

DIRECTIVE 2024-03

February 8, 2024

To: All County Boards of Elections
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: March 19, 2024 Primary Election Canvass Instructions

SUMMARY

This Directive outlines the procedures that boards of elections must follow when conducting both the unofficial and the official canvasses of the March 19, 2024 Primary Election.¹

To assist boards of elections with any problems, questions, or concerns on Election Day, the Secretary of State's office is staffed on Election Day from 6:00 a.m. until all boards report their unofficial results to our office. Boards should contact the Secretary of State's office using a dedicated telephone number that will be emailed before March 19, 2024.

All Directors, Deputy Directors, and Board Members must ensure that they are able to receive emails via their .gov address and other communications sent from the Secretary of State's office on March 19, 2024 (including after the polls close).

PART ONE - BALLOT QUANTITIES AND IMPORTANT REMINDERS

While voter participation in primary elections can vary, turnout in presidential election years often trends higher. Boards should be prepared to consider all factors, including other statewide and local contests, that might influence turnout within your county. Proper preparation ensures that boards are ready to meet the anticipated demand, including the availability of adequate ballot quantities.

When preparing for the March 19, 2024 Primary Election, the board must review [Chapter 5, Section 5.07](#) of the Election Official Manual ("EOM") regarding ballot quantities. As stated in the EOM:

Providing ballots is one of the most essential duties of a board of elections. It is not acceptable for a board to run out of ballots for an election. Likewise, it is unacceptable for a board, its director, or deputy director to delegate to any other

¹ Please note that counties holding the 6th Congressional District Special Primary Election will also follow the same procedures and timelines in this Directive.

person or entity the authority and responsibility for determining ballot quantities and machine allocation.

Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the board of elections, directors, and deputy directors to determine ballot quantities and machine allocation.

I. OPTICAL SCAN COUNTIES – ON DEMAND BALLOTS

In addition to the statutory minimum,² each board must review the number of ballots cast in the precinct in the 2008, 2012, 2016, or 2020 primary election (whichever election had the most similar circumstances taking into consideration projected turnout, contests of interest, recent voter registration activity, and other local factors that could impact turnout) for the Democratic and Republican parties, and provide to each precinct a stock of optical scan ballots a recommended twenty percent (20%) more than the number of the ballots cast in the precinct in the most similar election.

In calculating the number of ballots cast in a precinct in a past election, the board should be mindful of any changes made to the precinct's boundaries and/or the number of electors assigned to the precinct since the election and adjust the number of additional ballots accordingly.

Whenever a board plans to use ballot-on-demand printers for any voting-related purpose, it must ensure that it has on hand a sufficient inventory of printers, ballot stock, and printer consumables (e.g., toner, fusers, etc.) and that each precinct is provided an adequate supply. If precinct officials request additional ballots, the board must provide those ballots in a timely manner so that all qualified electors who want to vote can do so.³ Additionally, boards must pre-print additional optical scan ballots beyond these minimums to accommodate the projected turnout, local contests of interests on each precinct's ballot, and recent voter registration activity.

II. OPTICAL SCAN COUNTIES – PRE-PRINTED STOCK

If a board of elections pre-prints the total stock of ballots to be used at a precinct on Election Day or if the board utilizes ballot marking devices or a hybrid voting system, the board is required to provide at least one percent (1%) more ballots or stock for the printing of the ballots than the total number of voters registered in the precinct.⁴

III. DIRECT RECORDING ELECTRONIC ("DRE") VOTING MACHINE COUNTIES

Boards of elections using DRE voting machines as their primary voting system on Election Day must deploy at least one DRE voting machine for every 175 registered voters in a precinct or voting location. The DREs must be programed to allow any voter assigned

² [R.C. 3505.11](#).

³ [R.C. 3505.11\(B\)\(2\)](#).

⁴ [R.C. 3505.11\(A\)](#).

to the location to vote on any machine in the location. There must never be fewer than three DRE machines in any precinct or voting location. The three DRE machines are a minimum; boards must allocate additional DREs to a polling location beyond these minimums to accommodate the projected turnout, local contests of interest on each precinct's ballot, and recent voter registration activity.

