



Hannah Clarkin • Daily Times

Students at the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry work on the choreography to accompany Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas" during their gym period. Gym Teacher Mike Senerchia says students — and even some parents — have really taken to the program.

Students taking some extra steps

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COVENTRY — Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry gym classes are taking a break from typical sports activities, says Gym Teacher Mike Senerchia. In the three weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas the students are spending the class line dancing.

There are between 100 and 140 kids dancing in the gym per period, Senerchia says, and some of the kids are really getting into

it.

"One mom came to me the other day and told me that her boy came home and was showing her all the moves," he said. "I was surprised because he's usually kind of shy."

Teaching dancing gives a tangible sense of progress, Senerchia says, as teachers observe where the kids were when they first started learning and where they are now, nearing the close of the section.

So far they've learned how to dance to "Cotton Eyed Joe,"

"The Electric Slide," "Men in Black," and the class has choreographed its own dance to go with Mariah Carey's song, "All I Want for Christmas."

This year, some parents and grandparents have been getting excited, Senerchia adds, and coming by the middle school during their kids gym class to join in or to watch.

While some dances will be taught later in the year, Senerchia says, this is the only solid block of dancing that happens during the school year. Modern

line dances like the ones the kids are learning are less invasive, he says, than square dancing or waltzing, which might have been taught in gym classes in the past.

"These are less intense, they're about the individuals," Senerchia says.

He is the least musical and the worst dancer of the gym teachers, Senerchia says modestly, attributing the popularity of the program to his colleagues Dennis McGovern, Rick Frigón, Jan McMahon, Kelly Kramer, and Lonnie Morris.