



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Wheeling Intelligencer
Editorial
December 8, 2015

Think your electric bill is high? How about \$64,338.58 during the past five months? That is how much the Union Local school district has paid American Electric Power to keep the lights on, furnaces running, etc., at its schools.

Given the number of buildings in the district, the amount does not seem out of line. But for those who wonder how their tax dollars are spent, it may be an eye-opener.

Want to know how much Union Local spends with out-of-state vendors (slightly less than 6.5 percent of the total)? How much it spends for professional memberships at the Belmont Hills Country Club (\$835)? Other details of how the school district spends your money?

Just get online and go to OhioCheckBook.com, the website operated by state Treasurer Josh Mandel's office. There, in the local government and schools area, an enormous amount of information about Union Local spending is available.

Mandel launched the site about a year ago, providing a wealth of spending information on state government. Now, it has been expanded to include local governments and school districts.

Union Local has become the first East Ohio school system to participate in the program. Statewide, just 38 districts are involved.

That will - and should - change quickly as more Ohioans seek information on school spending. For too long, it was available only by asking for specific details from education officials, then sifting through mounds of paperwork to get at the details.

Good for Union Local officials for making their information available quickly! Now, other East Ohio school districts should jump on the bandwagon.

####