

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Penn State alumnus demonstrated his company's products at White House**

WASHINGTON, D.C., and UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. - Educational products and services that enable students affected by blindness and low vision to experience more hands-on science learning were demonstrated at the White House on Monday (Sept. 27).

Cary Supalo, a Pennsylvania State University alumnus and founder and president of the startup company Independence Science, LLC, met with Kareem Dale, associate director of the White House Office of Public Engagement and special assistant to the president for disability policy. Supalo is a blind chemist who recently earned his doctorate in chemistry from Penn State University. He has also served as project manager of the Independent Laboratory Access for the Blind (ILAB) project at Penn State University, where these tools were initially developed.

Independence Science produces and sells educational products to schools that assist in teaching science, math and other subjects to blind and low-vision students.

"We are honored to share Independence Science's products and services that empower students affected by blindness or low-vision with the current administration," Supalo said. "Our mission always has been to inspire this population -- which is underrepresented in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics -- to consider career paths in these areas."

Other Independence Science personnel who attended the meetings include Mick Isaacson, director of research and development; Michael Lombardi, curriculum development specialist; and Lillian Rankel, director of educational innovations.

Some of the Penn State-developed ILAB technology was presented at the meeting. Another product that was demonstrated in the White House is the Talking LabQuest, which collects and stores scientific data like acceleration and pH level. The device incorporates a text-to-speech software component developed by Independence Science that makes information displayed on its LCD screen audible.

The software was tested at the Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and was used by students who attended Camp Tuhsmehta this summer in Greenville, Mich. Independence Science received funding from the National Science Foundation to develop the technology and collaborated with Vernier Software & Technology and the Department of Educational Studies at Purdue University to create it.

Supalo's goals for Independence Science's visit to the White House were to learn about government opportunities in getting its technologies into schools to help blind students and to promote the company's mission. The demonstrated technologies were designed to increase students with disabilities' access to the STEM fields and are important tools for integrating these students into the Obama Administration's Educate to Innovate policy.

"We hope to tie this to educational and innovative opportunities for student learning in the United States," he said.

#### **About Independence Science, LLC**

Officials at Independence Science (<http://www.independencescience.com>) are making their expertise available to help school districts, colleges and universities, and state rehabilitation agencies across the country meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements in the science curriculum. These technologies are being made available to further serve as a dissemination tool to benefit any blind and low-vision student in the United States.

**Source:**

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