



Grade 3 and Grade 6 EQAO Assessment of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics 2003–2004

Overview of Results



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Grade 3 and Grade 6 EQAO Assessment of Reading, Writing, and Mathematics 2003–2004

Introduction

This report contains an overview of the 2003–2004 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) provincial assessment in reading, writing, and mathematics for grades 3 and 6. It brings together the information regarding what EQAO has learned over the past year about student learning in Ontario. Copies of the full *Provincial Report* can be downloaded from EQAO's web site, which is located at www.eqao.com.

What is EQAO?

EQAO is an independent, arm's length agency of the provincial government that provides parents, teachers, and the public with reliable and valid information about student achievement. EQAO also makes recommendations for improvement which educators, parents, policy makers and others in the education community can use to improve learning and teaching.

EQAO conducts a range of province-wide assessments. The grade 3 assessment has been in place for seven years. It involves all students, occurs annually, and provides information on what students have learned in reading, writing, and mathematics. In 1998–1999, EQAO introduced an annual grade 6 assessment that measures student achievement in the same three subject areas.

These assessments provide both individual and system data on student achievement. Parents receive an *Individual Student Report* and schools and school boards produce local reports for parents and their communities.

What was the assessment?

The grade 3 and grade 6 assessments measure how well students have met the provincial expectations in *The Ontario Curriculum*. The grade 3 and grade 6 assessment covers knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and mathematics that students are expected to have acquired by the end of the school year. These two assessments were administered in May 2004.

In the reading assessment, students read a variety of materials including both fiction and non-fiction. Students were assessed on how well they could use various reading strategies and conventions and how effectively they could understand concepts, make inferences, and connect ideas.

In the writing assessment, students were asked to use a range of forms and to write for different purposes. They completed two pieces of written work. Students were assessed on how well they could use writing strategies and language conventions and how effectively they could understand assigned tasks, organize ideas and communicate with a reader.

In the mathematics assessment, students were asked to solve problems, apply concepts and procedures, and explain how they arrived at their answers. The assessments tested students' knowledge and skills in five curriculum areas of mathematics: Number Sense and Numeration, Geometry and Spatial Sense, Measurement, Patterning and Algebra, and Data Management and Probability.

Who participated in the assessment?

All Peel grade 3 (9,934) and grade 6 (9,884) students participated in the assessment during regular classes. Exemptions were permitted only where students would be unable to respond to the assessment in any way and/or where they would be adversely affected as a result of participation. Exemptions were made only with the written informed consent of the parent(s) or guardian(s). In specific circumstances, teachers were allowed to provide certain kinds of assistance to students with special needs – 16% percent of grade 3 students received one or more accommodations compared to 13% of grade 6 students. Two percent of Peel grade 3 students and 2% of grade 6 students were exempted in all three subject areas.

How was student work marked?

EQAO reports on student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics using a four-level scale. The four levels describe how well students performed in each subject area. EQAO has aligned its four levels of achievement to those of the *Ontario Student Report Card*.

Marking was done in July 2004 by specially trained principals and teachers. EQAO developed scoring scales by taking the four achievement levels established by the Ministry and applying them to actual student work. Markers used EQAO's scales to score student work. The scoring was monitored to ensure that it was objective, consistent, and reliable.

The Ministry of Education has set *Level 3* as the provincial standard for grades 3 and 6. *Level 1* identifies achievement that falls much below the provincial standard. *Level 2* identifies achievement that is approaching the provincial standard. *Level 4* identifies achievement that surpasses the provincial standard.

Some key messages about the EQAO assessments

- ✓ EQAO urges principals to ensure that school councils are fully informed about the assessment and are encouraged to play an active role in reviewing and updating the school's Action Plan for Improvement.
- ✓ EQAO encourages schools and school boards to include strategies in their Action Plans for Improvement that will help both boys and girls improve their achievement.
- ✓ Parents, educators, policy-makers, and the public should use the overall results to measure improvements in student achievement over time.
- ✓ EQAO encourages schools and school boards to be proactive in reporting results to parents and their communities.
- ✓ The achievement data must be interpreted in relation to contextual data that schools and school boards have gathered (e.g., size of school, ESL population, Special Education population, language spoken at home).
- ✓ Teachers and principals should use samples of student work, provided by EQAO anchor papers and Ministry exemplar documents, to help students and parents understand what work at Level 3 and 4 looks like.
- ✓ School boards should provide opportunities for teachers and principals to share assessment expertise and successful assessment practices.
- ✓ EQAO's four levels of achievement are closely aligned with those in the *Ontario Student Report Card*.

