

**PRESS****RELEASE**

Edward Pound | Director of Communications
202.254.7930 edward.pound@ratb.gov

Cheryl Arvidson | Assistant Director of Communications
202.254.7910 cheryl.arvidson@ratb.gov

BREAKING NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 23, 2011

Education Inspector General Kathleen Tighe Selected to Lead Recovery Board

WASHINGTON--Kathleen S. Tighe, the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Education and a strong proponent of transparency and accountability in government, was selected by President Obama today to serve as the new Chair of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board.

Ms. Tighe, a member of the Recovery Board since April 2010, replaces Earl E. Devaney, who is retiring on December 31 after nearly three years in the post.

"Under Earl Devaney's leadership, the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board became a model for government oversight—ensuring that Recovery Act dollars were distributed efficiently and effectively across the country. He will be greatly missed," said Vice President Joe Biden. "I'm confident that Kathleen Tighe will continue to hold the Board to the high standards set by Earl as the Recovery Act's top watchdog."

In a statement, Ms. Tighe said: "I am honored to have been appointed by the President to serve our nation's taxpayers in an additional capacity as chair of the Recovery Board. Ensuring that there is effective oversight, accountability and transparency involving Recovery Act dollars has been the hallmark of the Board's work to date, and I intend to continue that critical mission."

Ms. Tighe also serves on the Government Accountability and Transparency Board, an important component of the President's campaign against fraud and waste in government. The GAT Board, in a report issued to the President on December 14, concluded that the Recovery Board's transparency and accountability initiatives should be expanded throughout government.

A veteran of the Inspector General community, Ms. Tighe served as trial attorney in the Fraud Section of the Justice Department from 1988 to 1991. Later, she joined the Office of the Inspector General at the General Services Administration, serving as Assistant Counsel and then as Counsel for the Inspector General. In 2006, she became the Deputy Inspector General at the Department of Agriculture.

On March 17, 2010, Ms. Tighe was sworn in as the Inspector General for the Department of Education. She will retain that position when she assumes her new duties as Chair of the Recovery Board on January 1.

At the Education Department, Ms. Tighe has delivered on her long commitment to government openness and accountability.

(more)

The Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board was created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to oversee the expenditure of Recovery funds and bring transparency and accountability to the process. The Board consists of a chairman, Earl E. Devaney, and 12 federal Inspectors General. The Board runs the Recovery.gov website that provides information on the Recovery initiatives and spearheads an accountability effort that involves both federal and state investigators and enforcement officials.

Page 2

“The clarion call for accountability in education programs and operations at all levels of government has perhaps never been louder,” she wrote in her most recent semiannual report to Congress. “No individual or entity is above scrutiny. Accountability by Department employees, consultants, contractors, grantees, and program participants has long been a focus of OIG work and a tenet of the OIG mission.”

Ms. Tighe has focused on recovering funds misused by contractors and others. Her office participated in a multi-agency investigation of Accenture LLP, a contractor for the Education Department and other agencies, resulting in a \$63.6 million settlement. The settlement stemmed from allegations that Accenture violated the Anti-Kickback Act and the False Claims Act by receiving payments from subcontractors in exchange for influencing government agencies to award contracts.

In another matter, Ms. Tighe’s audit team’s work and a whistleblower complaint led to a recent \$57.75 million settlement with the student lender Nelnet and three other lenders to resolve allegations that they improperly inflated their entitlement to special allowance payments in violation of the False Claims Act.

Ms. Tighe’s staff also uncovered fraud involving Recovery Act funds. Work conducted by her office recently helped convict a former City University of New York employee who tried to scam more than \$1.5 million in Recovery Act grant funds. In addition, the Inspector General community has recognized her office’s Recovery Act audit work for achievement in protecting stimulus funds and enhancing the quality of Recovery Act data.

###