



Three sixth-graders are telling finishing fifth-grade class what to expect next year.

Bridges: A Landmark Transition Program at Nottingham School

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Alerted by the last issue of *Knightly News*, June 22, 2022, this reporter learned about the Nottingham School's Bridges program. Being curious, he interviewed one of the program's two school guidance counselors, Laura Wheeler about it on June 28, 2022. She, the guidance counselor for grades 5 through 8, and Magna O'Brien, grades K through 4, run this program.

Here is what I found. Ten years ago, it was recognized that, at the end of the school year, the transition to next year's higher-level class produced anxiety in many children. What to do? The guidance counselors developed a plan where some students currently in the class would tell the incoming pupils about their class experiences. For example, as in the above picture, current 6<sup>th</sup> graders informed those about to enter it next year what to expect. Then as of now, this preparation makes students less apprehensive about the change. This is also part of the school's guidance department to be 80% pro-active and 20% reactive.

Here is how it works. The current class teacher selects three of that room's most successful students to be the informing panel. Then the three along with the guidance counselor for that grade meet for 45 minutes with the next year's incoming class. They talk about their experiences and answer questions. As Wheeler pointed out this program actually has two neat outcomes. It rewards the selected panel students for demonstrated leadership and helping the incoming students in the transition.

Again, what a neat idea Nottingham School. Have a great vacation.