Grade 3 and Grade 6 EQAO Assessment Peel and Provincial Board Results 2003–2004

Background Characteristics

Grade 3 Students

- 9,934 Peel grade 3 students in 139 schools participated in the EQAO testing; 2% were fully exempt from the assessment in all three subjects.
- Of those students who took the test, 6% were identified as students with special needs (excluding gifted and enhanced learning students) and 27% were ESL or ELD learners.
- Fourteen percent attended three or more schools since grade 1; 92% attended kindergarten before grade 1; 23% were born outside of Canada; 3% were in Canada less than one year, 6% were in Canada one year or more but less than three years, and 13% were in Canada three years or more; 17% speak only or mostly a language other than English at home.

Grade 6 Students

- 9,884 Peel grade 6 students in 91 schools participated in the EQAO testing; 2% were fully exempt from the assessment in all three subjects.
- Of those students who took the test, 10% were receiving special education support (excluding gifted and enhanced learning students) and 11% were ESL or ELD learners.
- Forty-eight percent attended three or more schools since grade 1; 26% were born outside Canada, 2% were in Canada less than one year, 5% were in Canada one year or more but less than three years, 17% were in Canada three years or more; 10% speak only or mostly a language other than English at home.

Organization of the Report

Grade 3 and 6 student achievement results for Peel and the Province are presented in Tables 1 and 2 for reading, writing, and mathematics. The percent of all students performing at Levels 2, 3, 4 and Levels 3, 4 are presented for each subject area. Table 3 presents the results of the comparison of student achievement scores between Peel and the Province. Table 4 presents the results of the comparison of Grade 3 student achievement scores from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004. Table 5 presents the results of the comparison of grade 6 student achievement scores from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004.

Table 6 presents Peel gender comparisons for grades 3 and 6 and Table 7 presents Peel gender gap analysis from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004. Table 8 presents Peel ESL five year comparisons for grade 3 and Table 9 presents the five year ESL results for grade 6. Table 10 presents Peel Special Education five year comparisons for grade 3 and Table 11 presents the five year trends for grade 6. Table 12 presents a comparison between Peel and the province of the grade 3 French Immersion student achievement scores.

Student Achievement Reporting

Achievement results in this report are expressed as the number of students achieving at each level as a percentage of all of the students in the grade, including students who were exempted, those who took part in the assessment but did not provide enough information for their responses to be scored, and students who did not have enough information for Level 1.

This is EQAO's primary method of reporting because publicly funded schools are accountable for the achievement and progress of all students. Overall results are also reported for all students who participated in the assessment, under the category participating students.

The overall achievement results in reading, writing, and mathematics reported for both the Peel Board and the province may not add to 100%, due to rounding errors.

TABLE 1

EQAO 2003–2004 Results: Peel and Provincial Comparisons - Grade 3

(All students - Includes Exemption, No Data, Not Enough Information to Score, Not Enough Evidence for Level 1 Categories)

	Exempt		No Data		Not Enough Information to Score		Not Enough Evidence for Level 1		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4	
	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel
Reading	6%	3%	1%	1%	6%	6%	1%	1%	6%	6%	27%	26%	47%	49%	6%	8%
Writing	5%	2%	1%	1%	3%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	31%	32%	49%	50%	9%	11%
Mathematics	5%	2%	1%	1%	3%	3%	<1%	<1%	2%	2%	25%	23%	52%	53%	13%	16%

All Students¹

	Levels 2, 3, 4 ¹		Levels 3, 4 ¹	
	Province	Peel	Province	Peel
Reading	80%	83%	54%	57%
Writing	89%	93%	58%	61%
Mathematics	90%	92%	64%	69%

When compared to the province:

- Peel students in grade 3 scored above the provincial standard in Levels 2, 3, 4 and Levels 3, 4, for reading, writing, and mathematics.

