

TNOTA Board Meeting June 11, 2026

In attendance: Stephanie Lancaster, Cindy Blackwell, Hanna Saxon, Kelsey Kennedy, Bhumika Patel, Hannah Dougherty, Anna Fung, Sandra Dicks, Mikayla Gale, Christine Watt, Nolan Ellis, Martin Davis, David Eades, Valery Hanks, Rachel Palmer, Alyssa Campbell, Kristin Soderberg, Stedmon Hopkins, Daylee Scudder, Nicole Ayers, Evelyn Daniel

Staff in attendance: Zach McElgunn, Peggy McElgunn

Approval of minutes will be deferred to our June meeting.

Action Items for TNOTA Board members

- Please update any CE events that you've had [here!](#)
- Please submit any district, committee, or CE events ASAP using the [Executive Board webpage](#) at least 30 days prior to the event.
- You can submit any communication requests on the [Executive Board webpage](#)
- Please send a notice of any leadership changes - personnel and roles - in your district or on your committee to president@tnota.org and admin@tnota.org
- Please continue to engage with TNOTA social media posts.

Upcoming Events

- **Please watch our social media and website for announcements and information about continuing education events as more learning opportunities are planned.**
 - President, VP, and Treasurer nominations/elections will be coming up in the Fall
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Announcements

- Board member news
- New business/updates:
 - Working on updating both the bylaws and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Plan to send the updated bylaws out for Board member review and comment around July 1 and we can discuss at the July board meeting.
 - If you did not get the email on Monday with the agenda for this meeting, please note that in the chat so staff can address that.
 - Student reps - if you are rolling off the board and there is a new student rep taking your place, please email me at president@tnota.org with the new rep on the email to let me know (if you haven't already done so).

- TNOTA Annual Conference Updates
 - 2026 Conference in Nashville at Scarritt Bennett on Sept 18-20, 2026. Theme is “Finding our Rhythm: OT in a Changing World”
 - Preconference on Friday will be Suicide Prevention Training and Ethics & Jurisprudence
 - Wonderful turnout for proposals:
 - 31 posters
 - 18 short courses
 - 14 workshops
 - Have 8 sponsors and still working on getting more
 - Early bird registration will open July 6th
 - Be on the lookout for Board member code - remember that only ACTIVE committee members should be given the codes - we will send them to the chairs to distribute.

- Financial Report for May 2026
 - Update on financial advisor firm. It was noted that arrangements have been confirmed and TNOTA will be moving funds into Cannata & Company for management resulting a stronger return on investment than a bank.
 - TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY:
 - Total Income for the month: **\$6,590.56**
 - Expenses for the month: **\$3,346.87**
 - Net Income for the month: **\$3,243.69**
 - Links to documents:
 - [Balance Sheet](#)
 - [Profit/Loss](#)
 - [Comparison](#)

- Membership Update
 - **Membership Report for the period 5/14/26 - 6/11/26:**
 - 1st year OT: 23 (-5)
 - 1st year OTA: 9 (-1)
 - OT: 395 (+7)
 - OTA: 73 (-1)
 - Retired: 1 (-)
 - Student: 320 (-17)
 - TOTAL members: 873
 - **TNOTA Audience Report for the same period:**
 - Total contacts: 3,139 (-13)
 - New contacts: 29
 - 27 via API; 2 via list import
 - Deleted contacts: 47
 - 21 unsubscribe; 26 hard bounce

- Legislative updates
 - Compact privileges were rolled out in TN May 20. For detailed information please check: otcompact.org
 - No notes on feedback yet, but this will be reported as we learn how the Compact is being received and used by practitioners
 - From AOTA: Dept of Ed made final student loan borrowing cap ruling- OT is not exempt and subject to cap. This means future occupational therapy students will only have access up to \$20,500 per year and \$100,000 total in federal graduate student loans
 - <https://www.aota.org/advocacy/advocacy-news#sort=%40publicationz32xdate%20descending>
 - State- there will be rules addressing occupational therapy in gov ops next week. Cindy will update next week

- Advocacy Committee
 - Not in attendance

- Continuing Education Committee
 - The committee has been reviewing a few courses with support from the newest committee members.

- Diversity & Inclusion Committee
 - Community Meet-ups (two scheduled)
 - June 12th in Knoxville (Stedmon Hopkins)
 - June 18th in Franklin (LaRae Murray)

- Mental Health Committee
 - Next suicide prevention will be held this Saturday. Planning CoP meeting late July/early August.

