



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 450 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

TOLEDO &ndash; Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the Lucas County and Toledo Public Schools online checkbooks on OhioCheckbook.com. In December 2014, Treasurer Mandel launched OhioCheckbook.com, which sets a new national standard for government transparency and for the first time in Ohio history puts all state spending information on the internet. OhioCheckbook.com recently earned Ohio the number one ranking in the country for government transparency.

Treasurer Mandel was joined at today's announcement by Toledo Public Schools Superintendent Romules Durant, Treasurer Ryan Stechschulte and School Board President Bob Vasquez. Lucas County is the first county in Northwest Ohio to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com and Toledo Public Schools is the first school district in Lucas County to partner with the Treasurer's office to post their spending online. Toledo is also the first metropolitan area to have city, county and school checkbooks online.

The following is a breakdown of today's local government checkbook sites:

Lucas County's online checkbook includes over 457,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$2.7 billion of total spending over the past six years.

Toledo Public Schools' online checkbook includes over 65,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$89 million of total spending over the past fiscal year.

"I believe the people of Lucas County have a right to know how their tax money is being spent, and I applaud local leaders here for partnering with my office to post the finances on OhioCheckbook.com," said Treasurer Mandel. "By posting local government spending online, we are empowering taxpayers across Ohio to hold public officials accountable."

"Toledo Public Schools is proud to be the first large school district in the State of Ohio to work with Treasurer Mandel and his staff to launch the online checkbook option to our community," said Toledo Public Schools Superintendent Romules Durant. "This step of transparency reinforces one of the district's core commitments of keeping our stakeholders informed and allows us to highlight the progress we continue to make each day."

On April 7, 2015 Treasurer Mandel sent a letter to 18,062 local government and school officials representing 3,962 local governments throughout the state calling on them to place their checkbook level data on OhioCheckbook.com and extending an invitation to partner with his office at no cost to local governments. These local governments include cities, counties, townships, schools, library districts and other special districts.

A large coalition of statewide and local government organizations have expressed support for OhioCheckbook.com and local

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government transparency, including:

- Ohio Municipal League
- Ohio Township Association
- Ohio Association of School Business Officials
- Buckeye Association of School Administrators
- County Commissioner Association of Ohio
- County Auditor Association of Ohio
- Ohio Newspaper Association
- Ohio Society of CPAs
- Buckeye Institute
- Common Cause Ohio

OhioCheckbook.com was launched on December 2, 2014, marking the first time in Ohio history when citizens could actually see every expenditure in state government. Since its launch, OhioCheckbook.com has received overwhelming support from newspapers and groups across the state and, as of January 4, 2016 there have been more than 424,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$496 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 135 million transactions. The website includes cutting-edge features such as:

- “Google-style” contextual search capabilities, to allow users to sort by keyword, department, category or vendor;
- Fully dynamic interactive charts to drill down on state spending;
- Functionality to compare state spending year-over-year or among agencies; and,
- Capability to share charts or checks with social media networks, and direct contact for agency fiscal offices.

In March 2015, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG) released their annual “Following the Money 2015” report and Treasurer Mandel earned Ohio the number one transparency ranking in the country for providing online access to government spending data. Ohio was prominently featured in the report after climbing from 46th to 1st in spending transparency as a result of Treasurer Mandel’s release of OhioCheckbook.com. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio received a perfect score of 100 points this year &ndash; the highest score in the history of the U.S. PIRG transparency rankings.

The Treasurer’s office is partnering with OpenGov, a leading Silicon Valley government technology company, to provide residents of Ohio the ability to view and search local government expenditures in a user-friendly, digital format. “Ohio is setting the standard for financial transparency on an unprecedented scale. We are excited to partner with the Treasurer’s office to bring world-class technology to communities large and small across the state,” said Zachary Bookman, CEO of OpenGov.

For more information or to view your local government website, visit the Local Government option on OhioCheckbook.com or click on:

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ToledoSchools.OhioCheckbook.com.

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