

Students Build thier Own Boards with CreateASkate

From [Steve Cave](#),
Your Guide to [Skateboarding](#).
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Revolutionary school program teaches core learning using skateboard design

We are always learning, it's just that we choose to learn things that are interesting to us. A student might have a hard time learning when Rome fell, but he can tell you his favorite quarterback's number. Why is that? It's because for learning to stick, it has to be relevant. You have to care about it, and when you do, well, it's sort of easy!

[CreateASkate.org](#) is demonstrating to students all over the country how relevant learning can be by walking them through building their very own skateboard, right in the classroom! They get to actually make a skateboard *by hand*. In establishing the CreateAskate.org program, Paul Schmitt, a skateboard manufacturer for 15 years, hopes pre-teens and teenagers can discover for themselves a sense of pride, accomplishment, and empowerment while also seeing first hand the real value of understanding things like math, science, engineering and artistry. In his own words, "Professor" Paul Shmitt says that he wants to "Empower students of all ages to learn life lessons through the relevance of a skateboard."

So how does it work? Here are the basics of the CreateASkate.org program:

- Available to any school with Woodshop or Art class 5th-12th grades.
- Woodshop needs Power tools, art class doesn't.
- Cost is \$15-20 per student. The students raise their own project fee through fundraising methods, so the cost to the school is minimal.
- Students are measured to ensure proper sizing of deck that will be ordered for them.
- Depending on woodshop or art class student receive molded rectangular blanks or cut out skateboard blanks.
- Students learn the CreateAskate Curriculum through various experiments as they complete each phase of the project. They learn about the environment along the way and about all the other major subjects they are taking with other instructors. This project engages them and they no longer ask the question "When will I ever need to know this" in the other classes. Applying what you learn is the key to retention of the knowledge!

What classifies a tree as "veneer grade"? What's the botanical classification "Hard Maple" mean? What does your size and scale have to do with skateboarding? Classes discuss things like this, applying math, science and engineering skills, and finally artistry as they get to design their own graphics and paint them on the board. How many programs out there let students build something like this in school, that they can immediately use outside of school? Demonstrating the value and relevance of learning in this way is incredible.

[CreateASkate.org](#) gives educators a tool that students can identify with in order to connect with them. When learning is exciting, it's easier for the students to relate to what they are being taught. Plus, it shows them how learning applies to them now and in the future when they hit the real world. Here are some testimonials from kids, teachers and principals who have experienced the CreateASkate.org program:

"It is very inspiring for me to want to go out there and do something with myself, something really cool!" - **Erika**, age 18, Senior, Tampa Bay Tech High, Florida

"It shows that even though school's not that cool, you can get something out of it, like he did. (talking about Paul Shmitt, creator of the program)" - **Alex**, sophomore from Florida, Tampa Bay Technical High

"They are still learning processes and they are learning about materials, but they are able to apply it to something that they have a passion for. They're beating down the doors to get into my classroom!" - **Scott Diment**, TechEd teacher, Traverse City Jr. High, Michigan Grades 7-8

"Creating a program where you are doing 3 or 4 different subject areas in the same lesson - that's pretty unique. That's not something you can do on an every day basis. Whether the student has been involved with skateboarding, I honestly believe it's the

passion of the subject matter that's going to draw kids in." - **Chris Farkus**, Principal, Tampa Bay Tech High, Florida, Grades 9-12

"I've never seen a program that has motivated every single student, to this degree. It really stresses to the kids that if this is going to mean anything to them, they have to *earn* that money." - **Gabe Del Real**, 5th Grade Teacher, Newport Heights Elementary, California, Grades K-6

Interested? Good! I think every school should be. Whether students are skateboarders or not, every kid seems to love the program. It's something exciting, interesting, and unusual - and ridiculously educational. The cost is minimal, and the payoff is huge! If you are concerned at all about the legitimacy of the program, just take a look at some of the people involved:

Paul Schmitt, the creator of this program, started building skateboards at age 14 in his mom's driveway and garage. Today he is a successful skateboard manufacturer with over 10 Million skateboard decks produced to his credit.

Bryan Ridgeway is also involved as the Managing Director - a former Vice President for Jamie Thomas's Zero/Mystery skateboards and General Manager for Tony Hawk's distribution (Birdhouse, FLIP, Baker, Fury Trucks, and Hookups). Bryan is also a founding member of TransWorld Skateboarding Magazine, and helped to start up The Skateboard Mag as well. Not hard to see why Paul would hire him to direct this major program with him having over 25 yrs of industry expertise.

Jim Fitzpatrick is also on board with CreateASkate.org as Educational Director. Jim is a school principal in Santa Barbara, and has been the President of IASC, the International Association of Skateboard Companies and currently is Vice President of the USA Skateboarding Association..

This is a legitimate program, and a brilliant idea. In the first couple of months alone, the program went to California, Michigan, Florida, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Nevada, Maryland and West Virginia. So far there has been interest in the program from no less than 2000 schools and growing!

So, if you are interested, student, parents, teachers and school administrators can logon to CreateASkate.org's page. To learn more about CreateASkate, visit www.CreateASkate.org. It's one of the best ideas I've ever seen! Get a better idea about the program with the [CreateASkate Photo Gallery](#).