



SPEAKER ENDORSEMENTS



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MARK C. PERNA

Acclaimed Keynote Speaker

Generational Expert

Bestselling Author

National Thought Leader

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PRESENTER BIOGRAPHY



MARK C. PERNA is the founder and CEO of TFS Results, a strategic consulting firm at the forefront of the North American paradigm shift in education and workforce development. As an international generational expert, Mark has devoted his career to empowering audiences to unleash the tremendous potential of today's young people.

Mark delivers over 80 keynote speeches annually at national and statewide events and has spoken at Harvard University by special invitation. His work has helped countless parents, educators, employers, and national organizations across North America to engage more effectively with the younger generations.

Mark founded the Education with Purpose & Employment with Passion movement to help communities connect the pipelines between education, business, and economic development. Mark serves on the Advisory Council for the Coalition for Career Development and is a member of the International Economic Development Council, both in Washington, DC.

As a weekly contributor at Forbes.com since 2019, Mark has published more than 300 articles, reaching an audience of over 4 million. He interviews frequently on radio shows, television, and podcasts, and his library of episodes on *The Perna Syndicate* podcast reaches listeners in more than 70 countries. His multi-award-winning bestseller, *Answering Why: Unleashing Passion, Purpose, and Performance in Younger Generations*, was written to help educators, employers, and parents understand and motivate the millennial and Z generations. Find out more at MarkCPerna.com.

MARK IS ENDORSED BY THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS:

EVENT ORGANIZERS	Pages 2-8
AUDIENCE MEMBERS	Pages 9-11

EVENT ORGANIZERS



Dr. Mike Oliver, Principal at Mountain View High School: "Captivating. Thought-provoking. Alarming. Mark Perna delivers a powerful and disruptive message that challenges conventional thinking about education and the pathways young people take toward their futures. His thought-provoking insights create a healthy disequilibrium, pushing audiences to rethink how we prepare students to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. Mark's message will inspire bold conversations and meaningful change and will leave his audience energized and eager for more, proving that Mark doesn't just talk about a need for change—he equips communities to make it happen."

Liz Leaming, Director at Ponca City Development Authority: "Mark nailed it. The conversations post-Perna have been positive, excited and engaged about the next generation of workforce. Instead of pointing fingers in frustration, employers and educators in Ponca City have been coming up with ways to inspire and connect with future workforce. This is the start of a new way of working together in our community towards the common goal of economic growth—and it all came from 2 hours with Mark Perna. 100% unanimous feedback: fabulous message, presentation and action steps for future growth. Bravo!"



Diana Watkins, President at Northern Oklahoma College: "After hearing Mark Perna at another event, we were thrilled to bring him in to address our regional stakeholders and all employees across our 3 campuses. His enthusiasm is contagious! At our Spring "Staculty" (staff + faculty) Inservice meeting, Perna delivered game-changing insights that got everyone not just ready, but excited for the new semester. The tagline at our open-admissions institution is "Life changing"; the work Perna is doing fits that perfectly."

Sally Harrison, President & CEO at Mesa Chamber of Commerce and President of Mesa Industry & Defense Council: "For 2 fantastic hours, Mark Perna riveted our audience of business owners, corporations, community leaders, economic development, and educators. His message of truly connecting our pipelines was substantive, funny, and full of actionable strategies that people are still talking about. The keynote ended in an enthusiastic standing ovation, but the impact Mark made isn't over. What an incredible experience!"



Amy Christianson, Chief, Member Services at California School Boards Association: "Our audience of school board trustees and superintendents was amused, entertained, and inspired by the power of Mark Perna's keynote speech at our annual conference. Creating meaningful, productive, cross-generational relationships is key to teaching, learning, and governance, and lies at the heart of what we do as educators. Mark's compelling presentation on unleashing the potential of Gen Z resonated with our members and provided a roadmap for leaders in schools districts and county offices of education across the state."

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EVENT ORGANIZERS (CONT.)

