



State Board for Occupational Therapy
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BOARD MEETING NOTES

Date: Wednesday February 4, 2026
Time: 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Location: New York City and Albany Offices

In Attendance:

Rebecka Cox, Chair
Janet Falk-Kessler
Richard Sabel
Kelly Van Auken
Kim Ann Mahoney
Sharon Sedlak

Christina Amato, Staff
Kellie Murphy, Executive Secretary
Alana Davis, Office of Special Education

Jeff Tomlinson, NYSOTA
Francelle Pineda, NBCOT

Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 12:00pm and introductions were made.

Meeting minutes from June 27, 2025 and September 25, 2025 were reviewed, voted, and approved unanimously.

The Office of Special Education joined the meeting for a presentation from the preschool policy unit. The presentation focused on their role of providing assistance related to services and programs for disabilities including policy and guidance; technical assistance; professional development, and monitoring. Mainly the discussion focused on Indicator 6 of the State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report which are required to be in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities and Education Act (IDEA). Indicator 6 speaks to when a child with a disability aged 3, 4, and 5 enrolled in a preschool program may be removed from the classroom to receive services. The targets for 2025 include more than 50% of students attending a regular early childhood program receive the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program with less than 20% of students attending separate special education classes, separate schools or residential programs. Pull out services do not count toward indicator 6.

The Board discussed possible barriers to providing OT services in the classroom including possible distractions and changes in classroom dynamics. The Board felt more data was needed and voiced concerns regarding forcing Occupational Therapists to do something that may not encourage goal attainment. Murphy will follow-up with a link and power point slides to board members should they wish to provide individualized feedback.

Francielle Pineda from the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) joined the meeting to provide a presentation regarding updates within the Board. Pineda provided background on NBCOT and all the services and data they provide to licensure boards including available continuing education courses, micro credentials, and access to survey results which discuss current issues and trends in OT. NBCOT conducts a practice analysis every five years including sending evaluations to test-takers within the last three years. The results inform the examination blueprint and are available publicly on the website. NBCOT will also evaluate and test examination questions reviewing them for implicit bias and quality. The Board is accredited by NCCA and therefore must meet certain requirements for examinations and national certification.

The Board greatly appreciated Pineda's presentation providing insight into the tools that are made available to all state boards. Discussions and questions followed which included discussions on the sharing of disciplinary information and examination eligibility determinations for candidates prior to being conferred a degree. Murphy will follow up with the Board to provide the presentation slides along with links to information provided through the presentation.

The Board discussed the issue of swallowing and diet orders. Swallowing is within the ACOTE standards for accredited programs including dysphagia management. Discussion regarding OTs providing table side evaluations, palpating and listening for the swallow. Questions regarding who is ultimately responsible, documenting these procedures, and what services are billable for an Occupational Therapist were discussed.

During open discussion it was shared the federal professional degree designation changes which will impact graduate financial aid were posted to the federal register. Murphy will follow-up with the link on the federal register should board members wish to review.

The board has received questions regarding oropharyngeal suctioning and whether it is in the scope of practice. Discussions of liability for the procedure and whether it was within the treatment plan for the Occupational Therapist. Murphy will request a legal review and follow-up with the board.

The meeting adjourned and next meeting will be May 28, 2026.