These boards must provide sufficient supplies and equipment (e.g. paper for voter verified paper audit trail printers) so that voting may continue without undue delay resulting from missing or insufficient replacement supplies.

A board of elections using DREs as its primary voting system on Election Day must provide backup paper ballots for this election. Boards should determine the minimum number of optical scan ballots to provide for each precinct by multiplying the number of ballots cast in the precinct (public count) from the 2008, 2012, 2016, or 2020 primary election, whichever is most similar to the current set of circumstances taking into consideration projected turnout, contests of interest and recent voter registration activity, by fifteen percent (15%). This is the recommended minimum number of optical scan ballots to be provided for that precinct. Boards of elections may print ballots totaling more than the calculated minimum number.

IV. ALL COUNTIES

The ballot quantity and DRE allocation instructions are recommended minimums; boards must pre-print additional optical scan ballots beyond these minimum quantities or allocate additional DREs to accommodate the projected turnout, contests of interest on each precinct's ballot, and recent voter registration activity.

Boards of elections should keep in mind that electors may switch parties in the upcoming primary election. Additionally, boards of elections should be mindful that voter registration activity – both new registrations and changes of address – often surges immediately preceding the close of registration before an election. Boards of elections should take into consideration any increase in registration after the close of registration when determining ballot and precinct supplies minimum quantities.

No board of elections can rely solely on a ballot on demand printer to produce its stock of optical scan ballots on Election Day. A board of elections that utilizes a ballot on demand printer must ensure that it has a sufficient supply of blank ballot stock and toner on hand to print any additional ballots needed on Election Day beyond the requirements of state law and this Directive.

V. PROVISIONAL BALLOTS AND SUPPLIES

The board of elections is recommended to provide at least twenty percent (20%) more ballots and envelopes than the number of provisional ballots cast by party in that precinct at the 2008, 2012, 2016, or 2020 primary election, whichever is the most similar

election, considering the circumstances. Additionally, each board is recommended to provide to each precinct and/or polling location a stock of provisional ballot affirmation envelopes containing Secretary of State Form [12-B](#) that is greater than the number of provisional ballots being provided for this election. Additionally, any multi-precinct polling location must have a sufficient supply of Secretary of State Form [12-D](#).

VI. ELECTRONIC POLLBOOK REMINDERS

As a reminder, if a board of elections uses electronic pollbooks, the board must have a paper pollbook to serve as a backup for each electronic pollbook at each check-in station within a polling location. If the board's secondary method of checking in voters is by dividing the paper pollbooks alphabetically, then it is acceptable to have the backup paper pollbooks divided alphabetically. The board may decide to provide a full copy of the pollbook for each check-in station, but the board must develop a procedure to ensure a voter only receives one ballot. Boards of elections should consider the manner in which voters will be checked in to ensure accuracy and efficiency.

PART TWO - UNOFFICIAL CANVASS

The Unofficial Canvass of the March 19, 2024 Primary Election must be conducted on Election Night in accordance with state law⁵ and the processes and procedures outlined in [Chapter 10, Section 10.02](#) of the Election Official Manual. Each board must ensure all eligible Election Day and absentee ballots are tabulated and reported in its Unofficial Canvass. Boards must ensure all memory cards containing tabulated results are properly processed into its election management system. The board must have a document in place to ensure it meets this requirement (i.e., checklist or chart to check off when a memory card is processed).

The Unofficial Canvass must be conducted in full view of the members of the board of elections and any appointed observers, and the board must continuously count the ballots during the Unofficial Canvass.⁶

I. PROCESSING ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Boards of elections may begin processing (including scanning, but not tabulating) absentee ballots on February 21, 2024, the day after the close of voter registration. Boards must begin this process prior to Election Day to ensure the Unofficial Canvass includes all absentee ballots received by the close of polls on March 19, 2024. Ohio law prohibits boards from tabulating any absentee ballot prior to 7:31 p.m. on Election Day.⁷ If a court

⁵ [R.C. 3505.27](#) (counting regular ballots that were cast at precinct polling locations); [R.C. 3505.28](#) (ballots not counted); [R.C. 3509.06](#) (counting absentee ballots); [R.C. 3509.07](#) (rejection or challenge of absentee ballots); and [R.C. 3511.11- 3511.13](#) (uniformed service and overseas voter absentee ballots).