Nathan Ohle, President & CEO at International Economic Development Council (IEDC):

"Mark led our opening plenary with an incredibly impactful message that set the tone for the rest of our conference. His insights into the 'Why Generation' really resonated with our audience of economic developers, spurring productive and ongoing discussions. We need to foster economic opportunity in our communities and drive top talent to regions of all sizes—and Mark's strategies were laser-focused on those outcomes. The energy, excitement and passion Mark brought have changed the conversation."



Dr. Janet Pope, Executive Director, Louisiana School Boards Association: "Mark's dynamic message was exactly what we were looking for to kick off our 86th annual convention! He not only conveyed valuable knowledge and expertise, but also inspired and engaged our members with his personal stories and experiences. His ability to connect with the audience on both a professional and relatable level was truly remarkable and will make a powerful impact as we move forward. Mark's positivity is contagious and set the tone for our best convention experience ever!"

Rosanna Mucetti, Superintendent at Napa Valley Unified School District: "Mark Perna delivers the full package! He keynoted during our initial strategic planning process, which informed our critical decision-making, and then several months later inspired our administrators to completely buy into the power of our district vision. He then supersized the impact by addressing our full staff, both certificated and classified, about meeting the younger generations exactly where they are with a compelling narrative of relevance and purpose. The feedback has been very positive and people are excited about where we're headed. Mark's high-powered message aligns with everything our district is aspiring to achieve—and he's equipped our team to do it!"



Dr. Ruth Pérez, Deputy Superintendent of the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE):

"Mark Perna has had an extraordinary impact on our leadership! In his three-hour keynote, he riveted our county-wide superintendents and cabinet-level administrators with a hard-hitting message that is still reverberating. As the largest county school system in the country, we are working to help every student achieve a personal competitive advantage. Thanks to Mark, we've been inspired with a practical vision to make it happen. We highly recommend Mark for any organization seeking a common rally point everyone can get behind."

Cassandra M. Vanhooser, Director, Economic Development & Tourism at Talbot County, MD: "MARK PERNA IS DYNAMITE! His message was transformative and impactful for our wide range of attendees, including CEOs, educators, nonprofit leaders, HR directors, and more who raved about Mark's presentation. He has helped us reach across boundaries and engage the entire community to truly start shifting our paradigm. Mark's energy and progressive ideas are EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED to meet the challenges of modern economic development."



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EVENT ORGANIZERS (CONT.)



Kim Kirby, Vice Chancellor at Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas: "Mark Perna unflinchingly delivered the powerful truths we needed to hear in this pivotal moment. It was a wake-up call for everyone in attendance—from educators and employers to economic developers and community leaders. Now it's time to wake up our community to everything our youth can accomplish when we empower their journey. This is just the beginning of our ongoing paradigm shift!"

Kim Barkdoll, Director of HR Operations at Mosaic | PHR, SHRM-CP, Employee Relations: "Mark Perna's presentation was spot on for our organization! His real-life, action-oriented strategies have already impacted our mindset and how we connect with employees. One of our goals is to support the holistic development of leaders, this provided takeaways to apply with their family, friends, and community. This was a zero-fluff, high-value experience—Mark delivered real substance and everyone in attendance was fully engaged in what he had to say. Our time with Mark was 100% worth every minute!"



Jeffrey Elstad, Superintendent at Owatonna Public Schools: "Mark Perna is one of the best speakers our staff has ever heard. He inspired all of us to think about how to move away from what "has always been done" to transforming our teaching and learning for our current and future generations. Mark's powerful message around unleashing students' purpose, passion and performance will continue to drive our work in career pathways in the Owatonna Public Schools."

Dana Schon, Professional Learning Director at School Administrators of Iowa: "In his opening keynote, Mark Perna engaged and provoked the thinking of our audience at our School Administrators of Iowa Annual Conference. His fast-paced delivery included research specific to the needs of this generation of students, relevant personal stories, and an introduction to pathways toward career readiness. Attendees have followed up with me to remark on the powerful impression he made and their plans to incorporate his ideas into their strategic planning moving forward. Mark's passion, energy, and enthusiasm coupled with the substance of his message set the stage for the conference experience we want for our members."



