

Central Count Station Plan for Tabulating Ballots for the March 3, 2020 Primary Election

Per section 127.007 of the Texas Election Code, this is the written Central Counting Station (CCS) Plan for the March 3, 2020 Primary for the orderly operation of the tabulation of election ballots. This plan will be made available to the public on request. The CCS is the location for optical scan ballots to be tabulated. For Fayette County, the CCS is located at the Elections Office in the Fayette County Courthouse, Suite 108.

Key Personnel of CCS

- CCS Manager who manages overall administration of station and supervision of personnel
- Presiding Judge who maintains order at CCS and administer oaths and receives ballot boxes.
- Tabulation Supervisor who operates the automatic tabulating equipment.
- Assistant Tabulation Supervisor who assists the Tabulation Supervisor with operating the automatic tabulating equipment.
- Clerks who assist with receiving ballot boxes from election precincts, moving ballot boxes through the CCS, opening ballot boxes for tabulating, preparing ballots for tabulation, and securing tabulated ballots. In addition the clerks who receive the ballot boxes under the direction of the Presiding Judge will validate the boxes are locked and sealed.
- Peace Officer for election security.

Date and Time CCS will convene

Section 87.0241 of the Texas Election Code dictates when an entity is permitted to count ballots. The Fayette County Elections Office, CCS Manager and CCS Presiding Judge will convene the CCS on Tuesday, March 3, 2020. Tabulation of election ballots will not occur prior to this date. The Early Voting Ballot Board will convene on this same day to begin the process of qualifying early voting ballots. These ballots will be tabulated using the DS450 Tabulation Machine. The Early Voting Ballot Board will also convene 1-9 days after the election to qualify provisional and late ballots.

Tabulation Team

Under Section 127.127, the Tabulation Supervisor and the Tabulation Team are the only ones authorized to operate the automatic tabulating equipment or handle ballots that are automatically counted. After the counting of ballots (or accumulation of vote totals) has occurred, the Presiding Judge of the CCS is responsible for preparing the precinct election returns. The Presiding Judge is required to sign the precinct returns to certify their accuracy. This team will also be responsible for completing the 2nd and 3rd Logic and Accuracy test for the DS450 Tabulator immediately before and immediately after the counting of ballots.

Reconciliation of Ballots and Voters

The CCS will reconcile the number of voters listed as voted against the number of ballots cast in one of three ways:

- **Early Voting By Mail** – CCS personnel will compare the number of ballots entered on the “Ballot Transmittal Form” from the Early Voting Ballot Board to the number of ballots tabulated Tabulation Team using the DS450 ballot tabulator.
- **Early Voting in Person** – CCS personnel will compare the number of early votes provided by the Early Voting Clerk using the early voting roster/combination form to the number of ballots tabulated by the Tabulation Team using the DS450 ballot tabulator.

- **Election Day** – CCS personnel will compare the number of voters on the Register of Official ballots to the total number of ballots tabulated by the Tabulation Team using the DS450 ballot tabulator.

Printing of Precinct Returns and Election Totals

The CCS Presiding Judge and CCS Manager shall work in coordination to ensure precinct returns are printed and certified (signed by the CCS Presiding Judge). The CCS Manager will release the unofficial election results (routinely throughout the night until all ballots have been counted) to the public, but not before the polls have closed at 7pm.

Election Results

The unofficial election results will be released as soon as available after the polls close. Alternatively, the Presiding Judge of the CCS, in cooperation Central Count Station Manager/Election Administrator may (if deemed necessary) hold the release of unofficial results until the last voter has voted. Results will be released by the Central Count Station Manager as follows:

- Uploaded to the Secretary of State via their online portal
- Posted on the Fayette County Bulletin Board at the Fayette County Courthouse
- Posted on the Fayette County Webpage
- And, per their request, released to the newspapers and radio stations by emailing, faxing, phone call etc.

Results of the elections will be canvassed no later than Thursday, March 12, 2020.

Poll watchers

Poll watchers are entitled to be present during the time the CCS is convened for the purpose of processing or preparing to process election results and until the election officers complete their duties at the station. The poll watcher must deliver their certificate of appointment to the Presiding Judge of the CCS and the Presiding Judge must countersign their certificate. The CCS Presiding Judge may stipulate the areas where a poll watcher can stand or sit to observe the counting activities.

Delivery of materials to the General Custodian of Election Records

After the completion of the counting of ballots both on Election Day and after Election Day, voted ballots, election records, and election equipment must be delivered to the Fayette County Elections Administrator who is the general custodian of election records.