¹Due to rounding errors, these percentages may not be the sum of Levels 2,3,4 and Levels 3,4 as noted in the above table.

TABLE 2

EQAO 2003–2004 Results: Peel and Provincial Comparisons - Grade 6

(All students - Includes Exemption, No Data, Not Enough Information to Score, Not Enough Evidence for Level 1 Categories)

	Exempt		No Data		Not Enough Information to Score		Not Enough Evidence for Level 1		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4	
	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel	Province	Peel
Reading	4%	2%	1%	<1%	5%	5%	<1%	<1%	6%	6%	26%	25%	49%	49%	9%	11%
Writing	4%	2%	1%	<1%	3%	2%	<1%	<1%	4%	4%	34%	34%	45%	46%	9%	10%
Mathematics	4%	2%	1%	<1%	4%	4%	<1%	<1%	6%	7%	27%	28%	44%	45%	13%	14%

All Students¹

	Levels 2, 3, 4 ¹		Levels 3, 4 ¹	
	Province	Peel	Province	Peel
Reading	84%	85%	58%	60%
Writing	88%	90%	54%	56%
Mathematics	84%	87%	57%	59%

When compared to the province:

- Peel students in grade 6 scored above the provincial standard in Levels 2, 3, 4 and Levels 3, 4, for reading, writing, and mathematics.

¹Due to rounding errors, these percentages may not be the sum of Levels 2,3,4 and Levels 3,4 as noted in the above table.

TABLE 3**EQAO 2003–2004 Results: Peel and Provincial Comparisons - Grade 3 and 6**

(All students - Includes Exemption, No Data, Not Enough Information to Score, Not Enough Evidence for Level 1 Categories)

	GRADE 3			GRADE 6		
	Levels 3, 4			Levels 3, 4		
	Province	Peel		Province	Peel	
	Comparison		Comparison			
Reading	54%	57%	+3%	58%	60%	+2%
Writing	58%	61%	+3%	54%	56%	+2%
Mathematics	64%	69%	+5%	57%	59%	+2%

When compared to the province:

- Peel students in grade 3 scored above the Provincial standard in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Peel students in grade 6 scored above the Provincial standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

For Grade 3 (Levels 3,4)*Peel students scored:*

3% higher in reading

3% higher in writing

5% higher in mathematics

For Grade 6 (Levels 3,4)*Peel students scored:*

2% higher in reading

2% higher in writing

2% higher in mathematics

TABLE 4

EQAO 2003–2004 Results:

Peel Comparisons of Change in Scores from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004 School Years - Grade 3

(All students - Includes Exemption, No Data, Not Enough Information to Score, Not Enough Evidence for Level 1 Categories)

Levels 3, 4

	1999– 2000	2000– 2001	2001– 2002	2002– 2003	2003– 2004	Previous Year Comparison	5-year Comparison
Reading	58%	57%	56%	53%	57%	+4%	–1%
Writing	57%	58%	60%	58%	61%	+3%	+4%
Mathematics	67%	70%	67%	62%	69%	+7%	+2%

When compared to last year's results (2002–2003):

- Peel students scored 4% higher in 2003–2004 for reading when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel students scored 3% higher in 2003–2004 for writing when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel students scored 7% higher in 2003–2004 for mathematics when compared to 2002–2003.

When compared to 1999–2000 results (5 year trends), Peel students scored:

- 1% lower in 2003–2004 for reading
- 4% higher in 2003–2004 for writing
- 2% higher in 2003–2004 for mathematics

TABLE 5**EQAO 2003–2004 Results:****Peel Comparisons of Change in Scores from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004 School Years - Grade 6**

(All students - Includes Exemption, No Data, Not Enough Information to Score, Not Enough Evidence for Level 1 Categories)

Levels 3, 4

	1999– 2000	2000– 2001	2001– 2002	2002– 2003	2003– 2004	Previous Year Comparison	5 Year Comparison
Reading	58%	60%	58%	58%	60%	+2%	+2%
Writing	53%	55%	54%	55%	56%	+1%	+3%
Mathematics	59%	57%	55%	55%	59%	+4%	0%

When compared to last year's results (2002–2003):

- Peel students scored 2% higher in 2003–2004 for reading when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel students scored 1% higher in 2003–2004 for writing when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel students scored 4% higher in 2003–2004 for mathematics when compared to 2002–2003.

