

## TOP 25 COUNTY SCHOOL CHOICE MARKETS

(December 2020) Nearly 100,000 students attend charter, home or private schools, or are eligible to participate in a public school choice program, state Department of Education and non-profit records show.<sup>1</sup> The following 25 counties have the largest number of charter, home and private school students.<sup>2</sup> Most Arkansas public companies are based in one of the 10 largest markets.

#1	Pulaski County	26,162
#2	Benton County	12,601
#3	Washington County	11,164
#4	Garland County	3,168
#5	Faulkner County	2,421
#6	Sebastian County	2,390
#7	Baxter County	1,904
#8	White County	1,803
#9	Crittenden County	1,475
#10	Crawford County	1,445
#11	Boone County	1,434
#12	Saline County	1,430
#13	Mississippi County	1,420
#14	Craighead County	1,181
#15	Phillips County	1,070
#16	Lonoke County	1,041
#17	Independence County	781
#18	Greene County	759
#19	Pope County	726
#20	Jefferson County	686
#21	Sharp County	598
#22	Poinsett County	491
#23	Conway County	441
#24	Miller County	456
#25	Cross County	411

### Economic Strength & Top School Choice Markets

Publicly-traded companies are the backbone of a state's market-based economic system. Eleven Arkansas public companies have headquarters in one of the 10 largest school choice markets.

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<sup>1</sup> Arkansas Department of Education and Arkansas Non-Public Accrediting Association. The niche market (2020-21) includes 40,512 in charters, 27,563 at home, and 17,843 in private schools. About 13,000 are eligible for public school choice programs.

<sup>2</sup> Other counties: Carroll 407; Union 388; Bradley 386; Arkansas 378; Polk 346; Columbia 343; Hot Spring 334; Randolph 331; Logan 320; Cleburne 319; Madison 301; Lawrence 297; Grant 279; Stone 268; Van Buren 256; Johnson 240; Searcy 237; Franklin 205; Ouachita 174; Yell 173; Marion 170; Ashley 160; Fulton 138; Izard 132; Drew 131; Clark 129; Howard 127; Newton 121; Pike 120; Clay 118; Jackson 114; Montgomery 99; Hempstead 98; Cleveland 88; Perry 81; Scott 81; Nevada 68; Bradley 67; Little River 65; Lincoln 57; Prairie 55; Sevier 55; St. Francis 52; Desha 44; Chicot 43; Woodruff 42; Calhoun 36; Lee 28; Lafayette 27; Monroe 27; and Dallas 15.

(#1, Pulaski County) Bank of the Ozarks, Dillard's, Uniti;  
(#2, Benton County) America's Car-Mart, J.B. Hunt, Walmart  
(#3, Washington County) P.A.M. Transportation Services, Tyson Foods;  
(#5, Faulkner County) Home Bancshares;  
(#6, Sebastian County) ArcBest;  
(#10, Crawford County) USA Truck.<sup>3</sup>

### **Proximity to Higher Education**

A large number of post-secondary institutions are based in the 10 largest county school choice markets.

(#1, Pulaski County) Arkansas Baptist College, Philander Smith College, Pulaski Technical College, Univ. of Arkansas at Little Rock, Univ. of Arkansas for Medical Sciences;  
(#3, Washington County) University of Arkansas;  
(#4, Garland County) National Park Community College;  
(#5, Faulkner County) Central Baptist College, Hendrix College, University of Central Arkansas;  
(#6, Sebastian County) Univ. of Arkansas at Fort Smith;  
(#7, Baxter County) Arkansas State University Mountain Home;  
(#8, White County) Arkansas State University Beebe, Harding Academy;  
(#9, Crittenden County) Arkansas State University Mid-South.

The state Department of Education reports 473,004 students in Arkansas public schools in the 2020-2021 school year.

--Greg Kaza

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<sup>3</sup> Simmons First National is based in Jefferson County (#20) and Murphy USA has headquarters in Union County (#27).