



June 16, 2026

Regional Advisory Committee Minutes
State Council on Developmental Disabilities
Central Coast Regional Office (CCRO)

Attendance

Members Present:

Lindsey Baker (online from publicly posted location)
Sara Curren (online from publicly posted location)
Jonathan Gush (online from publicly posted location)
Sebastia Janelle (online)
Tricia Kokes (Main Location)
Makayla Rustigian (online)

Members Absent:

Ilene Candreva (Excused)
Karina Guzman (Excused)
Frank Serrano (Excused)
Daniel Stickney (Excused)
Kavita Sreedhar (Excused)

SCDD Staff:

Jennifer Lucas, Regional Manager
Joe Macias, Analyst II
Heather Kroencke, Sequoia Office Technician
Sheraden Nicholau, Deputy Director, Regional Office Operations

Public Attendees:

Yvonne Lui

Discussion of Agenda Items

- Call to Order and Introductions (10:08 am)
- Quorum established with 6 members present.
- Minutes for April 17, 2026, RAC meeting were approved with corrections. Motion (Gush), Seconded (Baker), Roll Call Vote: 6 ayes.

- **Announcements:**
 - Jennifer Lucas announced Sebastien Janelle as the newest RAC Appointee for Santa Barbara County. He has filled the vacancy left by Melissa Fitch. Sebastien introduced himself. He currently lives in Santa Barbara with his fiancé. He is originally from Iowa where he graduated from college.
 - Jennifer Lucas also took a few minutes to acknowledge that it was Juneteenth. She encouraged everyone to reflect on what the holiday means to us all, the official end to slavery in the United States. As of 2022 all 50 States recognize it as a day of Remembrance or as an official holiday.

- **Public comments:**
 - Sara Curran acknowledged the Ins and Outs of Supported Decision Making and Alternatives to Conservatorship Event that Jennifer Lucas presented at. She said it was a great event.
 - Heather Kroencke shared that Nick Lutton, the Sequioa Regional Office Manager was a guest on our SCDD Council Member, Melissa Fitch's Podcast, "Raising Ryan".

- **Chairperson Report– Tricia Kokes, RAC Chair**
 - **Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC):** Just a reminder the next election is in November. Tricia will be working at the polls. As a reminder anyone can volunteer to work (and it's paid). The next meeting is in July. They meet every three months.

- **Committee for Transportation Mobility and Accessibility (CTMA)** – Nothing new to report at this time.
- **Silicon Valley Independent Living Center.** They have hired a new Executive Director.
 - They will be hosting a party on June 25th in San Jose.
- **Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (SSAN) and Advocacy Report – Daniel Stickney**
 - Daniel was unable to attend, Jennifer Lucas gave a short report in his absence. They (Jennifer, Daniel and a few others with lived experience) attended an Event in Palo Alto for Emergency Services and Volunteers. There were about 50 people in attendance. The one-hour training covered Effective Communication, Sensory Needs and First Aid. The breakout tables offered smaller conversations that allowed the Emergency Services folks to learn about the needs of the Self-Advocates. The Self-Advocates also benefited from the conversations about what they could do to be better prepared for interactions with Emergency Services.
- **People First of San Luis Obispo County Report – Makayla Rustigian**
 - There was a meeting on May 16, 2026. The group created a Creed that included items such as Listening to each other, Not talking over each other, Being Positive and Happy, Work to improve the lives of those with I/DD and to Support Each Other. They also held a People 1st Dance on May 8th. They charged \$5 for a ticket as a fundraiser. It was at Bobs Cantina. They will be hosting another fundraiser on September 26 with UCP+, it will be an Uno tournament with a \$10 entry fee. On October 9th they will be having a Halloween Dance with Pathpoint.
 - There will not be a July Meeting. The next meeting is August 18th and Daniel Stickney will hopefully be presenting.

- **RAC Member Reports:**

- **J. Gush** expressed concerns that The Alternative Diploma cohort has not been accurately assessed and there are discrepancies in the numbers vs their actual skill set. Parents are very confused as students are not going to Transition placements rather than staying at the High Schools like they thought. There was a distinct lack of planning, and discussions were not had.
- **J. Gush** also reported concerns about Santa Barbara School District where there are at least 3 cases where they are being sued on Staff Sexual Assault Charges.
- **J. Gush** told the RAC about an art exhibition he attended. It was hosted by Art Liberte 2026, the Art Zone showcased poetry and mixed media from individuals from 5th Grade to Adult. It unfortunately closed on June 18th but was very professionally presented. They are doing an international tour including Chile.
- **S. Janelle** raised concerns about the cost of housing in Santa Barbara. Him and his fiancé are paying too much to rent a house. Lindsey also commented that with the loss of Federal Housing Funds the local Housing Authority rules are going to be changing making housing even harder to get.