- Mentorship Committee
 - We have extended the applications for mentee and mentor for our upcoming 7th cycle due to an imbalance of mentor to mentee applications. The new deadline for applications is June 30.
 - With the assistance from Admin and Stephanie L, we reached out to 3 OT programs - Nashville State, TSU, and UTC. These 3 programs graciously emailed their prior 2 graduating classes with information about the upcoming 7th cycle. This effort was an attempt to pull in mentee applicants.
 - Our next Committee mtg is June 24.
 - The mentorship CEU event on June 4th was well-designed and well-received. *Real Mentorship: Honest Conversations from Both Sides* was hosted by Kim and Niccole of Aspire OT.
 - Don Lewis, Program Director of ETSU, will present on Mentorship through Aspire in October. Exact topic TBD.

- OTA Connect Committee
 - Open position
- Philanthropy Committee
 - Not in attendance
- Student Involvement Committee
 - Next Meeting schedule for August! Then prepping for conference/student room - sent out a survey to students on what they would like to have there.
- TNOTF/RA Updates
 - Amanda was not in attendance. Board members were asked to connect with Amanda about the TNOTF scholarship; Amanda and Stephanie are working on the set-up of those applications and may reach out asking for volunteers in reviewing applications once those have come in (likely in August).
- East District
 - Not in attendance
- Middle District
 - Looking for a Secretary to join our committee!
 - August 6th at 6pm CE: Surviving to Thriving- a Guide to school based practice
 - Saturday in Sept/Oct: Nashville OT Meetup- Volunteer Event with OneGen Mobile Food Pantry.
- Northeast District
 - Regrouping as a team to determine how best to support our district and increase involvement/membership.
 - Next district event late July/early August
- Rural West District
 - Hosted in person/virtual CEU May 30th on Assistive Technology in Jackson went very well with good attendance
 - Lunch and Learn Membership course July 9th by Michelle Roth
 - PAMS Course scheduled Oct 11th
 - Compliance Day scheduled Nov 7th
- Southeast District
 - Long COVID CE on July 22, 2026 from 8-9:30pm EST virtually
- West District
 - 7/14: Church Health Informational with Kevin Gibson, PT. We will be discussing OTs role serving the underserved and the recent legislative change in TN that impacts children.

Student Representatives & School Reports

- Belmont University
 - First years started our summer semester at the beginning of this month
 - Second years have started their first level II fieldwork placements
 - We are in our accreditation year and this week we had our site visit with ACOTE. They reviewed our program, toured facilities, met with staff in depth, interviewed a group of students from the 2027 cohort (virtually) and students from the 2028 cohort (in-person). We have received great feedback!
- Concorde Academy
 - Not in attendance
- East TN State
 - First year students are working hard in their first semester.
 - Second years are continuing to enjoy summer break before starting back for the fall semester.
 - Third year students are completing their first Level IIA fieldwork rotations in various settings and states throughout the U.S!
- Jackson State
 - Not in attendance
- Lincoln Memorial University
 - 1st year students: Flying through their first semester and doing great with their anatomy cadaver lab!
 - 2nd year students: We are learning all about assistive technology and ADA accessibility in our community.
 - 3rd year students: Completing level IIA fieldwork rotations.
- Milligan University
 - Not in attendance
- Nashville State
 - Not in attendance
- Roane State
 - Everyone is enjoying summer break and taking the opportunity to relax and prepare for next semester! We are excited to welcome the new cohort in August and the second years are preparing for their third semester.
- South College Nashville
 - Not in attendance

- Tennessee State University
 - Hello! Our second-year students have started their level II fieldwork. Our first years have started their level I Mental Health fieldwork in pairs or small groups of about 3-4 at these sites. The first years are working to pair upcoming cohort members with a mentor to help their new transition into OT school. We have been given the opportunity for a community outreach with an engineering company here in Nashville, helping engineers understand why minimum ADA accommodations are not always the best. We are super pumped to work with them as they have reached out to us. The summer semester has been flying by!
- Tennessee Wesleyan
 - Not in attendance
- UT- Chattanooga
 - Not in attendance
- UTHSC (Memphis)
 - First-year students are finishing this semester strong and are looking forward to a break, a new semester of courses, and meeting the new cohort that is starting in August! Second-year students are about to finish their last fieldwork placement and begin studying for the NBCOT!
- Walters State Community College
 - Not in attendance

The board broke up into breakout groups to address strategic planning initiatives.

Group 1

- Capstone Experience handbook is being drafted. Christy is bringing it to the board in August.
- Stephanie is making a video in July or early August and will ask for support in distributing that information to OT/OTA programs in August.
- We will offer opportunities for new grads to connect with Board members and volunteers.

ACTION → Stephanie will update and request to board members to distribute a video articulating benefits of membership to their networks.

