



# SCHOOL CHOICE

How Does The

New School Choice Law

Impact Garland County?

## **New Arkansas School Choice Law**

**vs**

## **Garland County Federal Desegregation Agreement**

Life would be so much easier if everything was simply black and white, without shades of gray. However, things rarely are only black and white in the real world. The recent Arkansas Legislative Session passed a new law in response to the fact that the state's current School Choice Law, Act 609 of 1989, was declared unconstitutional in 2012. For most of the state, schools will be operating under a new School Choice Law in the upcoming school year.

There are some school districts, including those in Garland County, where the new law may or may not change what they have been doing with School Choice in the past. For districts and/or counties in the state that have been under Federal Court Desegregation Orders or Agreements, the Federal Court Actions will take priority over state law. Garland County Public Schools have been operating under such a Federal Desegregation Agreement for a quarter century. Therefore, what is going on in other parts of the state may be drastically different than what we are able to do in regard to School Choice.

At the current time, all seven Garland County Public School Systems are working together with the Arkansas Department of Education and local legal counsel to determine the appropriate status of School Choice in Garland County. We are taking School Choice Applications just as usual; however, we are somewhat in limbo on what actions in this arena will be accepted by the Federal Court. At this point, we are awaiting legal guidance on this matter. As soon as we have more definite direction and guidelines specific to the Garland County Federal Desegregation Agreement, we will update the information on this website.