State Council on Developmental Disabilities Budget and Legislative Update – Sheraden Nicholau, Deputy Director, Regional Office Operations

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- Sheraden Nicholau began by introducing herself and again recognizing Juneteenth and reflection on its importance.
- She began by addressing the newest Federal Changes including the shift of Special Education leaving the closed US Department of Education and being assigned to the Health and Human Services department. We do not know what this will look like or how it will impact the Office of Special Education and Rehab Services (OSERS). The Office of Civil

Rights has been moved to the US Department of Justice (OCR). SCDD will be watching the transition closely.

- The second large announcement was the “Opinion” that was posted by the Office of Legal Counsel. This document stated that the Department of Justice and Health and Human Services have been exceeding authority granted by the Olmstead Supreme Court case in 1999. The “Opinion” is that interpretation of non-institutionalization was never defined and therefore actions have gone beyond it’s intended purpose.
- Next the State Budget was reviewed. The good news is that SCDD will not face any cuts within the May Budget Revise. Both the Legislature and the Senate are compiling their final budget documents (Called a 2-party deal) that will be delivered to the Governor by June 30th for his signature.
 - Some of the items included in the new budget are:
 - “Big Share” Corporations will be paying more to cover the federal budget cuts
 - The Legislature removed the \$2000 asset cap for Medical and IHSS
 - Shifted Regional Center Self-Determination supplemental program funds from \$2 Million to \$1 Million – these are the funds the Local Advisory Committees distribute through grants
 - The IHSS cuts from the January Budget were removed
 - The Equitable and Consistent Needs Assessment – for Use by Regional Centers was funded – this will streamline the tools use for assessments statewide.
 - Will fund the Medical Eligibility cuts by the Federal
 - Will support Food Banks
 - Rejected cuts to Adult Protective Services
 - Fund Housing Authority
 - Protect Preschool for 3 year olds

- Allocates \$2 million to Human Trafficking Victims
- The last topic covered was the Trailer Bill Proposal for DDS Eligibility and the Equitable and Consistent Needs Assessment. The intent is to promote equity in the assessment and intake criteria for disability and the level of “substantial disability”. This will create a statewide toolkit for all 21 Regional Centers to use in their assessment process. Currently they are not all using the same assessments and that can lead to varying results. This will streamline the options to create a list of the tools to use. Concerns with this process are that it is not a Person-Centered approach to assessments and may lead to some diagnosis being missed or improperly represented.
- **SCDD Council Member Updates – M. Fitch, SCDD Council Member, discussed:**
 - M. Fitch was unable to attend but will report at the next meeting.
- **CCRO / SCDD Updates –**
 - J. Lucas discussed:
 - Palo Alto Emergency Responders Event – There have been two so far (November 2025 and May 2026). They are hoping to grow the event.
 - SCDD Sponsored Event with ARC and Tri-Counties Regional Center in Oxnard on the Ins and Outs of Supported Decision Making. There were over 200 Self-Advocates in attendance. The theme was Informed Decisions. They had breakout sessions to help review all the options prior to Conserved.
 - In the first week of September Jennifer and Nick Lutton (RO8) will be presenting at the Government Disability Summit. They will be talking about Healthcare Equity. Aaron Caruthers will also be in attendance.

- Jennifer also reported she has completed the POST Certification and can now teach at the police academies on Disabilities.
- Jennifer reviewed the two new SCDD links on the website.
 - The first is a legislative tracker that allows the public to access an easy to read document that is tracking the bills/legislation that are one of the following; one SCDD has helped author/support, ones we support or ones we do no support. The tracker has a banner for each that state where it is in the legislative process.
 - The second is a Regional Center Service Code Index. Self-Advocates/Families/Agencies can use this tool to search for descriptions and service codes for all Regional Center Services.
- J. Macias informed the group that the Central Coast Office has transitioned the Monthly Email from MailChimp to Constant Contact. He shared there is now a QR Code individuals can use to sign up for the email updates.
- **12:04 PM: Adjournment.**