



Regional Administrator Transition Process Final Report Application of Change-Capable Leadership Principles

June 23, 2023

Overview

A change in the CEO of any organization is inevitable. For Region 3 Behavioral Health Services, this change is brought about by the retirement of the Regional Administrator after 34 years with Region 3. Beth Baxter is officially retiring on June 30, 2023. This coincides with Region 3's fiscal year and is an appropriate time of the year to officially pass the leadership baton to the future Regional Administrator.

Region 3 applied the principles of Change-Capable Leadership defined as **the individual and collective actions, behaviors, and mindsets needed to lead change effectively**. It is about *how leaders behave* while doing the work of change and how to forge a common direction to move the necessary change forward. Change-capable leadership requires knowing how to align people and resources in order to facilitate effective and efficient change and builds the collective commitment to making the change effort successful. Effective change leaders focus on people and process.

Strategic change doesn't happen on its own. It takes effective and committed change leaders who listen, communicate, plan, initiate and lead. Region 3 utilized its Leadership Team to ensure a smooth shift in leadership and minimize operational disruptions along the way. The Leadership Team was tasked with the responsibility of facilitating the **Regional Administrator Transition Process**. The Leadership Team consists of senior management, leadership, and staff representatives.

The **Regional Administrator Transition Process** has been flexible, transparent, open to opportunities to enhance the process, and incorporated additional strategies as necessary to ensure the best outcome to keep Region 3 a strong, effective and progressive organization. The following timeline outlines the 16 ½ month transition process.

Timeline (has been fluid throughout the process)

March 11, 2022: During the Region 3 Annual Strategic Planning session with staff, Beth Baxter announced her intention to retire on June 30, 2023. This was done to ensure the strategic planning process included areas that would assist Region 3 in preparing for a leadership change and for staff to participate in this process.

April 26, 2022: the Leadership Team met and determined their role in facilitating an effective, smooth and successful transition process. The team laid the groundwork and foundational principles of the purpose and expectations of the transition process. The team adopted the focus statement of: *Our mission statement is our compass and our philosophy is our roadmap*. Discussion at that time solidified what we knew, what we wanted to do, and how were going to achieve this.

May 18, 2022: Leadership Team meeting for further planning and information sharing. Beth Baxter provided information that she had submitted a revised System Enhancement Plan that included a Network Project Director who would serve in a key leadership position. Discussion occurred regarding how this position would work into the transition process and be the possible successor to the Regional Administrator.

May 20, 2022: The System Enhancement Plan was approved by the Division of Behavioral Health.

May 27, 2022: Executive Committee and Regional Governing Board Meetings - informed the Board of the retirement date and presented a draft transition process and timeline and obtained feedback/input that was incorporated into the plan. The goal was to clearly articulate the importance of pursuing an internal candidate to ensure continuity across the organization, Provider Network, and Region 3 area. This is in the best interest of Region 3. Region 3 employees who are in leadership positions have depth, tenure, vision, experience, and great respect across the region and state with our stakeholders.

June 8, 2022: All staff meeting to update employees regarding the status of the transition timeline and discuss the date(s) and purpose of employee focus groups. The transition timeline was presented and discussed.

June 9, 2022: Leadership Team Meeting. Beth Baxter presented the plan and timeline as presented to the Executive Committee and Regional Governing Board with their feedback. Beth B presented general functions of the Network Project Director and the next iteration of the Regional Administrator job description.

June 15, 2022: The search for a Network Project Director was opened internally. It was believed that the Network Project Director would, more than likely, be the successor to the Regional Administrator when Beth retires. This allowed for training, acclimation, and skill building opportunities for the Network Project Director to prepare for the Regional Administrator position. This has also allowed for the logical transfer of some current responsibilities of the Regional Administrator that will be better accomplished by the Network Project Director to improve effectiveness and efficiency for Region 3. At this time it was the plan to rehire for the Network Project Director once he/she moves into the Regional Administrator position. This position was cross-trained for the Regional Administrator succession plan in the future. This process of acclimation, cross-training, transfer of some job responsibilities was been extremely valuable.

July 1, 2022: Close the Network Project Director search.

July 6 & 11, 2022. Two Staff Focus Groups were conducted along with gathering information from individuals who were unable to attend a Focus Group. The purpose was to gather information and ideas from the staff at-large regarding the Regional Administrator transition process, organizational changes related to this transition, etc. Also, Tammy Fiala, Regional Recovery Specialist, conducted a focus group with individuals who were participating in rehabilitation and recovery services provided by Region 3 Network provider organizations asking the same type of questions as to what they believed to be important characteristics and skills of a successful Regional Administrator. The information gathered through these three focus groups was used to develop the interview questions and inform the selection process.

August 19, 2022: Conducted Network Project Director interview.

Finding the “right fit” has been extremely important throughout this process due to the significance of this new position for Region 3, the responsibilities of this position, the magnitude of the job, and the intent to transition this individual to the Regional Administrator position prior to June 30, 2023. The elements of the “right fit” include a person’s hard and soft skills, strengths, experience, motivation, attitude, ability to forge positive relationships, and values weighs whether or not a candidate is a good match or “right fit”.

August 26, 2022: Tiffany Gressley was offered the Network Project Director position and accepted.

August 26-31, 2022: Announced results of selection of Network Project Director internally and with external stakeholders.

September 2022: The selection of Tiffany Gressley for the Network Project Director created a vacancy at the Region as Tiffany Gressley served as the Prevention System Coordinator. Region 3 moved forward in the selection process for this position and hired within the organization.

September/October 2022: Due to the vacancy of the Prevention System Coordinator position, Region 3 opened internally first to gauge interest of current Region 3 employees; Shyanne Adams, Prevention Coordinator, applied, interviewed, deemed an excellent fit for the position and was promoted to the Prevention System Coordinator position. The Prevention Coordinator position vacated by Shyanne Adams was opened internally and externally. Region 3 hired Sarah Godejohn, an external candidate, as the Prevention Coordinator.

From Hiring of Network Project Director – March 31, 2023: Onboarded of Tiffany Gressley to her new position as the Network Project Director. Continued to review of the Regional Administrator job description and Network Project Director responsibilities and fine-tuned both job descriptions. Tiffany shadowed Beth B as needed. The review and revision of the timeline continued as needed.

March 1, 2023: Network Director (formerly Network Project Director) position was opened to prepare for Tiffany to transition to the Regional Administrator role. This was an internal search and, if needed, an external search would have been conducted. Applications were received from current Region 3 employees. Interviews were conducted during the week of March 27th.

April 5, 2023: The selection of new Network Director was announced. Suzanne Davis, Regional Housing Specialist, was offered the position and accepted.

April 24 – Present: The onboarding of Suzanne as the new Network Director began; however, Region 3 has continued the hiring process for the Regional Housing Specialist as the position is not yet filled.

April 3, 2023 – Present: Tiffany assumed additional RA responsibilities and began participating in RA meetings as part of her onboarding process.

June 5, 2023 – June 30, 2023: Tiffany was transitioned to the “Regional Administrator” position on June 5th to work collaboratively with Beth B. The onboarding process will continue through June 30th with Tiffany assuming the solo RA role on June 30, 2023 at 5:01 p.m.

June 8, 2023: Beth Baxter submitted her resignation to the Regional Governing Board Executive effective 5:00 p.m. on June 30, 2023.

June 9 – 13, 2023: Conducted Regional Housing Specialist interviews.

June 23, 2023: Formal appointment of Tiffany Gressley as the Regional Administrator by the Regional Governing Board during the Board meeting.

June 30, 2023: Transition process complete – It’s cake time!