Dr. Ashlee Spannagel, Dean of CTE & Workforce Development at Southeastern Community College: "Mark Perna brought not just dynamic presence, but also real substance to the pressing questions we are facing as a community college. Many staff stated that this was the best professional development we have ever had. With his vision of human connection and competitive advantage, Mark lit a fire among our campus community. This was the inspiration we needed to move forward in a fast-changing landscape!"

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EVENT ORGANIZERS (CONT.)

Dr. Dawn Bridges, Executive Director, Suburban School Superintendents:

"At our national conference of K-12 superintendents, Mark Perna shared a stirring keynote on not just why we urgently need to shift the K-12 school paradigm, but also how to effect that change. His message laid the groundwork for further productive dialogue around how education must adapt and move forward to connect the dots for our younger generations. Mark's passion for understanding Gen Z was a rallying call for all of us to learn, reflect, and build a stronger future—together!"


Carrie Amann, Executive Director at Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association (PWDA):

"Every year we work hard to bring in the best workforce thought leaders to keynote at the PWDA Annual Conference. This year, Mark Perna blew our expectations out of the water with his energetic style and timely message. Mark's passionate keynote was perfect to follow the Governor of PA's speech at the conference. He connected instantly with the audience as he delivered valuable strategies that they can implement in both their professional and personal lives. We recommend Mark as a dynamic, personable, and genuine speaker who keeps his audience riveted with truly actionable content."

Rachel Kreikemeier, Executive Director at Gage Area Growth Enterprise (NGage):

"Mark Perna's keynote was game changing for our community! In my work with businesses, employers, community leaders, and educators across Gage County, I constantly hear the same things: We need more skilled people, how can we educate and train the next generation, and what will keep our youth here? Mark's presentation hit all these nails on the head and gave the change-makers in our community the tools and motivation to take the next step toward achieving our goals. We are inspired!"


Tait Strand, Executive Director of Central Wisconsin Manufacturing Alliance:

"When we brought Mark in to address our huge regional audience of business, industry, education and community leaders, we knew he would light up the room. But we didn't realize just how actionable and inspiring his message would be. Mark's message absolutely hit the sweet spot for our diverse audience. It was relevant, exciting, and empowering for everyone in attendance, and we've been flooded with positive feedback. Throughout the entire process, from planning through execution, Mark and his team were remarkably proactive and easy to work with. In short, Mark's dynamic vision couldn't have come at a better time and we're thrilled with the impact he has made here."

Della Schmidt, Greater Burlington Partnership President and CEO: "We had the pleasure of welcoming Mark Perna as our keynote speaker at a county-wide, four-school district Professional Development workshop for teachers. The day prior Mark spoke at a parents' night event and also to the entire staff at the local community college. Mark lit a fire of inspiration that we are taking full advantage of to catapult local student career exploration efforts. I have often referred to Mark as the "evangelist of education"—he is a dynamic, passionate, compelling speaker and trainer. Do not hesitate to book him—do it now! He will make you look brilliant."



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EVENT ORGANIZERS (CONT.)



Kristie Young, Vice President Economic Development, Greater Beaumont Chamber: "Mark is by far one of the best speakers we have had in Beaumont, TX! He is an event planner's dream—he comes very prepared, and setup is a breeze. Mark's message resonated with our educators, business professionals and community leaders. Thank you for motivating and inspiring our audience members. Our community is ready to connect the dots and put Mark's wisdom into action!"

Collin Callaway, Senior Policy Director at Arkansas Community Colleges:

"Mark Perna brought our audience to their feet with his energetic, engaging, and inspiring message! His insights will help us move forward effectively in a changing world. Mark knows how to bring the heat and challenge every participant to forge a genuine human connection with the young people we serve. Our audience left with valuable tools they can start using immediately to improve their day-to-day interactions and outcomes, and the feedback has been amazing. Thanks, Mark!"



