

Fit Cast – Virtual PE in Schools

Venice, Florida-The school day at Taylor Ranch Elementary in Venice begins with a virtual workout in the classroom for a group of 5th graders. It's a half hour of heart pumping and calorie burning dance moves and high stepping kids to hip-hop music.

Students say the exercise keeps them motivated to stay fit. Three months into the 30 minute workout 3 times a week and students say they feel stronger and more energetic.

A YMCA instructor steps in the classroom using video conferencing technology. Instructor Jennifer Tucker helped create the program called "Fit Cast" after learning 30 to 40 percent of Sarasota 6th graders are overweight or obese. "The overall goal is to reduce childhood obesity in Sarasota County," says Tucker.

Instructors reach 75 classrooms in 19 elementary schools each week through the Fit Cast. Tucker says the fitness classes are tailored to each grade level. The program is also interactive, the instructor can see and talk to the students. Tucker says that two way conversation helps the instructor correct students' movements and encourage them at the same time.

The Sarasota school district also pre-produced several 30 minute long segments for teachers to use at any time of the school day that best fits their schedule.