



**Sequoia Regional Office of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities
Regional Advisory Committee Minutes**

March 11, 2026

– Zoom and In-Person at 770 E. Shaw Ave., Suite 123, Fresno, CA 93710

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT ONLINE:

Jim Becker, Rebecca Donabed, Matt Gjerde, Carolyn Huffstutler, Nicole Renee Mensch, Julie Peeler, Thao Tran

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT IN-PERON:

Sherry Huggins

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Michael Esquibel (E), Lisajo Narcisse (E), Veronica Rubio (A)

STAFF PRESENT ONLINE:

Sheraden Nicholau, Deputy Director of SCDD
Veronica Magallanes, Analyst II
Judi Muirhead, Volunteer Advocate, Analyst II

STAFF PRESENT IN-PERSON:

Nick Lutton, Regional Office Manager
Heather Kroencke, Office Technician

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Heather Kroencke facilitated the online meeting. The meeting was called to order at 3:07 p.m. She welcomed everyone to the March 11, 2026, Regional Advisory Committee Meeting.

The official roll call was conducted by Heather Kroencke and there was a quorum.

Heather asked if there were any proposed additions/changes to the March 11, 2026, agenda as e-mailed.

M/S/C to approve the March 11, 2026, Agenda as emailed.

Heather asked if there were any proposed additions/changes January 14, 2026 Minutes as e-mailed.

M/S/C to approve the January 14, 2026, Minutes as emailed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Emily Tymn introduced herself as a Field Representative for the Office of Assemblyman David J Tangipa - 8th Assembly District. She shared a document titled 8th Assembly District 2026 Legislative Package that highlights some legislation her office is currently working on.

Rebecca Donabed reported that starting July 29th through September 15th she will be again hosting a Leadership Academy through RICV. She will share the flyer when it is finalized. On the 9th and 10th of April there will be a Voter Accessibility event at the Fresno RICV. On November 7th from 10-2 the Fresno RICV will be holding a 50th Anniversary Open House.

Thao Tran reported that there will be a Disco @ the Capital, the registration is open. On May 19th there will be an Advocacy Conference, with a reception the evening before. The fee will be \$50. Also Best Buddies will be holding their walk on May 2nd, you can register on their website.

NEW BUSINESS:

Julie Peeler was introduced as our newest Regional Advisory Member. She has an 8 year old son with Autism. He was diagnosed at age 2 with a Global Developmental Delay. He is a regional center client and she has become his school and health advocate. He currently receives Speech and OT. They are currently homeschooling and looking at getting ABA started again.

Matt Gjerde wanted to discuss the Bill put forward by ARC, AB 2189. He had concerns it would take money away from current Parent Training groups. However, that is not what it will do.

Item 8. – Introduction of New Regional Office Manager

Nick Lutton introduced himself, he is the new Regional Office Manager. He thanked the RAC members for meeting with him individually and sharing their stories with him. His journey into I/DD advocacy started when his son was born 12 years ago. His son has Profound Autism and requires 24 hour supervision. He has worked for Family Voices and EPU Children's Center in the past. His most recent position was at Big Brothers, Big Sisters Central California. He is excited to hit the ground running in his new role.

Item 8. PRESENTATION - SCDD Policy Work Updates & Opportunities for Advocacy

Sheraden Nicholau, SCDD Deputy Director of Regional Office Operations, presented on the January Proposed California Budget and what it could mean for our community. It is a working document and will be followed by the May revise. SCDD has prepared a summary and she reviewed it. She also reviewed the following bills:

SB 1052 – Sponsored by ICC, SCDD, ARC and others – It aims to strengthen Authorized Representatives, includes safeguards for individuals with I/DD who are Regional Center clients. It allows for Contingent Appointments, clarifies rights and limits representation to one year, but can be cancelled earlier if required.

AB 2360 – Which will require State Offices to publish documents in Plain Language, both printed and digital. It also helps define Plain Language. It states that offices must create, adopt and post a Plain Language Policy and designate at least 1 official to be in charge of the program.

AB 2189 – Is not a SCDD Sponsored bill but does mention us. It would increase training for special education and would build a Statewide Coalition.

STAFF UPDATES:

Sheraden Nicholau provided information on the SCDD updates by reviewing the SCDD Council Meeting Summary.

Nick Lutton shared that he has continued to do the CIT/Law Enforcement training. He completed the one-week Instructor training shortly after joining us. He is looking forward to doing more of the trainings in our area.

Veronica Magallanes, shared her updates on the training and events she has been doing, including one for ARC Fresno on Healthy Relationships which included 33 Self-Advocates. She also participated in RICV's Winter Symposium on Feb 4th. For Kern County Network for Children, she training 30 professionals in person and another 70 virtually. She has scheduled a training for Community Housing on Emergency Preparedness as well as several upcoming community events.

REGIONAL CENTER UPDATE:

Nick Lutton is in communication with both Regional Centers to appoint a contact person who will report out at our meetings moving forward.

PORTERVILLE DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER UPDATE:

Judi Muirhead, Volunteer Advocate at Porterville Development Center reported PDC has seen an increase in population. They are 155 currently participating in the Court Competency program. They are now up to 7 Cal-Fire units on the campus. They are doing building maintenance for the roofs and asbestos abatement. They still have the surge unit available for Covid/Flu outbreaks. They are encountering issues with some placements as there are a lack of Enhanced Behavioral Homes available. The Regional Centers are actively trying to get these homes up and running.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:39 p.m.

GUESTS – Yenifer Gallegos and Emily Tymn.