Tim Payne, Superintendent at Ephrata School District: "Words can't express the universal impact Mark Perna had on our entire community. He inspired literally everyone—from middle and high school students to our K-12 staff, community stakeholders, and state representative—to expand, and in some instances change, our thinking about education, careers, and what we can accomplish together. I've never witnessed such a collective mind shift. For the first time, every stakeholder is aligned on common ground and excited to move toward a stronger future!"

Cathy LeCompte, Past President & Event Organizer at Alaska ACTE: "Mark Perna's high-powered keynote was the capstone of our statewide conference! Afterward Mark led a frank and candid VIP discussion about where the world has changed and how we take action as communities—as well as how we move forward as a state. We had leaders and influencers in attendance who now feel the urgency to bring this message to the capital for legislators and the governor to take action. With the powerful momentum Mark has helped create, we will accomplish great things."



Cody Snider, Market President at Stuttgart Cadence Bank and CEO of Stuttgart Unlimited: "Mark Perna delivered an incredible message that brought our education and employment systems together in a way I've never seen before. We all have a vital role to play in the economic viability of our community—and now, we feel equipped to play it. With Mark's ongoing involvement, we're already taking the next steps to transform the way our community thinks about education and careers. Thank you, Mark!"

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EVENT ORGANIZERS (CONT.)

Mindy Stalker, Executive Director at Union County Development Association:

"Our diverse audience was deeply moved by Mark's dynamic message! Superintendents, principals, counselors, employers, HR folks, economic development, state legislators, and community leaders were all inspired to rethink what we do with young people—and why. It was an extraordinary experience that has created the desire for an ongoing dialogue among all stakeholders. Mark brought our community together and ignited the spark we needed. We're ready to focus, plan, and most importantly, take action!"



April Moore, Superintendent at Sierra Sands Unified School District: "Mark C. Perna thoroughly impressed me with his ability to captivate and connect with our staff and city leaders alike. He spoke meaningfully to everyone in the audience, from the Navy base captain to the chief of police, city council members, and the college president. The impact he made was palpable, motivating all of us to make a positive difference. Thanks to Mark's powerful address, this school year is off to an exceptional start. His passion and expertise have set the tone for success, and I wholeheartedly recommend him to any educational institution seeking transformative leadership."

Alan Peterson, Superintendent at Merced Union High School District: "Every Superintendent wants an energetic, thought-provoking, paradigm-shifting speaker to start the year. Mark Perna nailed it! I have never heard such positive feedback following our kickoff event. Mark's inspiring message not only helped us understand the current generational challenges we face in education and employment, but also reached a personal level by providing more tools for us as parents. Mark shares 'the why' in a clear, relevant way, applicable to certificated and classed staff alike. We now feel empowered to make major changes in our educational system."



Dr. Christopher Gilmore, Principal at Westwood High School: "Having Mark Perna speak to our students, parents, and community is invaluable. His cutting-edge insights align perfectly with the new educational systems we're embracing. It's crucial to get the word out about how the education game has changed and how we're preparing students for a rapidly evolving world. Mark's message helps bridge the gap between traditional educational models and the innovative approaches we're taking to ensure students are college, career, and community ready. Mark is a visionary who can help inspire the mindset shift you want to see in your organization and community!"

Trina Goss, Director, Business & Talent Initiatives, Go Topeka: "At our recent Education and Industry Summit, Mark C. Perna delivered a thrilling keynote that resonated deeply with both educators and industry leaders. His insights have sparked meaningful conversations about how we can empower the personal and professional growth of our younger generations. We've received truly outstanding feedback, with many attendees expressing interest in bringing Mark back for a larger-scale event. His expertise and engaging delivery make him an invaluable asset to our ongoing efforts in education and workforce development."



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EVENT ORGANIZERS (CONT.)



Cory McIntyre, Superintendent at Anoka-Hennepin School District: "As Minnesota's largest school district, we start our school year with a leadership workshop and then rally nearly 8,000 staff members around a common convocation message. Mark C. Perna's high-energy, content-rich presentations set the foundation for future success at the individual, school and community level at the onset of the school year. Perna's effective messaging integrated perfectly with our district statement that "It takes all of us" to have the best possible schools. His presentation provided concrete action steps to align individual staff members with a larger district vision, inspiring all of us to ensure students find relevance in their education and are well prepared for their next step in life upon graduation."