When compared to 1999–2000 results (five year trends), Peel students scored:

- 2% higher in 2003–2004 for reading
- 3% higher in 2003–2004 for writing
- the same in 2003–2004 for mathematics

TABLE 6

EQAO 2003–2004 Results: Peel Gender Comparisons - Grade 3 and Grade 6

(All students - Includes Exemption, No Data, Not Enough Information to Score, Not Enough Evidence for Level 1 Categories)

	GRADE 3			GRADE 6		
	Boys	Girls	Comparison	Boys	Girls	Comparison
Reading	52%	63%	+11%	54%	67%	+13%
Writing	53%	70%	+17%	48%	65%	+17%
Mathematics	69%	70%	+1%	58%	61%	+3%

When comparing the results of Peel boys and girls:

- Peel girls in grade 3 scored above boys in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Peel girls in grade 6 scored above boys in reading, writing and mathematics.

For Grade 3 (Levels 3, 4)

Peel girls scored:

11% higher than boys in reading

17% higher than boys in writing

1% higher than boys in mathematics

For Grade 6 (Levels 3, 4)

Peel girls scored:

13% higher than boys in reading

17% higher than boys in writing

3% higher than boys in mathematics

TABLE 7**Peel Gender Gap Analysis - Grade 3 and Grade 6
Extent to which Girls Outperform Boys in Levels 3, 4**

		1999– 2000	2000– 2001	2001– 2002	2002– 2003	2003– 2004
	Reading	+12%	+11%	+10%	+12%	+11%
Grade 3	Writing	+14%	+14%	+18%	+16%	+17%
	Mathematics	+2%	+2%	0%	+2%	+1%
	Reading	+18%	+15%	+17%	+13%	+13%
Grade 6	Writing	+20%	+20%	+22%	+18%	+17%
	Mathematics	+6%	+2%	+2%	+3%	+3%

When comparing the results of Peel boys and girls:

- Girls outperform boys in all test areas in grades 3 and 6 every year of the assessment.
- For both grades 3 and 6, the gender gap in achievement is largest for reading and writing and smallest for mathematics (1% grade 3; 3% grade 6).
- The gender gap in achievement in each test area since 1999–2000, within grade 3 and grade 6, has remained consistent over the last 5 years.

TABLE 8**EQAO 2003–2004 Results:****Peel Comparisons of Change in ESL Scores from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004 School Years - Grade 3****Levels 3, 4**

	1999– 2000	2000– 2001	2001– 2002	2002– 2003	2003– 2004	Previous Year Comparison	5-year Comparison
Reading	28%	32%	32%	33%	44%	+11%	+16%
Writing	30%	37%	39%	42%	50%	+8%	+20%
Mathematics	46%	56%	50%	51%	61%	+10%	+15%

When compared to last year's results (2002–2003):

- Peel ESL students scored 11% higher in 2003–2004 for reading when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel ESL students scored 8% higher in 2003–2004 for writing when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel ESL students scored 10% higher in 2003–2004 for mathematics when compared to 2002–2003.

When compared to 1999–2000 results (five year trends), Peel ESL students scored:

- 16% higher in 2003–2004 for reading
- 20% higher in 2003–2004 for writing
- 15% higher in 2003–2004 for mathematics

TABLE 9

EQAO 2003–2004 Results:

Peel Comparisons of Change in ESL Scores from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004 School Years - Grade 6

Levels 3, 4

	1999– 2000	2000– 2001	2001– 2002	2002– 2003	2003– 2004	Previous Year Comparison	5-year Comparison
Reading	22%	21%	27%	34%	41%	+7%	+19%
Writing	18%	20%	25%	30%	35%	+5%	+17%
Mathematics	32%	31%	37%	43%	49%	+6%	+17%

When compared to last year's results (2002–2003):

- Peel ESL students scored 7% higher in 2003–2004 for reading when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel ESL students scored 5% higher in 2003–2004 for writing when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel ESL students scored 6% higher in 2003–2004 for mathematics when compared to 2002–2003.

