



# NEWS

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## **FORMER DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION JOINS FLORIDA TAXWATCH**

**TALLAHASSEE** — Florida TaxWatch is pleased to announce the appointment of Betty Coxe as Executive Director of its Center for Educational Performance & Accountability (CEPA). CEPA, one of four Centers of Excellence at TaxWatch, is in a multi-year research initiative evaluating Florida's public education system toward improving student academic achievement.

"Betty Coxe has a long record of improving student academic achievement and accountability at all levels," said Dominic M. Calabro, Florida TaxWatch President & CEO. "She has taught at every K-12 level in a variety of subjects, including reading and mathematics. Together with her administrative and state policy experience, she brings a wealth of knowledge and know-how to our research efforts," said Calabro.

Coxe recently retired from the Florida Department of Education, after nine years in multiple posts, including Director of the Division of Public Schools, Deputy Chancellor, and Deputy Commissioner. As such, she chaired the team that led to the implementation of Governor Bush's A+ Plan for Education.

She led the teams charged with the implementation of the Grades 3-10 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and the school grading system throughout the state. Her research efforts included the compilation and analysis of multiple reports and evaluations essential to educational progress and reform.

Coxe was selected by the U.S. Department of Education as one of twenty-two educators throughout the nation to serve on the federal No Child Left Behind Act Negotiated Rulemaking Committee.

Prior to joining the state Department of Education, Coxe worked in the Martin County school system for a span of 20 years. Besides her teaching experience, she has served as both assistant principal and principal at the high school level. She has also been a district administrator, overseeing middle and high school educational programs and operations.

"Betty is a first class individual who has the best interest of Florida's students at heart," said Tom Slade, Chairman of the Advisory Committee to CEPA. "We look forward to her expertise in guiding our research

efforts to rethink, redefine and re-tool Florida's public education system and to do so in a fiscally efficient and accountable way," said Slade.

In her role as CEPA's Executive Director, Coxe will work with Slade and an advisory committee comprised of 36 of the best and brightest citizens in the fields of education, civic service, and business. The committee steers the Center's multi-year research initiative in providing answers to improve student performance in all 67 school districts in the state and ensuring a workforce capable of sustaining and increasing the quality of life for all Floridians.

Last month, Florida TaxWatch and CEPA came out with a series of research reports, recommending the components of a quality Universal Prekindergarten plan and the cost consequences of passing an inadequate plan. The Legislature later passed a plan that carried many of the TaxWatch recommendations. Its first plan, passed during last spring's session was deemed inadequate by TaxWatch and was vetoed by Governor Bush.

Coxe holds a Bachelor's Degree in English Education from the University of Florida, a Master's Degree in Reading from Nova Southeastern University, and additional graduate studies in School Administration and Supervision.

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**MEDIA NOTE: A black & white picture of Betty Coxe accompanies this release.**

Florida TaxWatch is a private, non-profit, non-partisan research institute supported by homeowners, small businesses, corporations, professional firms, labor organizations, associations, individuals and philanthropic foundations -- representing a wide spectrum of Florida's citizens. The organization is dedicated to improving taxpayer value, government accountability and citizen understanding and participation in their state and local government fiscal policies. On the web at [www.floridataxwatch.org](http://www.floridataxwatch.org)