

Ward Students Get the Feel of Sensory Taekwondo

Students in Joyce Kinches and Lauren Cesa's classes at William B. Ward Elementary School are enjoying a six-week session of Sensory Taekwondo, which involves therapeutic mind-body activities that stimulate the brain, improving balance, muscle strength, coordination, self-awareness, executive functions, and working memory.

The classes, conducted by Sensory Taekwondo creator, Dr. Kerry Escamilla, is a breakthrough martial arts program custom-designed around each child's neurological requirements and needs. The program combines neuroscience and martial arts and is extracted from cutting-edge neurological studies that incorporate movement exercise to help create healthier pathways in the brain. "It is so beneficial to my students because it helps them to have more control over their bodies as well as increasing their own body awareness with others," said Ms. Cesa. "My students are learning that using martial arts helps provide an appropriate place where they can use combined techniques for breathing and exhaling to allow their frustrations to be released in an appropriate setting."

Working alongside Dr. Escamilla is Muay Thai master and longtime martial arts practitioner and coach "Mikhail."

This is the first time the two teachers have experienced the program and are impressed with their students' reactions. "The students are learning crucial life skills. We're seeing improved focus, more eye contact, better impulse control and improvement in following directions," said Ms. Kinches.

The students are also having a great time. "When I asked my students how they liked their first session, there was a collective, 'We love it!'" said Ms. Cesa.

"I like it because it is fun and amazing," said third grader Christian. "It helps me to control my body," said Jilyn, fifth grade.

"They're having so much fun—we can't wait until the next session," said Ms. Kinches.



Wearing T shirts provided by the PTA, students participate in the Sensory Taekwondo exercises.