⁶ [R.C. 3505.27](#), [R.C. 3505.29](#), and [R.C. 3505.30](#).

⁷ [R.C. 3509.06\(F\)](#).

orders polls to remain open later than 7:30 p.m. on Election Day, boards will receive a directive with alternate instructions.

II. ELECTION NIGHT REPORTING (“ENR”)

State law requires boards of elections to provide election results for certain contests to the Secretary of State’s office.⁸ Election Night Reporting for the March 19, 2024 Primary Election will consist of results for following races:

- President of the United States;
- United States Senator;
- United States Representative to Congress;
- Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1-1-2025);
- Justice of the Supreme Court (Full term commencing 1-2-2025);
- Justice of the Supreme Court (Unexpired term ending 12-31-2026);
- Judge of the Court of Appeals;
- State Senator;
- State Representative; and
- Countywide Offices.

All counties must use the Secretary of State’s County Submission System (“CSS”) to provide summary results on all candidates that appear on the county’s ballot. The Secretary of State personnel assigned to each county board of elections and their contact information will be provided prior to March 19, 2024.

Although boards of elections will have access to manually hand-key the results at the time frames below, the upload tool allows each board to do this more efficiently and accurately by mitigating data entry errors. Boards must use the USB drives provided by the Secretary of State’s office to ensure the security of the ENR system and election management system (“EMS”). The USB drives must be used only once.

For the Unofficial Canvass, boards must provide summary-level election results, rather than precinct-level results. Boards will upload precinct-level results for the Official Canvass.

A. INITIAL REPORTING

Each board must log in to the CSS no later than 7:45 p.m. on March 19, 2024. A board must immediately notify the Secretary of State personnel of delays in completing any portion of the results reporting activity.

Each board must upload vote totals for absentee ballots by 8:00 p.m., unless the voting system is technologically unable to do so. If necessary, partial absentee results may

⁸ [R.C. 3505.27\(C\)](#).

be uploaded by the county. If a board uploads partial absentee results at 8:00 p.m., it must not double-report the initial upload. Contact the board's voting system vendor if you need technical assistance. The board must enter zero (0) precincts reporting when it uploads its absentee results.

B. REPORTING SCHEDULE

ENR begins with the first upload of absentee results by 8:00 p.m. and will continue uploading results at the assigned time throughout the night. After the board uploads its first summary election results, it must report on the following time increment assigned to the county:

1. "Half-Hour" Counties

Allen, Ashtabula, Athens, Belmont, Butler, Clark, Clermont, Columbiana, Cuyahoga, Delaware, Erie, Fairfield, Franklin, Geauga, Greene, Hamilton, Hancock, Jefferson, Knox, Lake, Lawrence, Licking, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Medina, Miami, Montgomery, Muskingum, Portage, Richland, Ross, Sandusky, Scioto, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Union, Warren, Washington, Wayne, and Wood Counties.

"Half-hour" counties must report at each half hour beginning at **8:15 p.m.** and every half hour after (e.g., 8:45 p.m., 9:15 p.m., 9:45 p.m., etc.), and must continue reporting until all precincts report results.

A board must notify the Secretary of State personnel if it will be delayed in reporting results. Once one hundred percent (100%) of the precincts have reported, boards must enter final vote tallies into its CSS. The board does not have to wait until its designated reporting time before reporting the final results.

