



Florida School for the Deaf & the Blind

Do More. Be More. Achieve More.

Patrick Turnage

106th FSDB Commencement Presenter

June 5, 2020

A 2001 graduate of the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB), Patrick Turnage has more than 10 years' experience in consulting and supporting individuals, organizations, educational entities, government agencies and corporations in the areas of assistive technology (AT) assessment and integration solutions, accessibility compliance and remediation, and universal design practices.

Turnage is currently an assistive technology coordinator at FSDB, where he has been employed since 2013. As a part of Technology Services, he works with various campus departments on optimal delivery of AT-related solutions for teachers, specialists and students. These include strategic planning and provision of training presentations, adaptations for traditional and distance learning environments, evaluation of new and emerging technologies, and advising on interoperability and integration.

Previously, Turnage worked as an AT specialist at Florida Reading and Vision Technology, Inc. (2008-2013); where he provided AT sales, marketing, training and support throughout Florida. As a customer sales/quality assurance specialist with Hilton Reservations and Customer Care (2005-2008), he received a commitment to excellence award in recognition for his work.

After graduation with a Bachelor of Arts degree in international studies from Florida International University (2015), Turnage became a certified AT instructional specialist through the Academy for Certification of Vision Education and Rehabilitation Professionals (2017).

A proud alumnus of FSDB, Turnage started in second grade where he continued developing his proficiency with braille and technology. During his time at FSDB, he developed lifelong friendships. He took part in chorus, Outta Sight, goalball, student council (class vice president), and track and field. Turnage was born with congenital glaucoma, and even though he was born legally blind, he still had some usable vision. His condition worsened, and by the spring of his eighth-grade year, he became completely blind. He recognized early on that the only way to accept and adapt to his reality was to become a lifelong learner; technology gave him the ability to learn and communicate freely.

He has taken his learning and passion for assistive technologies into the classroom to provide instruction and support to both staff and students from the perspective of someone who is also blind. As he explains, "One of the things that make me want to come to work every day is that I once was a student and I recognize how skills like assistive technology have contributed to my success in life. The technology skills I work with them on are the same technology skills I go home to and depend on in my daily life to accomplish everyday tasks. I have the best job that lets me do so much to ensure that FSDB students develop the skills and experience to follow their dreams."

Turnage credits his FSDB teachers, staff members and friends for his success. "Upon graduation, I realized I wanted to continue learning," said Turnage, who took on full-time work while enrolled in college. "Statistics clearly demonstrate a correlation between braille literacy and techno-literacy as the two strongest indicators of successful employment outcomes."

Turnage presents regularly on topics related to AT. His most recent presentation was on using "Virtual Assistants in the Classroom as an Assistive Technology" at the Future of Education Technology Conference in Miami. He has presented for the Blind Veterans Association, Assistive Technology Industry Association Florida Division of Blind Services and the Florida Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind.

Turnage also volunteers his time providing AT support and training with Instituto Franciscano para la Capacitación del no Vidente in Tegucigalpa Honduras.