Mandi D. Mitchell, President and CEO of the Lafayette Economic Development Authority:

"Mark was enlightening, energizing, and relatable! His insights sparked numerous "AHA moments" for me and the broad cross-section of community leaders who joined us. Mark's philosophy on engaging with young people—with equal parts of optimism, high expectations, and belief in their potential—has helped inform the actions we need to take as a community all pulling in the same direction. Many of the organizations in attendance already want to bring Mark back to keep supersizing everything we're going to accomplish!"



Catherine Puster, Director of Educational Programs at Crestview Local Schools: "Are you trying to figure out how to connect with young people or why they are 'just not hearing' what you are saying? You need Mark Perna! Mark's message is not just for parents, but also educators from preschool through graduate school and especially appropriate for business owners and managers of all sizes and industries. As an educator with over 25 years of experience as a teacher and administrator, it is without reservation, and with the highest regard that I recommend Mark Perna to any organization. The opportunity to hear Mark's message is truly an advantage to anyone's personal and professional experience."

Jim Grubbs, Superintendent at Crestview Local Schools: "Over my 26 years as an administrator, I have found it challenging to bring in a motivational speaker who can connect with a diverse audience, from elementary teachers to high school teachers, custodians, and school cooks. Yet, Mark Perna accomplished just that. Typically, after these events, someone always asks, 'Why did I need to sit through that?' But this time, no one asked that question. I've never had a presenter who could engage with everyone in attendance the way Mark did. I would highly recommend Mark to any organization looking to create common ground and rally every individual on their team. He changed the game for us!"



Brett Yeagley, Superintendent at Canton Local Schools: "Mark Perna's ability to connect with his audience and address the challenges we face in education today is amazing! Even with 750 people in attendance at our Educator/Business Leader Summit, he made it feel like he was speaking directly to you. Mark's unique blend of humor, high energy, and relevant insights captivated the audience and sparked meaningful conversations between educators and business leaders. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with many attendees noting how applicable this content was to their daily work. Mark's message is one that needs to be heard by not only educators, but also by the students that they serve each day."

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

(Additional testimonials available upon request.)

"Your presentation is the **BEST I'VE EVER HEARD** and this is my 40th year in education!" - *Caroline Bloxom, High School Principal/County CTE Supervisor*

"Mark Perna doesn't just talk about changing the landscape of education. **HE PROVIDES A SPECIFIC ACTION PLAN** educators can use to harness student motivation and keep students moving toward their career goals." - *Rhonda Rhodes, Principal at Greenville County Schools*

"If you are looking for insight on connecting with Gen Z, **THIS IS A MUST-SEE EVENT!**" - *Craig Harthoorn, President at H&S Manufacturing Co., Inc.*

"Engaging and inspiring. Starting year 33 as an educator and I'm **MORE FIRED UP FOR THE START OF THIS YEAR** than I have been for the past several years." - *Sue Lasky, Principal at Morgan Elementary*

"The depth and breadth of this presentation can only be called heart. It is **BLOOD-PUMPING ADRENALINE.**" - *Grover Welch, Instructional Facilitator, Newport Special School District*

"You brought me to tears. These were the **MOST MOTIVATING WORDS I'VE EVER HEARD!** Life changing!" - *Laurence Beliel, Director of Business Retention & Expansion at Ponca City Development*

"**THIS INFORMATION APPLIES TO EVERYONE**, regardless of your role in students' lives. This presentation was motivating and energizing. This will benefit our entire school district." - *Trevor Hoss, Supervisor of CTE at Bedford County Public Schools*

"Mark was able to connect a lot of the thoughts and ideas that most people are trying to figure out. **NOT JUST MOTIVATIONAL, PROVIDES ACTUAL SOLUTIONS.**" - *Matt Huber, Business & Community Development Manager at Liberty (Utilities)*

