

Bridges Elementary Program

5418 Chapel Hill Road

Raleigh, NC 27607

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The Bridges Program is a school-based assessment/intervention program in the Wake County Public School System. The mission of Bridges is ***"to provide an alternative therapeutic environment that allows elementary students with significant unmet emotional/behavioral needs to progress academically and behaviorally.*** Bridges serves students in elementary school, grades K through 5, who are experiencing difficulty with academic, emotional, and behavioral adjustment in their current school programs. Bridges also serves as a step-down for some students from residential programs such as hospitals and Wright School. Common student characteristics may include: low academic performance, lack of intrinsic motivation, poor self-esteem, high absenteeism, aggression, inappropriate/irresponsible behavior, and poor self-control.

The number of students attending Bridges varies during the school year as student's transition to appropriate educational settings and as new students are referred and accepted. Bridges can serve up to 50 students at one time.

Bridges provides academic, behavioral, and social skills instruction for students as well as individual and/or group counseling as needed. The goal is to help students learn more successful behaviors that can generalize to other educational settings and to the community at large.

Families are strongly encouraged to become involved with the Bridges team through open houses, conferences and collaboration with other agencies, family counseling, and parent group meetings as appropriate. The aim of family involvement is to enhance and strengthen family life and problem-solving skills in order that the student receives support necessary to be successful in the home, school, and community.

Bridges provides support for schools in the form of regularly scheduled meetings, visits to Bridges and base schools, substitutions in teachers' classrooms (so that teachers may attend meetings and visit students at Bridges), crisis intervention, and consultation services.

Students are primarily referred by schools. A referral packet is compiled by the school soliciting input from school staff, parents, and

agencies working with or knowledgeable about the student. A representative from the referring school presents the student to a committee comprised of representatives from Special Programs, Guidance and Social Work, Mental Health, principals of elementary schools, and Bridges. The referral committee looks at **services or lack of services, frequency/intensity/duration of behaviors, interventions tried at school, and what the goals of the student would be** while at Bridges when considering a referral. Once a student is accepted, records are reviewed and an intake meeting is held. Subsequent meetings are held during the student's stay at Bridges to discuss progress, evaluation results, and to modify/change interventions as needed. If a student is not accepted, the referral committee will make suggestions as to other interventions to try. A school can always refer a student again.

Staff at Bridges includes a director, lead teacher, secretary, teaching staff (teachers and teacher assistants), psychologist, social worker, liaisons, and crisis assistants. Bridges also has PE, media, music, and art teachers each one day a week.