2. "Hourly" Counties

"Top-of-the-hour" counties (e.g., 8:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m., etc.): *Ashland, Auglaize, Brown, Champaign, Clinton, Crawford, Darke, Defiance, Fulton, Guernsey, Highland, Huron, Logan, Madison, Mercer, Morrow, Ottawa, Pickaway, Preble, Seneca, Shelby, and Williams Counties.*

"Bottom-of-the-hour" counties (e.g., 8:30 p.m., 9:30 p.m., etc.): *Adams, Carroll, Coshocton, Fayette, Gallia, Hardin, Harrison, Henry, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Paulding, Perry, Pike, Putnam, Van Wert, Vinton, and Wyandot Counties.*

Note: "Bottom-of-the-hour" counties will report once at the "Top-of-the-hour" at 8:00 p.m. and then at the bottom hour as noted above.

"Hourly" counties must report summary election results at the top *or* bottom of every hour, as specified above, and continue until all precincts have reported. If the board reports more frequently, it must still report on the hour.

A board must notify the Secretary of State personnel if it will be delayed in reporting results. Once one hundred percent (100%) of the precincts have reported, boards must enter final vote tallies into its CSS. The board does not have to wait until its designated reporting time before reporting the final results.

C. SUPPLEMENTAL STATISTICS

Boards of elections must provide supplemental statistics upon reporting the county's last precinct or shortly thereafter. **Boards must promptly report vote totals, even if supplemental statistics are not yet available.** On Election Night, upload the election results, then submit the statistics when ready. The required supplemental statistics are as follows:

Counted Ballots

- Total Regular Election Day ballots cast and counted from Election Day precincts (do not include absentee).
- Total absentee ballots, including early in-person and by mail, counted.
- Total Regular Election Day and absentee ballots cast and counted as part of the Unofficial Canvass.

Outstanding Ballots

- Total number of outstanding absentee ballots (issued but not yet counted).
- Total number of provisional ballots (issued at the polls or the board office before or on Election Day).

III. SUMMARY AND FINAL REPORTS

Boards of elections must follow the procedures outlined in [Chapter 10, Section 10.02](#) of the Election Official Manual for reporting summary results and submitting final summary reports in even-numbered year elections. The required reports and forms (listed below) for the Unofficial Canvass as well as the instructions and deadline for submission will be provided to boards of elections via email before Election Day:

1. Unofficial Vote Total Summary Report;
2. Group Detail Report (if not included with Summary Report);
3. Write-In Report;
4. Most Populous Report(s) (when applicable); and
5. Signature Form.

In addition to the Unofficial Vote Total Summary Report submitted on Election Night, each board must print off the county results from the CSS via the "Current County Results" page and proof this report. The Unofficial Vote Total Summary Report, Group

Detail Report, **and** the Signature Form must be sent to Results@OhioSoS.gov. Instructions outlining this requirement will be provided separately. All final summary reports, and Group Detail Report must be transmitted to the Elections Division via email to Results@OhioSoS.gov.

On Election Night, once the Secretary of State's office receives, reviews, and compares the board's Unofficial Vote Total Summary Report and Group Detail Report, a Secretary of State staff member will contact the Director.

The Director and Deputy Director must not leave the office until Secretary of State staff contacts the Director to confirm that the board's reports have been received and reviewed to ensure the results match. The Director is responsible for releasing the board's staff.

IV. VOTE TOTALS FOR PRESIDENTIAL DELEGATES

Voters elect Republican candidates for president through both delegates at-large and congressional district delegates. Voters elect Democratic candidates for president through only delegates at-large. Therefore, only the results for the Democratic delegates at-large will be reported through the Election Night Reporting system. However, the Ohio Democratic Party's delegate selection rules allocate convention delegates according to each presidential candidate's results in each congressional district. Thus, the Ohio Democratic Party requests that vote totals for delegates pledged to Democratic candidates for president be centrally reported to the Secretary of State's office.

For both the unofficial and official canvasses, every board of elections must report the delegate vote total for each presidential candidate to the most populous county of each congressional district. The most populous county board of elections must report these vote totals to the Secretary of State's office via the same procedures as for any other multi-county office by Wednesday, March 20, 2024.

