

SCDD San Diego Imperial Regional Advisory Committee (RAC)

DRAFT Minutes for Meeting Held:

July 8, 2021

**4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Through Zoom**

# Call to Order

Leticia Galvan, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

# Members Present

Nicole Brobeck (SA), Melissa Cenizo (FA), Helen Crenshaw (FA), Leticia Galvan (FA), Harvey Goldman (FA), Dayon Higgins (FA), David Jespersen (FA), Susan Madison (SA), James Walker (SA), Nancy Vogel (FA),

# Members Absent (Excused)

Marta Leyva (Vice Chair), Julie St. Pierre (FA), Jackie Riddell (FA)

# Staff Present

Mary Ellen Stives, Debbie Marshall, and Suza Szewiola of SCDD San Diego Imperial Office.

# Guests

Viri Salgado (SCDD San Diego Imperial Intern), Julie Austin (FA) SCDD Councilmember, Ethel Marcos (PRIDE Industries), Carol Larkin (FA), Peter Salgado (SA)

# Welcome and Introductions

Members and staff introduced themselves.

# Establish Quorum

A quorum was established.

# Approval of Agenda

Nicole Brobeck moved to approve the agenda. Helen Crenshaw seconded it. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

# Approval of Meeting Minutes

Susan Madison moved to approve the May 13, 2021 minutes. Harvey Goldman seconded it. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

# Public Comment

Helen Crenshaw raised the issue that a significant barrier to self-advocate employment is the inability to use a cash register, particularly since many entry-level jobs are in retail. After asking various providers, the Regional Center, and the Department of Rehabilitation, she has not been able to find training programs that offer cash-register training. She asked the group if they know of any such training or if they had any suggestions.

Ethyl Marcos mentioned that the number and variety of different point of sale systems retailers use make it more difficult to set up training programs.

Helen proposed that providing training through a larger group program rather than to each individual would be helpful. Debbie stated that perhaps such training could be part of the high school and middle school curriculum.

Mary Ellen said she would ask the employers who will be at Jobtoberfest if they do this kind of training.

# Presentation

Aspects of the upcoming Five-Year State Plan were discussed. The focus areas of education, health, self-advocacy, housing, and employment will remain the same.

Mary Ellen stressed that it is imperative that local RACs provide the State Plan Team with information, input, and suggestions on their local community. As such, Mary Ellen met with RAC members David, Leticia, and Susan several months ago to focus on SDI RAC’s input.

The group determined that they would like to see education focus on a blueprint for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) and for this planning to start earlier in a student’s public school education. Students should be given the full opportunities of a public school education rather than being put on a non-diploma track which negatively impacts the ability to obtain CIE. This is especially important because students are sometimes put on the non-diploma track without the knowledge of the student or family.

To remedy this, the group considered developing trainings for families of younger students to guide them through the process, in particular the IEP. Another suggestion is that transition should begin in middle school and not wait until students are 16 years old.

The need for more benefits planning and training, particularly regarding ABLE accounts was considered as was the need for proactive safety and sexual abuse training, internet safety training, and an increase in mental health and dental care and services.

On the topic of education, Julie Austin emphasized that distance learning for all students will continue to be part of California’s future. She noted that particular attention should be paid to the current discrepancy between general education and special education distance learning. Additionally, Julie has seen a considerable rise in anxiety in her clients during the pandemic. This is causing them to be reluctant to go outside and a preference to attend online school.

Helen noted that Rady Children’s Hospital and 9th District PTA is having a suicide prevention symposium in August focusing on the effects of the Pandemic on mental health as well as varied student responses to distance learning.

Julie spoke about the controversy surrounding Proposition 98 and the proposed funding increase for Special Education Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). She stated that, while increased funding to keep cases out of the courts appears beneficial on the surface, there are reservations regarding equal representation for parents as compared to the school districts.

Briefly, school districts have an opportunity to consult with their attorneys before the ADR. Parents, however, are typically unaware of this fact and do not obtain legal representation. Therefore, some see Prop 98 as giving school districts money to hire attorneys to prepare protective ADRs which may not serve the best interests of the student. Some ADR’s have been very useful however, so it is uncertain how this will affect students.

Julie continued that there is much public concern around the bill and whether SCDD should support, watch, or oppose it.

Mary Ellen briefly mentioned the challenges of housing—cost and availability.

# SCDD Legislative Committee Update

Julie reported on the large budget increase—a 262.2 billion dollar spending plan—which she characterized as “astounding and life-changing”.

Some of the inclusions in the budget:

* Funding for AB-813 which requires the State Department of Developmental Services to establish a pilot project to develop metrics and methods of data collection to evaluate the outcomes of services authorized by regional centers and provided to the consumers through the vendored providers.
* Funding to provide social recreation, camping, educational services, and non-medical therapies for people served.
* Specifies that the Self-Determination Program is available to all regional center consumers and that DDS must set sign-up benchmarks. RCs must report on meeting those benchmarks.
* In 2022, 61.8 million dollars will be provided to enhance service coordinator ratios at the 21 regional centers. This equates to 53 additional service coordinators throughout the State.
* Improve and support language access and cultural competency across the RC system.
* Increase of base rate and formula for Special Education.
* Permanent restoration of 7% cut for IHSS.
* 6 billion for broadband infrastructure.

# Self-Advocacy Report

Debbie Marshall updated the RAC on trainings she and Viri Salgado have been conducting including: Leadership Group, Afternoon at the Movies, Boardsmanship Training. She spoke more in depth about *Project SAFEE* (Self-Advocates for Emergency Education) which has been a popular offering.

# Manager Report

Mary Ellen stated that the Self-Determination orientations have been very well-attended. Both English and Spanish sessions have been at capacity of 75 per session. She alerted the RAC that everyone should be receiving a postcard in the mail informing people of the availability of the Self-Determination option.

This year, Jobtoberfest will be held virtually on the REMO platform on October 13th. COX Communications, the platinum sponsor, will be running PSAs for the event starting August 14th. Money obtained from those purchasing tables at Jobtoberfest will be used for scholarships for students with disabilities.

Upcoming events include: The Youth Leadership Forum next week (and virtually), Leading the Charge Conference on December 2, 2021; IEP Day April 30, 2022; and the People First Conference May 6 – 7, 2022.

# Roundtable

James was the keynote speaker for Banyon Tree’s graduation which was livestreamed. James will be transitioning into a new job this week at Marshall’s.

Helen shared that the Adaptive Rock-Climbing Program at Mesa Rim in Mission Valley is starting up again.

Susan Madison reminded everyone about how important our words are when speaking about people with disabilities.

Nicole spoke briefly about her trivia groups and mentioned that they are always open for new people.

Dayon noted that, through her advocacy, she has seen the significant impact the pandemic has had on mental health of students and the struggle to find proper supports. She recently visited Ramona High School and was impressed with their vocational training program which is person-centered.

Harvey shared his family’s struggle with Community Interface Services, who lost a large number of employees during the pandemic and did not offer enough services to clients during the past year (especially when compared with other programs.) The “squeaky wheel” efforts of the Goldman family resulted in significant increases in service delivery from CIS and a potential audit of CIS by the Regional Center.

# Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

# Next Meeting

The next Regional Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, September 9, 2021 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.