materials, newspapers and periodicals, and much more.

As of October 1, 2007, special funding from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs made if possible for qualifying K-12 students to access these materials for free.

Which students qualify for access to Bookshare?

Students with visual impairments, physical disabilities, or print-based disabilities are eligible to obtain digital books through Bookshare.

How does staff identify eligible students?

At the beginning of the school year, staff should review evaluations and levels of achievement to identify students with print disabilities. Students with print disabilities have significant vision, physical or learning disabilities which prevent them from being able to read printed text. Be sure that the appropriate accommodations are indicated on the IEP or 504 Plan ("verbatim reader" and "text reader").

When enrolling your school for access to Bookshare.org (see the Quick Guide titled Bookshare-Enrolling Your School), you'll need to give a list of eligible students to your ITSS. Make sure the list includes the student names, grades, and computer login IDs. Your ITSS will give those students access to the *Copyrighted Text* folder on your school server.

How do we obtain books from Bookshare for eligible students?

See the Quick Guide titled Bookshare-Enrolling Your School.

What software do we need to read the books downloaded from Bookshare?

You can view the books in any web browser. You can use any text reader software to have the books read aloud by the computer. See the Quick Guide titled Bookshare-Downloading Materials for more information on how to use Bookshare files.

The Bookshare website mentions "purchased book packages." Does Bookshare cost my school money?

No, because you are signed up as an authorized K-12 public institution. Bookshare membership is available to others for a fee.

What's involved to get started with Bookshare?

To initiate access to Bookshare at your school, you will need to:
1. Register a *Primary Contact* on the Bookshare.org website. The *Primary Contact* is a teacher or staff member who is responsible for overall account management and is the main point of contact between the organization and Bookshare.org. The Primary Contact can download books.

2. Designate and register *Sponsors* on the Bookshare.org website. *Sponsors* are additional faculty or staff members who download this material for Members.

3. Identify and register *Members* the Bookshare.org website. *Members* are the disabled students that will read downloaded material.

What are the responsibilities of the *Primary Contact*?

1. Identify staff that will be downloading books from Bookshare for eligible students. These are the *Sponsors*.
2. Work with special education teachers and other staff at the school to identify which students are eligible to have copyrighted material downloaded for them through Bookshare.org. These are the *Members*.
3. Enroll the school with Bookshare.org (See the quick guide titled <u>Bookshare-Enrolling Your School</u>).
4. Ensure that your school has two folders on the school server that teachers can access in order to distribute digital files to students.
   - **Copyright Free Text** folder: MCPS curriculum materials, public domain, educational website and teacher-created text should be stored here, organized by grade/subject. All students can use text readers (e.g., Kurzweil or SOLO Read:Outloud) to read these materials (in keeping with Educational Fair Use Guidelines.)
   - **Copyrighted Text** folder: Copyrighted works can be stored here. Bookshare texts should be stored in this folder. Only eligible students can have access to these copyrighted materials.
5. Provide the list of eligible students, including names, grades, and computer login IDs, to your ITSS so those students can have access to the **Copyrighted Text** folder.
6. Be sure that *Sponsors* have a copy of the <u>Bookshare Organizational Agreement</u> so that they understand copyright compliance and eligibility.

7. Be sure staff understands that texts downloaded from Bookshare.org have to be approved for use by MCPS students. The Databases of Accountable Evaluations (DAE) and/or EPIC have to be checked for approvals. If an approval is not found, an MCPS Form 365-25 has to be completed before the title can be used with students.
8. Set up a file where Bookshare information will be stored, including the spreadsheet of staff *Sponsors* and students *Members*.
9. Update the list of Sponsors at the beginning of each school year, when staffing changes occur, and when students with print disabilities move into or out of your school building. At every update, provide that list to your ITSS so those students can be given access to the **Copyrighted Text** folder.

Does the Primary Contact need to be someone who can do ALL of the tasks above? No one in my building has enough time.

No, there are many people in the building who can help with these tasks including the staff development teacher, the special education team, the leadership team, the media specialist, teachers and paraeducators. However, the Primary Contact should be able to coordinate the above tasks to make sure that they all get done.

Does the Primary Contact need to be a special educator or a teacher?

No, the primary contact can be anyone in the building who can organize the tasks above.

My school is signed up for Bookshare. Now what?

First, provide your ITSS with a list of eligible students. This will ensure that they receive timely access to digitized text. (See the Quick Guide titled Bookshare-Enrolling Your School)

Remember that students must be using text readers instructionally on a regular basis in order to use these same supports as testing accommodations on County or State tests.   Identify and implement the instructional supports, services, and training needed to use digital text effectively for instruction in your school building.