

## Florida Tax Watch Annual Board & Membership Meeting

**Lunch Keynote Speaker**  
Thursday's Annual Membership Meeting Luncheon welcomed John Kirtley, a board member of "Step Up for Students," a major provider of the state's corporate income tax scholarship program.

Mr. Kirtley spoke about the strides being made by charter, virtual, and non-traditional schools alongside Florida's traditional public schools, and asked TaxWatch members to reconsider the definition of "public schools," and how these non-traditional schools fit in.

Among these non-traditional approaches are: magnet schools, charter schools, scholarship schools, dual enrollment, digital or online learning, home school-

ing, and the voluntary pre-K program.

Kirtley said that many districts across Florida are beginning to open these non-traditional institutions to public school students with great success, and can offer students more personalized solutions, which can lead to more successful students, and a more educated workforce.

According to Kirtley, a new definition of "public education" could be, "Using taxpayer dollars to educate children in the best way possible, customized to each child's needs."



Dominic M. Calabro with John Kirtley

This would allow parents to choose from a broad continuum of learning options, to find the one that best suits their individual child. As an example, in Duval County alone, there are 56 magnet programs, 18 charter schools, and 106 private schools serving Step Up for Students scholarship winners.

