



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Builds for Statewide Government Transparency as OhioCheckbook.com Surpasses Over 200,000 Searches in the First Five Months

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

TOLEDO &ndash; Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel stood today with State Representative Kevin Boyce (D-Columbus) and Toledo Public School officials to announce the first partnership between the Ohio Treasurer's office and a Northwest Ohio school district to place their spending online at OhioCheckbook.com. Five years ago Treasurer Mandel and Representative Boyce ran against each other for State Treasurer and today they stood together to increase transparency in the Toledo Public Schools. Last year, 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 Superintendent of Toledo Public Schools Dr. Romules Durant, President of Toledo Public Schools Board of Education Bob Vasquez, Treasurer of Toledo Public Schools Matthew Cleland, Director of Finance and Accounting for Toledo Public Schools Eric Shreve and State Representative Kevin Boyce. Toledo Public Schools is the largest school district to announce a partnership with the Treasurer's office to place their spending information on OhioCheckbook.com.

On April 7th, 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.

"I believe the people of Toledo have a right to know how their tax money is being spent and I applaud local leaders here for partnering with the Treasurer's office to post their finances on OhioCheckbook.com," said Treasurer Mandel. "My vision is to create an army of citizen watchdogs who are empowered to hold public officials accountable."

"Toledo Public Schools began posting the district's checkbook online in 2011," said Bob Vasquez, president of the Toledo Public Schools Board of Education. "Transparency with our community is one of the Board's primary goals, and this new partnership with the State Treasurer's Office allows us to provide that openness in regards to the district's finances."

"We are excited to be the first school district in Ohio and the first public entity in Lucas County to partner with the State Treasurer's Office," said Dr. Romules Durant, CEO/Superintendent for Toledo Public Schools. "Our Treasurer's Office will work to prepare the template that other school districts will utilize to share their information with their community."

"I am supportive of any measure that strengthens transparency in government," said State Representative Kevin Boyce. "This resource will help promote integrity, uniformity and more importantly it will encourage public engagement and trust."

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

Ohio Municipal League  
Ohio Township Association  
Ohio Association of School Business Officials  
Buckeye Association of School Administrators

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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 May 8, 2015, there have been more than 200,000 total searches on the site. OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$408 billion in spending over the past seven years, including more than 112 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, 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 visit [OhioCheckbook.com](http://OhioCheckbook.com).

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