PART THREE - POST-ELECTION CURE PERIOD

I. DAYS AND HOURS

Each board of elections conducting an election must be open to the public on each of the four calendar days immediately following Election Day, and during the hours specified below, to allow voters to cure a deficiency on an absentee or provisional ballot, as provided for in state law:⁹

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Wednesday, March 20, 2024 | 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. |
| • Thursday, March 21, 2024 | 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. |
| • Friday, March 22, 2024 | 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. |

⁹ [R.C. 3505.181\(B\)\(7\)](#) and [R.C. 3509.06\(D\)\(3\)](#).

- Saturday, March 23, 2024

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

If a board of elections has no voters with a deficiency on their absentee or provisional ballot after Election Day (i.e., there is nothing *possible* to cure for any voter that cast a ballot in the election) or all deficiencies have been cured, the board may return to its normal operating hours for the remainder of the cure period.

II. AFFIDAVITS OF RELIGIOUS OBJECTION¹⁰

A provisional voter who failed to provide photo ID has four days after Election Day to either appear at the board of elections office to show photo ID or complete an affidavit of religious objection ([Form 12-O](#)). To cure a provisional ballot for lack of photo ID, it is not sufficient to provide a copy of the photo ID, the Ohio driver's license number or state ID card number, or the last four digits of the voter's Social Security Number. The voter must show photo ID (and not a copy) by the fourth day after Election Day. If the voter did not have a photo ID because of a religious objection to being photographed and the voter did not complete [Form 12-O](#) at the time they voted a provisional ballot, the voter must appear at the board office and complete the affidavit by the fourth day after Election Day (**Saturday, March 23, 2024**).

No later than 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 23, 2024, a board of elections must transmit the information in the completed affidavits to the Secretary of State's office, which then must consult the Bureau of Motor Vehicles' ("BMV") database to determine whether they issued a currently unexpired photo ID to that voter. The Secretary of State's office will complete this check no later than the seventh day after Election Day. The affidavit of religious objection is not valid if the BMV has issued a currently unexpired photo ID or if the last four digits of the voter's SSN provided on the affidavit do not match those digits in the Statewide Voter Registration Database ("SWVRD"). To compile the information for each voter, each board must supply the necessary data either by export from the voter registration system or completion of a spreadsheet that will be provided with instructions under separate cover.

III. EXAMINING AND COUNTING PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

Boards must follow the "Step-by Step Process for Examining Provisional Ballots" accompanying this Directive. Board staff, working in bipartisan teams, may begin examining provisional ballot envelopes the day after the election, as long as the board has adopted a provisional ballot policy allowing its staff to do so. The bipartisan teams may categorize provisional ballots into groups of like ballots (e.g., ballots that have been verified and eligible to be counted, provisional affirmations that are missing the voter's signature, etc.) for the board to consider. However, the board must not examine the provisional ballot affirmation of any provisional ballot cast by an individual who must

¹⁰ [R.C. 3505.181](#), [R.C. 3505.182](#), [R.C. 3505.183](#), and [R.C. 3505.19](#).

provide photo ID, complete an affidavit of religious objection, or provide additional information to determine the individual's eligibility until the individual does so or until the eighth day after Election Day, whichever is earlier.¹¹

It is important to remember that only the board members themselves can determine the validity of each provisional ballot. The board must, by a majority vote, determine whether to accept and count the provisional ballots in a properly-noticed, public meeting. No provisional ballot envelope may be opened, and no provisional ballot counted, until the board has voted on the eligibility of every provisional ballot cast in the election.¹²

IV. CURING ABSENTEE BALLOT DEFECTS

Whenever a board of elections receives an absentee ballot identification envelope that is missing required information or that contains information that does not conform to the voter's registration record, the board of elections must contact the absentee voter to provide an opportunity to supplement their identification envelope so the voter's ballot can be counted. The board must meet this requirement by issuing [Form 11-S](#) to the voter, according to the following schedule:

- [Form 11-S](#) must be issued not later than two business days after a "defective" absentee ballot identification envelope is received by the board from the start of absentee voting through the third Saturday prior to the election;
- [Form 11-S](#) must be issued not later than one calendar day after a "defective" absentee ballot identification envelope is received by the board between the third Monday and last Friday prior to the election; and
- [Form 11-S](#) must be issued on the same day that a "defective" absentee ballot identification envelope is received by the board of elections between the Saturday prior to the election and through the third day following Election Day.