- The new Academia Community of Practice has been launched. We will look at launching Fieldwork/Capstone Coordinator CoP in Q3/Q4.

Group 2

*ACTION → We will update the toolkit to share subpages regarding how to do “everyday” advocacy for each of our audiences around basic talking points: *reimbursements; *why therapy is important; *what OTPs do and how they impact community health. Our audiences include: Public; Legislators; Employers; Payers (insurance).*

ACTION → We will create a ‘drag and drop’ ability for members to create their own toolkits with information, brochures, FAQs and more. This individualization is designed to help members be more participatory in advocacy efforts.

ACTION → We will consider developing a table of FAQs with answers for each audience.

We will look at ways to increase exposure with the public and decision-makers. This could be switching the script...i.e, “what, you don’t know what OTPs do? How strange”. We will include scope of practice and deeper dive considerations as part of this effort.

ACTION → We will add information regarding how to request a meeting with a legislator and how to communicate (i.e., disability coalition information) on our website.

ACTION → Before conference (August) we will send out a survey to our audience asking them what issues are important for them. This will allow us to address these concerns and create conversations at conference (we can also promote conference before the actual date!). We want to create noise at the conference to inspire attendees to share what matters most in terms of advocacy.

ACTION → We will restart the advocacy communication in September/October as we we prepare for Hill Day 2027.

ACTION → We will consider working with not only the disability coalition in 2027, but also the other therapies. We will find out when they support hill day and see what might be most effective for TNOTA.

ACTION → A possible “low hanging fruit” consideration for 2027 is a placard signing bill.

Group 3

Group 3 focused on further development of a newsletter that provides member driven content. This included current students submitting ideas for the name of the newsletter (Branding); and a find your district link to the district page.

ACTION→ We will send author submission guidelines to the group for their consideration.

Group 4

This group continued to explore ways to build membership. This includes looking at micro-grants for TNOTA members to be used for specialty training, research or program development projects; considering ways to honor and support CE presenters; adding a column on membership for identification of any referrals; creating a new member packet to promote a sense of belonging and foster engagement.

ACTION → Staff will report how many CE presenters were participating with TNOTA in 2026 (to date).

MSC Meeting was adjourned at 9:04

Next meeting will be July 9, 2026, at 7 p.m. Central

Action	Date	Who
Anyone interested in contributing to the TNOTF scholarship application revision should reach out to Adnewbern@gmail.com	ASAP	Board
If you have a speaker, topic, contact, or suggestion for the next East district CE, please contact Julia Johnson (julefor@outlook.com)	ASAP	Board (especially East District members)
Please submit any district, committee, or CEU events ASAP for 2026 using the Executive Board webpage	ASAP	Board
Communications requests (social media, email) can be submitted here on the Executive Board webpage	Rolling	Board
Continue to engage with TNOTA social media posts	Rolling	Board
Stephanie will update and request to board members to distribute a video she is creating which will articulate benefits of membership.	7/15	Stephanie
We will update the toolkit to share subpages regarding how to do “everyday” advocacy for each of our audiences around basic talking points: *reimbursements; *why therapy is important; *what OTPs do and how they impact community health. Our audiences include: Public; Legislators; Employers; Payers (insurance).	Ongoing through (ideally) September 1	Cindy B & Staff (and members!!)
We will create a ‘drag and drop’ ability for members to create their own toolkits with information, brochures,	September 1	Staff with guidance from

FAQs and more. This individualization is designed to help members be more participatory in advocacy efforts.		Cindy B/Stephanie
We will consider developing a table of FAQs with answers for each audience.	9/1	Members to provide FAQs and answers!
We will add information regarding how to request a meeting with a legislator and how to communicate (i.e., disability coalition information) on our website.	9/1	Staff
Before conference (August) we will send out a survey to our audience asking them what issues are important for them. This will allow us to address these concerns and create conversations at conference (we can also promote conference <u>before</u> the actual date!). We want to create noise at the conference to inspire attendees to share what matters most in terms of advocacy. A possible “low hanging fruit” consideration for 2027 is a placard signing bill.	7/20	Staff to draft survey for review
We will restart the advocacy communication in September/October as we we prepare for Hill Day 2027.	9/15 (or so)	Cindy B & advocacy team
We will consider working with not only the disability coalition in 2027, but also the other therapies. We will find out when they support hill day and see what might be most effective for TNOTA.	9/15	Staff to identify dates; Advocacy to make determination
We will send author submission guidelines to the group for their consideration.	8/1	Group (Martin, Bhumika, etc)
Staff will report how many CE presenters were participating with TNOTA in 2026 (to date).	7/5	Staff