

# HILDERBRAND PELZER, III

The Principal Who Lifted Up One of the Largest Jail Systems Through Education

The beginning of Hilderbrand Pelzer III's leadership in the education field started when he became Philadelphia's youngest high school principal during the early 2000s. However, Pelzer's greatest accomplishment—in a career that included leading five different schools—was arguably in one of the largest prison systems in the United States: the Philadelphia prison system. Here, Pelzer made a significant impact by exemplifying a pivotal shift toward a leadership style characterized by high expectations for all incarcerated youth. Pelzer raised expectations in the Philadelphia prison system by using all the resources at his disposal to change the system's entire culture and by demonstrating that incarcerated youth can learn. Leveraging the unique lessons he has learned inside jails, Pelzer teaches his audience how to raise expectations for all students and how to connect them, hence demonstrating the importance of educators and school staff role to schools.



## TOPICS

### Criminal and Juvenile Justice System

- Criminalizing Black School Boys
- Juvenile Justice Education
- Cutting Off the Pipeline to Prison

### Equity

- Education Equity for All Students
- Educating High-Risk Students
- Connection between Early Literacy and Juvenile Delinquency

### Leadership

- Committing to Schools with the Most Pressing Challenges
- Reimagining the Preparation of New Teachers
- Leadership: What School Leaders Can Learn from Incarcerated Youth

"Powerful keynote to close out our conference. Thank you for challenging our team to overcome our challenges to unlock the potential of our students."

- Adam Johnson

North Carolina Department of Education  
Director of Education Services

## AS FEATURED ON

**TED<sup>x</sup>DeerPark**  
x = independently organized TED event

 **Microsoft**

**THE CENTER**  
*for Literacy & Learning*

**COSEBOC**  
COALITION OF SCHOOLS EDUCATING BOYS OF COLOR

  
**Council of the  
Great City Schools**

"Mr. Pelzer's work is truly inspiring and life-changing for the youth impacted. I appreciate his dedication to speak on issues of literacy, dyslexia, teacher preparation, the juvenile and criminal justice systems, and more. His book, *Unlocking Potential*, addresses many of these issues . . . I highly recommend him to speak to your organization."

- Stacie McClam, JD, M.Ed  
School Dismissed, LLC

Director & Producer of *Robbed: A Mother's Peril - The Kelley Williams-Bolar Story*

"Hilderbrand Pelzer shares his experience and practice in working with the most at-risk population of incarcerated youth. His educational model is of value to all educational settings as his core belief lies in building relationships with all students."

- Dr. Frank Garritano

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