When a telephone number or email address is on file with the board of elections, boards must use that contact information to quickly notify the voter about the deficiency on their identification envelope. The absentee voter must provide the necessary information in writing on [Form 11-S](#), either by in-person delivery or by mail by the fourth day after the election (**Saturday, March 23, 2024**).¹³

¹¹ [R.C. 3505.183\(G\)](#).

¹² [R.C. 3505.183](#).

¹³ [R.C. 3509.06\(D\)\(3\)\(b\)](#).

PART FOUR - OFFICIAL CANVASS

TIMELINE FOR COUNTING AND OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION

Due to recent changes made by the state legislature, boards of elections must begin counting cured absentee ballots and absentee ballots that arrive after Election Day no later than the fifth day after Election Day (**Sunday, March 24, 2024**). Board members and employees are prohibited from disclosing partial or final results of any contest in the election between the completion of the Unofficial Canvass and the certification of official results.¹⁴

A board must begin the Official Canvass no earlier than the fifth day after the election (**Sunday, March 24, 2024**) nor later than the fifteenth day after the election (**Wednesday, April 3, 2024**). Each board must complete its Official Canvass and certify no later than the twenty-first day after the election (**Tuesday, April 9, 2024**).¹⁵

III. INSTRUCTIONS FOR OFFICIAL CANVASS

Each board of elections must follow the instructions for pre-canvass activity outlined in [Chapter 10, Section 10.03](#) of the Election Official Manual. Boards must also follow the rules and procedures outlined in [Chapter 10, Section 10.04](#) of the Election Official Manual for conducting the Official Canvass. Each board must reconcile results with records from the pollbooks and voter registration system to ensure that only one ballot per voter is counted.¹⁶ This includes ensuring that all returned absentee ballots are entered in the voter registration system and reconciling the list of voters whose ballots were returned with the number of physical ballots returned.

IV. FORMS FOR OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION

After the Unofficial Canvass, our office will provide the forms for reporting official results. All certifications and reports must be signed by the appropriate board personnel before the board submits them to our office, another board of elections, or another public entity.

Each board of elections must submit the signature form to certify the Official Election Results, including the absentee and provisional ballot reports, to the Secretary of State's office.

A. CERTIFICATION AND REPORTING OF OFFICIAL RESULTS¹⁷

Each board of elections must complete and provide all of the following the day it

¹⁴ [R.C. 3505.183\(F\)](#) and [R.C. 3505.32](#).

¹⁵ [R.C. 3513.22\(A\)](#).

¹⁶ [R.C. 3505.32\(D\)](#).

¹⁷ [R.C. 3505.30](#).

completes its official certification and no later than **Tuesday, April 9, 2024:**

1. Official Vote Total Summary Report;
2. Group Detail Report (if not included with Summary Report);
3. Signature form;
4. Report forms;
5. Electronic turnout detail by precinct;
6. Statement of Votes Cast ("SOVC") report; and
7. Absentee and provisional ballot report.

Each board must submit these reports to Results@OhioSoS.gov as soon as the board completes its official certification. The Official Vote Total Summary Report must be clearly labeled "[County]'s Official Canvass," and it must contain *only* vote totals for that county. Boards must not delay submitting the official certification forms because of a potential recount. Every board must maintain a copy of each of its completed certification and report forms.

The board of elections for the most populous county of any multi-county jurisdiction or district must generate a separate report from its voting system, create a report outside of its voting system, or use a reporting form which will be provided after the Unofficial Canvass. This report must be clearly labeled "[County's] Official Canvass – Most Populous County." The report must include the total number of votes recorded for the office, question, or issue from each county in a multi-county jurisdiction and the sum total for all counties. The board must clearly mark the contest(s) for which a board is the most populous county to clearly identify it as a contest containing vote totals from other counties. The board must email the report(s) to Results@OhioSoS.gov.

State law requires the Secretary of State to publish a report on the number of absentee and provisional ballots cast and counted for the election in each county.¹⁸ Each board of elections must provide this data for absentee and provisional ballots. Our office will provide the reporting forms after the Unofficial Canvass.

