



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Mount Vernon News
By Pam Schehl
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MOUNT VERNON — Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel on Thursday proclaimed the Mount Vernon City School District “a leader in transparency.”

Speaking to a small group in the district’s central office, Mandel, along with district Treasurer Judy Forney, announced the participation of the district in OhioCheckbook.com, which is at no cost to the district.

“Mount Vernon Schools are the first in Knox County to go online,” Mandel said, “and also one of the leaders in Ohio with regard to transparency.”

OhioCheckbook is an online system which allows anyone to access the checkbook-level financial transactions of the district. Mandel demonstrated how to access the information available about the district. For example, one can pull up financial expenditures for the past few years in different spending categories and even find out details, such as how much a certain vendor was paid and for what purchase.

Mandel launched OhioCheckbook.com in December 2014 and in March 2015 the U.S. Public Interest Research Group gave Ohio the No. 1 transparency rating in the country for providing online access to government spending data.

“Why am I pushing for this?” asked Mandel. “Taxpayers have a right to know how their tax dollars are being spent. Modern technology, specifically OhioCheckbook.com, can help shine the spotlight on those expenditures. This program has bipartisan support and I really believe it is a way to empower the taxpayers to hold public officials accountable.”

Mandel said he is excited that Mount Vernon signed up and will use the district as an example to other Ohio schools.

“I’ll say, ‘Hey, if they can do this in Mount Vernon you can do it in Wapakoneta or Lima,’” he continued.

After the launch announcement, Mandel said he appreciates the cooperation given to him and his staff by Forney, Superintendent Bill Seder, the school board and other office staff.

“Everyone in Mount Vernon has been great to work with,” he added. “I appreciate the friendly relationship with the district.”

Forney told the News she is excited to have the data online and available to the public.

“I think it’s wonderful. We are proud of how we spend the school district’s money,” she explained, “and we are happy to share that with our community.”



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Forney said the putting data into the online system does not involve additional computational work for her office.

"I basically just ran a report of the data we already have, reviewed it to make sure it looked right and imported it to them, and they built the site," she said. "I also like that I can update it as often as necessary."

Mount Vernon's checkbook level data is available at OhioCheckbook.com and, in the near future, may be accessed through a hyperlink on the district's website.

North Fork Local Schools also joined the online checkbook site on Thursday.

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