

## Skateboarding kickflips its way into PE classes

By Tracy Loew  
USA TODAY

Skateboarders aren't frowned on at Oak Elementary School in Albany, Ore. In fact, students there get credit for performing grabs, kickturns and ollies in class.

Oak is among hundreds of schools across the country that have adopted a skateboarding curriculum in their physical education classes.

Skate Pass, the Boulder, Colo., company that created the curriculum in 2006, says skateboarding is now being taught in schools in more than a dozen U.S. states, plus Germany and Canada.

Educators say it's part of a "new PE" movement that recognizes that some kids aren't natural athletes.

"When people first hear 'elementary PE,' the first thing that comes to mind is dodgeball. Then all the other stuff they didn't like," says Jake Gerig, Oak Elementary's PE teacher.

"We're trying to focus on lifetime activities that are non-competitive and individualized so students can learn at their own pace," Gerig says.

Elementary schools are moving toward non-traditional activities, he says, such as rock climbing, unicycle riding, yoga and even Dance Dance Revolution, a music video game played on a dance pad.

"Only 10% of kids go on and play team sports," Gerig says. "What about the other 90% who are sitting at home playing video games because they're not star basketball material?"

Former professional snowboarder Eric Klassen developed the Skate Pass program with Denver PE teacher and fitness expert Richard Cendali.

"I've been skateboarding all my life and had been in the industry of skateboarding," Klassen says. "Richard is the one who thought it would make a good curriculum."

That was three years ago. Klassen says the curriculum now is used in school districts in Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, New Hampshire, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Districts in Kansas and Minnesota have placed orders for the curriculum, Klassen says, and the company is negotiating license agreements to bring Skate Pass to schools in Australia and Singapore.

Curriculum kits start at \$3,000 for 20 sets of helmets, pads and skateboards with wheels that are specially designed to not scratch gym floors.

The Skate Pass curriculum requires that students use safety equipment — helmets, knee pads, elbow pads and wrist guards. (Parents have to sign a waiver for kids to participate.)



By Robert Kirtila, Skate Pass

**The Skate Pass course:** Pupils at Douglass Elementary in Boulder, Colo., are taught safety first, then etiquette, how to stand and ride, and tricks.

"I've been skateboarding for about a year and a half now, but I learned some new stuff," Oak Elementary fourth-grader Xander Turkins says. "They teach you a lot about safety and the right way to do things."

The program also comes with instructional DVDs to lead teachers through the curriculum. "The teacher does not need to know how to skateboard in order to facilitate the instruction," Klassen says.

Lessons start with the basics: First safety, then skateboarding etiquette, then how to stand on the board and ride. Eventually, the students move on to tricks.

"We learned how to do an ollie, a kickflip, and turning on your board and stuff," Oak Elementary fifth-

grader Ashleigh Parish says.

An ollie is a trick where the skateboarder pops the skateboard into the air.

"Most of my class doesn't want PE to end," Parish says.

Gerig sought community support to purchase the program. Several area businesses, as well as the local PTA, donated to the project, he says.

"The kids who weren't the most athletically gifted were able to get on a board and push and ride. The next thing you know, they're able to reach down and do grabs. That was well worth every penny we spent," Gerig says.

Tracy Loew reports for the *Statesman Journal* in Salem, Ore.

## Boomers in the mood to give back to society

Survey finds boost for 'encore careers'

By Janet Kornblum  
USA TODAY

Baby boomers who came of age in the era of John F. Kennedy's civic call to arms are now, in the second half of their lives, not just asking themselves what they can do for their country, but they're actually doing it.

### Behavior

A new telephone and Internet survey, touted as the first of its kind, indicates millions of boomers are either quitting their old jobs or coming out of retirement to pursue new careers that not only give them personal meaning but also contribute to society.

The survey at [civicventures.org](http://civicventures.org) (margin of error: plus or minus 3 percentage points) by the non-profit MetLife Foundation and San Francisco Civic Ventures, a national think tank, shows 6% to 9.5% of adults age 44 to 70 are pursuing "encore careers" that give them both an income and meaning. That is 5.3 million to 8.4 million people. And half of those not already in encore careers say they are interested in moving into such jobs.

Researchers were surprised by the high numbers, says Allan Rivlin of Peter D. Hart Research Associates, which conducted the survey. He believes the findings are evidence of a "growing social phenomenon. Millions of Americans are already blazing a trail and working in encore careers."

Encore careers are defined as those that combine income, meaning and social purpose. They include jobs in the medical, education and non-profit sectors, such as teachers, social entrepreneurs and nurses. These are fields already facing job shortages, says Marc Freedman, CEO of Civic Ventures and author of *Encore: Finding Work That Matters in the Second Half of Life*.

It's impossible to say whether this truly is a new phenomenon, because there are no previous surveys for comparison.

But the trend for the past few decades has been moving toward earlier retirement, Freedman says. "We are seeing that being reversed now," he says.

And given that the boomer population is so large — 78 million to 79 million — the movement could have a tremendous effect on society in general.

"What's the healthiest, best educated, largest generation in American history going to do for what could easily amount to the second half or at least a third of their working lives?" Freedman asks.

These people are not going to go to the beach and just "hang out 20 or 30 years (waiting) to die," says Phil Borges, 65, of Seattle.

At 45, Borges quit his orthodontist practice to become a photographer; he then founded a non-profit that uses digital storytelling to connect children worldwide.

Borges agrees he's on the leading edge: "I think more and more people are being drawn in to contribute. There are so many issues to tackle."



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