B. CERTIFICATE OF OFFICIAL SUMMARY RESULTS FOR LIQUOR OPTION QUESTIONS AND LOCAL QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

Each board of elections must send a completed copy of Secretary of State [Form 126-B](#) to the Secretary of State's office via email to Results@OhioSoS.gov and a copy of the completed form to the Ohio Division of Liquor Control via email: localoption@com.ohio.gov or by mailing to the following address:

Division of Liquor Control
6606 Tussing Road
Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068-9005

¹⁸ [R.C. 3501.05\(Y\)](#).

The board of elections (most populous county only if it is a multi-county issue) must certify the results of an election on tax levies and bond issues to the following offices and agencies:

- The county auditor of each county in which the election was held
- The fiscal officer of the subdivision in which the election was held
- The Tax Commissioner of the State of Ohio via email at: DTE@tax.state.oh.us
- The Secretary of State

The board of elections of the most populous county must certify the results of an election on a school district income tax on Secretary of State [Form 125-A](#) to the following offices and agencies:

- The board of education that placed the issue on the ballot
- The Tax Commissioner of the State of Ohio via email at DTE@tax.state.oh.us
- The Secretary of State

PART FIVE - POST-CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

I. CERTIFICATES OF ELECTION

Each board of elections must follow the instructions for issuing certificates of election that are contained in [Chapter 10, Section 10.04](#), of the Election Official Manual. The candidate's name on the certificate of election should match the name as it appears on the ballot. The Secretary of State issues certificates of election for statewide offices, offices of Representatives to Congress, and offices of State Board of Education members. Certificates of election should not be issued before the expiration of the time by which applications for recounts may be made. Boards of elections may not issue a certificate of election in a contest for which a recount is requested, or conducted automatically, until after the recount is complete.

II. RECOUNTS

Before scheduling and conducting a recount, please review the procedures set forth in state law and [Chapter 11, Section 11.02](#) of the Election Official Manual. The deadline for a candidate or group to request a recount is five days after the certification of official results. A recount must take place no later than ten days after an application for a recount is filed or an automatic recount is declared.

The Secretary of State's office will provide the boards a spreadsheet along with the Official Canvass report forms to notify the Secretary of State of a recount.

If the recount to be conducted is for a multi-county jurisdiction, the Secretary of State's office will issue the notice of recount after receiving notice from the most populous county. Multi-county recounts will not be ordered until all counties in the district have certified their official results. If a recount changes vote totals, the board of

elections must submit a properly completed and signed amended certification and abstract to Results@OhioSoS.gov.

III. POST-ELECTION AUDITS

Boards of elections must perform a post-election audit after the March 19, 2024 Primary Election. When a board conducts an audit, the board must follow the procedures outlined in [Chapter 11, Section 11.03](#) of the Election Official Manual. Additional instructions will be provided after the Unofficial Canvass.

IV. VOTER HISTORY

All boards must upload voter history for the March 19, 2024 Primary Election to the SWVRD no later than 14 days after the board's official certification. Once voter history is transmitted, Secretary of State staff will compare the total ballots cast to the total number of voters participating in the election.

For purposes of assigning voter history, each board of elections must follow the instructions outlined in [Chapter 10, Section 10.04](#) of the Election Official Manual. The election name to submit the history for the election is **2024_MAR_PRIM**.

V. RETENTION OF BALLOTS

Because ballots for the March 19, 2024 Primary Election include candidates for election to federal offices, each board of elections is required by law to retain all ballots prepared for the election – both used and unused – for 22 months following the election.¹⁹ If the board uses a voting system and software that captures images of ballots as they are scanned by a high-speed scanner, those images may be subject to disclosure pursuant to a public records request and must be retained. Accordingly, consult with the county prosecuting attorney regarding the retention of those images.

If you have any questions regarding this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State's Elections Counsel at (614) 728-8789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State

¹⁹ [R.C. 3505.31](#) and [52 U.S.C.S. 20701](#).