When compared to 1999–2000 results (five year trends), Peel ESL students scored:

- 19% higher in 2003–2004 for reading
- 17% higher in 2003–2004 for writing
- 17% higher in 2003–2004 for mathematics

TABLE 10**EQAO 2003–2004 Results:****Peel Comparisons of Change in Special Education Scores from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004 School Years - Grade 3****Levels 3, 4**

	1999– 2000	2000– 2001	2001– 2002	2002– 2003	2003– 2004	Previous Year Comparison	5-year Comparison
Reading	17%	18%	22%	19%	26%	+7%	+9%
Writing	14%	17%	18%	16%	14%	–2%	0%
Mathematics	30%	34%	36%	31%	44%	+13%	+14%

When compared to last year's results (2002–2003):

- Peel Special Education students scored 7% higher in 2003–2004 for reading when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel Special Education students scored 2% lower in 2003–2004 for writing when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel Special Education students scored 13% higher in 2003–2004 for mathematics when compared to 2002–2003.

When compared to 1999–2000 results (five year trends), Peel Special Education students scored:

- 9% higher in 2003–2004 for reading
- the same for writing
- 14% higher in 2003–2004 for mathematics

TABLE 11**EQAO 2003–2004 Results:****Peel Comparisons of Change in Special Education Scores from 1999–2000 to 2003–2004 School Years - Grade 6****Levels 3, 4**

	1999–2000	2000–2001	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	Previous Year Comparison	5-year Comparison
Reading	16%	37%	16%	20%	20%	0%	+4%
Writing	13%	32%	13%	13%	11%	-2%	-2%
Mathematics	19%	37%	16%	20%	22%	+2%	+3%

When compared to last year's results (2002–2003):

- Peel Special Education students the same in 2003–2004 for reading when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel Special Education students scored 2% lower in 2003–2004 for writing when compared to 2002–2003.
- Peel Special Education students scored 2% higher in 2003–2004 for mathematics when compared to 2002–2003.

When compared to 1999–2000 results (five year trends), Peel Special Education students scored:

- 4% higher in 2003–2004 for reading
- 2% lower in 2003–2004 for writing
- 3% higher in 2003–2004 for mathematics

TABLE 12

EQAO 2003–2004 Results:

Comparisons for Peel and Provincial: French Immersion Students * - Grade 3

(All students - Includes Exemption, No Data, Not Enough Information to Score, Not Enough Evidence for Level 1 Categories)

	Levels 3, 4		
	Provincial French Immersion Students	Peel French Immersion Students	Comparison
Reading	59%	61%	+2%
Writing	66%	70%	+4%
Mathematics	67%	70%	+3%

* These results include French Immersion students who wrote the reading, writing, and mathematics components of the assessment in English.

When compared to the province:

- Peel French Immersion students in grade 3 scored higher than Provincial French Immersion students (who wrote the test in English) for reading, writing, and mathematics.

Peel French Immersion students scored:

- 2% higher in reading
- 4% higher in writing
- 3% higher in mathematics

Summary of Results, 2003–2004

1. Peel and Provincial Results

- Peel grade 3 students scored above the provincial standard in reading (+3%), writing (+3%), and mathematics (+5%)
- Peel grade 6 students scored above the provincial standard in reading (+2%), writing (+2%), and mathematics (+2%)

2. Yearly Comparisons (Peel)

- Grade 3 students scored 4% higher in reading when compared to last year
- Grade 3 students scored 3% higher in writing when compared to last year
- Grade 3 students scored 7% higher in mathematics when compared to last year
- Grade 6 students scored 2% higher in reading when compared to last year
- Grade 6 students scored 1% higher in writing when compared to last year
- Grade 6 students scored 4% higher in mathematics when compared to last year

