



# Santa Ana Unified School District

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**Jerry Almendarez**  
Superintendent of Schools

April 17, 2020

Dear Garfield Elementary Families,

Thanks to your support in passing Measure I, very important changes are on the horizon in the Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD), and Garfield Elementary School is at the forefront.

Garfield is one of the first schools in the District to be modernized under California's School Facility Program. Under this state program, the state pays for approximately 60 percent of the cost of improvements to a school, with the remainder of the funds coming from local bond funds.

As part of this program, and in accordance with the District modernization cycle, Garfield will undergo \$5.7 million in campus enhancements in the coming months, including:

- Restroom modernization
- Construction of two new Kindergarten classrooms
- Creation of a new STEAM Lab
- Construction of a new lunch shelter
- Modernization of campus buildings over 25 years old
- Safety and security upgrades

In order to carry out this very important work, temporary adjustments will need to be made during the 2020-21 school year to ensure the safety of our scholars and staff during construction, and to minimize the disruption of classroom instruction time.

Beginning in the Fall of 2020, Garfield elementary school will be temporarily relocated to the nearby Walker Elementary School campus to facilitate and expedite construction. Transportation for all Garfield students will be provided to the Walker site in order to ensure a seamless transition and continuous access to their familiar school community.

Walker will be vacant and available to temporarily house the Gator community as part of a new district-wide school optimization plan, approved by the District, that maximizes General Fund dollars while at the same time creating stronger, more efficient schools.

As part of the plan, Walker Elementary and Roosevelt Elementary will be combined into one school community housed on the Roosevelt campus starting in the 2020-21 school year, with the goal of creating a single, more efficient campus to serve the surrounding neighborhood.

Garfield school administrators and teachers will remain unchanged during the transition period, and will continue to work with Garfield scholars at the Walker site. The recently renovated Garfield

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Wellness Center, located adjacent to Garfield Elementary, will remain open during this time of transition to continue providing much-needed services to the surrounding community.

It is anticipated that Garfield Gators will return to their original updated, modernized campus by early January 2021. We will provide timeline and construction updates throughout the process.

Communicating with our Garfield families about this plan, and the upcoming transition period, is of utmost importance to us.

I, together with the principal of Garfield Elementary, will be holding online town hall meetings with staff and parents to speak about the upcoming construction project. A list of Frequently Asked Questions and important phone numbers will also be mailed and emailed to all Garfield parents/guardians.

In addition, the District has also established an online forum for the Garfield community to share feedback about this transition using a tool called ThoughtExchange. ThoughtExchange may be accessed from any smartphone or computer, and it takes less than 2 minutes of your time to submit feedback. It can be accessed at: Link: <https://my.thoughtexchange.com/617679469>

We want to thank you for your patience and trust as we move forward with these plans to improve our ability to serve our students and be good stewards of public funds. We look forward to speaking with you about the scheduled projects in the coming weeks, and invite you to share your input on these very important decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Almendarez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jerry Almendarez  
Superintendent of Schools