"Outstanding presentation. 17 years of teaching and no one has ever delivered a more **MEANINGFUL AND VALUABLE SET OF STRATEGIES.**" - *Jody Kessinger, Biology Teacher*

"Energetic way to see the other side of the 'entitled and lazy' generation. New perspectives are gained in a **FUN AND HUMOROUS PACKAGE!**" - *Misty Hiltabidel, Workforce Development Specialist at Fay-Penn Economic Development Council*

"Inspiring, thought provoking and transformational! **I CANNOT WAIT TO TAKE THIS KNOWLEDGE** and implement with my teachers and students!" - *Annie Smith, PK-12 Principal, Paton Churdan Community Schools*

"Amazing, enlightening and **FULL OF VALUABLE INFORMATION** to help you become a better leader and teacher." - *Anthony Brooke, Activities Director at MSBSD*

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AUDIENCE MEMBERS (CONT.)

(Additional testimonials available upon request.)

"Not only was this useful to me as an educator, but it will serve as a tool to help me work with my 17 year old who is stuck and perplexed about her future. **I NOW HAVE A CLEAR PATH** to help her with goal setting and future planning." - *Wanda Coates, Principal at S. Christa McAuliffe Elementary*

"**THE REAL ANSWERS** to your workforce/manpower questions!" - *Pamela Wise, Program Analyst at Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas*

"Everything Mark shared today applies to my family and to my teaching. **MARK OPENED MY EYES**. I will be more considerate of what my children and students need." - *Elizabeth Orozco, Kindergarten Teacher, Mission View Elementary*

"**INSPIRING AND WORTH LISTENING** for teaching staff and kids! Prepare for a ride that makes you nod your head repeatedly as items resound with you, chuckle and laugh and through it...the intensity to make the difference needed now." - *Jennifer Knight, Secondary Principal (6-12), Earlham Community School District*

"Practical solutions to perceived impenetrable problems...thanks for the **BREATH OF FRESH AIR!**" - *Tonya Ramey, High School Director*

"A must-see, the **ENERGY I HAVE AFTER TODAY TO CONNECT AND INTERACT WITH TEENS** is off the charts." - *Penny Mayo, School Nurse, Moses Lake School District*

"Very motivating and re-energizing! Gave **GREAT HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION.**" - *Nicole Richardson, Counselor at Cadillac Innovation High School*

"This was by far the best experience and best motivational speaker I have ever seen. I would describe it as the **ONE AND ONLY PRESENTATION THAT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR ALL EDUCATORS** to see." - *Abigail Wright, Behavior Interventionist at Fort Madison Community School District*

"I really was **READY TO QUIT TEACHING**. I've been struggling with this for two years now. This entire presentation made me realize that I absolutely can't. That I must stay to connect with our young people." - *Taylor Kane, Teacher, Clarksville Montgomery County Schools*

"Fabulous message crafted to **ENGAGE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP, EDUCATORS AND PARENTS** in a call to action to support career readiness for youth and adults!" - *Christy Hawkins, Dean of Workforce Services at Piedmont Virginia Community College*

"Life changing! I leave with a new paradigm for engaging students plus strategies for connecting with them on the first day. **MAHALO FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE** in the lives of teachers and their students." - *Derek Otsuji, Assistant Professor at Honolulu Community College*

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AUDIENCE MEMBERS (CONT.)

"If you are a human being, the content Mark provides will be **RELEVANT AND ENERGIZING TO YOUR LIFE.**"
- Emily Geray, Program Director at MENTOR Minnesota

"As a Gen Z young professional myself, I didn't necessarily have an "ah-ha" moment but **I DID FEEL EXTREMELY SEEN AND HEARD** and connected to throughout the session. It was extremely encouraging to watch those around me have those ah-ha moments." - Jill Sommers, Marketing & Communications Specialist, Tech Parks Arizona

WATCH MARK IN ACTION
[YouTube.com/@markpernaspeaker](https://www.youtube.com/@markpernaspeaker)