3. Five Year Comparisons (Grade 3)

- Grade 3 students scored 1% lower in reading than in 1999–2000
- Grade 3 students scored 4% higher in writing than in 1999–2000
- Grade 3 students scored 2% higher in mathematics than in 1999–2000

Five Year Comparisons (Grade 6)

- Grade 6 students scored 2% higher in reading than in 1999–2000
- Grade 6 students scored 3% higher in writing than in 1999–2000
- Grade 6 students' mathematics results were identical to 1999–2000

4. Gender (Peel)

- Grade 3 girls scored significantly higher than boys in reading (+11%) and writing (+17%)
- Grade 3 girls scored about the same as boys in mathematics (+1%)
- Grade 6 girls scored significantly higher than boys in reading (+13%) and writing (+17%)
- Grade 6 girls scored slightly higher than boys in mathematics (+3%)

Gender Gap Analysis

- Girls outperform boys in all test areas in both grades
- The gender gap in achievement is largest for reading and writing in both grades 3 and 6
- The smallest gender gap occurs in mathematics for both grade 3 and grade 6 students
- The gender gap in achievement in each test area since 1997–1998, within grade 3 and grade 6, has remained the same

5. ESL Yearly Comparisons (Peel)

- Grade 3 ESL students scored 11% higher in reading when compared to last year
- Grade 3 ESL students scored 8% higher in writing when compared to last year
- Grade 3 ESL students scored 10% higher in mathematics when compared to last year
- Grade 6 ESL students scored 7% higher in reading when compared to last year
- Grade 6 ESL students scored 5% higher in writing when compared to last year
- Grade 6 ESL students scored 6% higher in mathematics when compared to last year

6. ESL Five Year Comparisons (Peel)

- Grade 3 ESL students scored 16% higher in reading than in 1999–2000
- Grade 3 ESL students scored 20% higher in writing than in 1999–2000
- Grade 3 ESL students scored 15% higher in mathematics than in 1999–2000
- Grade 6 ESL students scored 19% higher in reading than in 1999–2000
- Grade 6 ESL students scored 17% higher in writing than in 1999–2000
- Grade 6 ESL students scored 17% higher in mathematics than in 1999–2000

7. Special Education Yearly Comparisons (Peel)

- Grade 3 Special Education students scored 7% higher in reading when compared to last year
- Grade 3 Special Education students scored 2% lower in writing when compared to last year
- Grade 3 Special Education students scored 13% higher in mathematics when compared to last year
- Grade 6 Special Education students' results in reading were identical to 1999–2000
- Grade 6 Special Education students scored 2% lower in writing when compared to last year
- Grade 6 Special Education students scored 2% higher in mathematics when compared to last year

8. Special Education Five Year Comparisons (Peel)

- Grade 3 Special Education students scored 9% higher in reading than in 1999–2000
- Grade 3 Special Education students' results in writing were identical to 1999–2000
- Grade 3 Special Education students scored 14% higher in mathematics than in 1999–2000
- Grade 6 Special Education students scored 4% higher in reading than in 1999–2000
- Grade 6 Special Education students scored 2% lower in writing than in 1999–2000
- Grade 6 Special Education students scored 3% higher in mathematics than in 1999–2000

9. French Immersion (Peel) (Levels 3,4)

- Peel French Immersion students in Grade 3 (who wrote the test in English) scored higher than Provincial French Immersion students for reading (+2%), writing (+4%), and mathematics (+3%)

EQAO Key Recommendations

EQAO recommends that school boards, school administrators and teachers continue to do the following:

1) Plan and Use Information

- Gather and analyze data from the EQAO results and from class, school and board sources to set literacy and numeracy goals and develop improvement plans at the board and school levels.
- Track student data over time to inform teacher practice.

2) Build Capacity and Expertise

- Analyze the assessment data and plan to address areas in which students have not adequately mastered the skills.
- Encourage literacy and numeracy committees and teachers across grades and subjects to share effective instructional practices.

3) Collaborate with Community Partners

- Connect with the community, including parents and school councils, to support student learning.