

The BEST AT Forum is a special event within OCALICON that focuses on braille literacy, assistive technology for students who are blind or visually impaired, the AT assessment process, and more. Exhibitor table displays on Thursday and Friday showcase the latest products, services, and solutions to support those who are blind or visually impaired. Six educational sessions on Friday feature the expertise and insights of parents, professionals, and students. An “event within an event,” the BEST AT Forum takes place during OCALICON 2017 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center.

FRIDAY 8:00 – 9:15

Blending Mainstream and Assistive Technology for Successful Classroom Outcomes

Braille and large-print readers must be able to successfully access a wide array of course content and electronic media to compete with their sighted peers. Tools that blend the functionality of assistive technology with the features of mainstream technology provide needed access to resources such as Google Classroom. In this session, participants explore how braille and large-print-reading students can use this technology to access classroom content and much more.

Jim Sullivan, Humanware

Assistive Technology at Work: How the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired Can Support Workplace Accommodations

The Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI) provides individuals with low vision and blindness services and supports necessary to help them attain and maintain employment. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services are customized for each individual through assessments and one-on-one meetings with professional VR counselors. VR services are available in all 88 counties. The focus of this session includes how assistive technology can be used as an accommodation in the workplace, and strategies job seekers can use with employers to explain their disability and request accommodations during the hiring process.

Sarah J. Kelly, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

FRIDAY 9:45 – 11:00

Hands-on Fun With Assistive Technology Tools for Visual Impairments

Discover the many benefits and uses of three assistive technology tools for visual impairments. LightAide provides many benefits ranging from simple cause and effect to visual tracking to learning letters and numbers to reading site words to working on basic math skills. The Braille Labeler is a great tool to create custom braille labels for identifying and organizing your home, school, or work materials. Finally, the Braille Trainer is a great tool to learn how to read braille with the ability to customize and add new words and/or phrases. Join us for a fun session to learn more about each of these three great tools and get time to experience them all with hands-on activities.

Heather Rushmore Koren, Westminster Technologies

The American Printing House for the Blind: Products and Resources

This session introduces participants to products and resources available from the American Printing House for the Blind. The featured products relate to assistive technology, multiple disabilities, and recreation for children who are blind or visually impaired. Learn about several online resources available through the American Printing House for the Blind.

Monica Turner, American Printing House for the Blind

FRIDAY 11:30 – 12:45

BrailleSense Polaris

This session explores native applications familiar to BrailleSense users such as the word processor, address manager, scheduler, and greatly simplified methods of Nemeth and UEB math entry – while also unleashing the power of Android (Google Play Store, Google Docs, etc.).

Andy Leach, HIMES, Inc.

Perspectives of Young Adults with Sensory Disabilities

Join young adults with visual impairments and deafblindness at one of the concluding sessions of the BEST AT Forum for an open panel discussion on transitioning to the workforce and independent living. Panelists represent a variety of experiences and professions, such as postsecondary students, bankers, transcribers, and parents. Areas of focus include employment, apartment hunting, daily living skills, useful assistive technologies, and opportunities for recreational and social activities. There will be opportunities for attendees to ask follow up questions.

Michelle Motil, Chris Harrington, Katie Robinson, Jacob Kaplan, Noah Beckman