



Dr. Laura Schwalm, Superintendent

Garden Grove Unified School District  
**Garden Park Elementary School**

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Gary M. Gerstner, Principal

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## Principal's Corner

The other day as my son was preparing to go to school, I mouthed the words “Good luck on your test”. Although he took these words as encouragement and unbridled support, I left the house pondering why I wished him good luck. Was the outcome of his upcoming assessment a result of “luck” or the product of a combination of numerous factors?

Overall, Garden Park Elementary School’s test scores have steadily increased. Is this a result of luck or multiple variables under our influence or control? I am of the opinion that our test results, both individually and collectively, are not a matter of luck but are directly linked to actions of four distinct groups.

The first group of people who have a tremendous influence on how our children do on any test is the teacher. At Garden Park, our teachers spend endless hours expanding their knowledge through professional development activities, collaborating with one another, and implementing well designed lessons that are filled with depth and complexity. You, the parent, is the second group of influence. Eating healthy meals, getting the appropriate amount of sleep, encouraging homework completion, regularly communicating with the teacher, and bringing your child to school on time are necessary actions that ensure an opportunity for academic success. The third group is our PTA. Without the assistance of our PTA, Garden Park would not have over 1,000 volunteer hours inside and outside of the classroom. Helping sort paper, filling folders, stapling papers, listening to children read, helping students take AR quizzes, and organizing the supplies for a classroom activity provides the teachers with additional time to spend teaching and responding to the specific academic needs of their students. Lastly, the fourth and final group is the student. Our children contribute to their test score through their daily actions inside and outside the classroom. Listening to the teacher during instructional time, asking clarifying questions, actively working on the assignments in class, and completing assigned homework under the supervision of an adult has a direct impact on any given assessment.

Each group plays an important role on any given testing day. The result of the test isn’t random but a fine intertwining of the interactions of these four groups. Together we make a difference in the academic life of our children.

When I got home from work that night I asked my son how he did on his test. He casually replied, “Dad, here is the test and I did my best.” After looking at the test, I grinned. The grade he earned was a result of the effort of his teacher, his mom, the PTA, and himself. Luck had nothing to do with it.

Sincerely,

Gary M. Gerstner, Principal

P.S. There will be no school on February 5, 12, and 15. February 5<sup>th</sup> is a Non-Student Day, the 12<sup>th</sup> is Lincoln’s Birthday, and the 15<sup>th</sup> is President’s Day.