

Planning a sabbatical to the Harvard Graduate School of Education

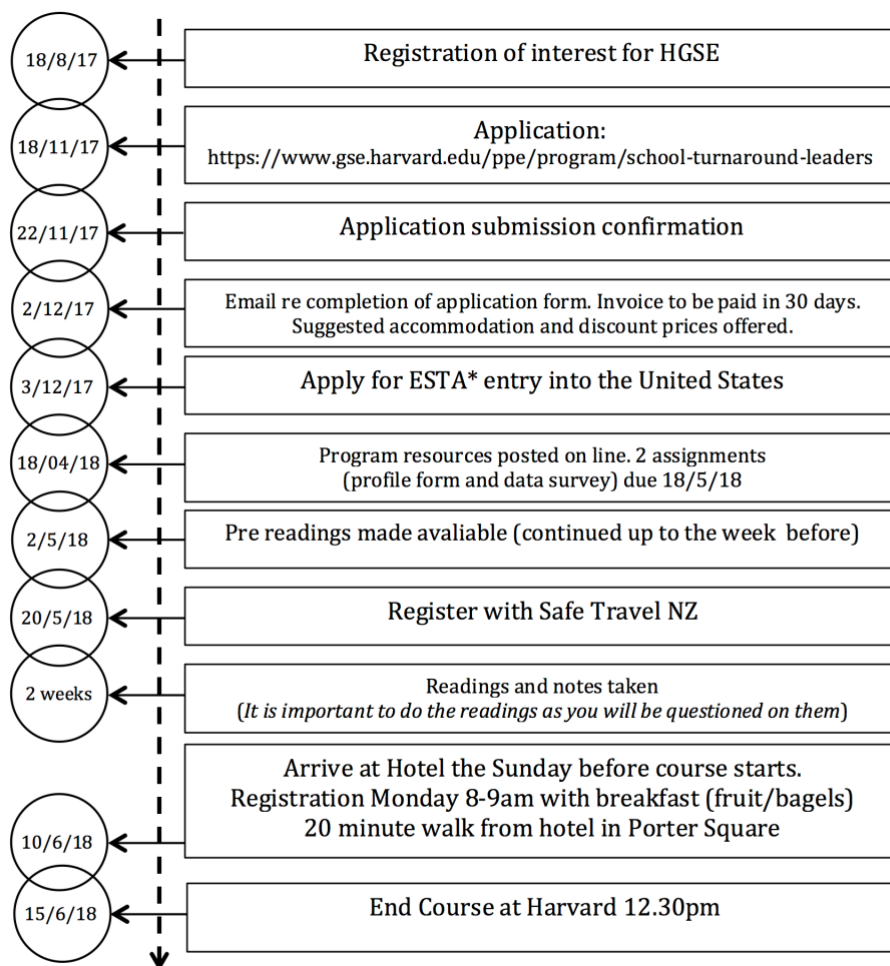


Bruce Kearney
Principal, Kaiapoi High School
Sabbatical Term Two 2018

The Process:

This report was written after many discussions with Principals who were thinking of attending a course at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and were unsure of the process, costs and value of the course.

My sabbatical journey began in 2017 when I was looking through the Harvard Graduate School of Education for possible courses that I could attend. I noticed that the Turnaround Schools Leadership course was offered in June that year. This course focused on creating a positive culture and implementing a strategy for school improvement. The course was held in June, and that worked well for the timing of my sabbatical. The following is the time line for organising my sabbatical to Harvard:



*New Zealand passport holders need to apply for an ESTA for entry into the USA. When you go through to apply for your ESTA online – make sure you don't google this (this will take you to a third party site which, while it is still OK, does mean you end up paying a lot more than the US\$14:00 fee

<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/application.html?execution=e1s1>

Once completed it will end with a confirmation. Your ESTA will be valid for 2 years from application date and offers multiple entry into the USA. I recommend you print off a copy of your confirmation and include this with your travel documents. You can leave applying for your ESTA until closer to your departure date, but I don't recommend leaving this any later than 3 months prior to your departure.

The course:

Booking of course (<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe/k12-leadership-development-programs>)

The Principals' Center
The Principals' Center is designed to support school leaders throughout their career development, as well as in specific school contexts.

New and Aspiring School Leaders | November 3 - 6, 2018
GSE.HARVARD.EDU/PPE/ASL
Faculty Chair: Pamela Mason
Join other aspiring principals in examining the challenges of leadership from the ground up, clarifying your vision of an effective school and your role in leading it. 0-2 years of leadership experience.

Improving Schools: The Art of Leadership | June 24 - 30, 2018
GSE.HARVARD.EDU/PPE/ADL
Faculty Chair: Pamela Mason
Expand your understanding of leadership and explore multiple approaches for addressing leadership challenges. Develop skills to support teacher development and student achievement. 1-5 years of leadership experience.


Leadership: An Evolving Vision | July 7 - 13, 2019
GSE.HARVARD.EDU/PPE/LEV
Faculty Chair: Joseph Blitt
Strengthen your ability to lead and manage effectively and revitalize your personal vision of leadership in this program for experienced school leaders. 5+ years of leadership experience.

Race, Equity, and Leadership in Schools | June 17 - 22, 2019
GSE.HARVARD.EDU/PPE/REAL
Faculty Co-Chairs: Deborah Jewell-Sherman, Mary Grassa O'Neill
Identify concrete strategies for building inclusive institutions and build your toolkit to teach, model, and practice them effectively.

School Turnaround Leaders | June 3 - 7, 2019
GSE.HARVARD.EDU/PPE/STL
Faculty Chair: Katharine Mesereth
Develop a theory of action for turning around underperforming schools, and learn strategies for successful implementation.

National Institute for Urban School Leaders | June 17 - 22, 2019
GSE.HARVARD.EDU/PPE/USL
Faculty Chair: Deborah Jewell-Sherman
Explore strategies for improving student achievement and leading successful urban schools.

"We're asking teachers to do things we didn't do ourselves when we were teachers. We're asking them to constantly change what they're doing, to grow significantly both for themselves and their students. If you ask someone to do something, you need to do it yourself. Professional Education at HGSE gives principals a chance to model a commitment to their own growth."
— KEVIN SKELLY
Superintendent, San Mateo Union High School District
Leadership: An Evolving Vision '16



"This institute gave me a new lens to provide the clarity to myself and my team as we press forward in our fight for education equity."
— SHELLEY ANDERSON
Assistant Principal, Dallas Independent School District
National Institute for Urban School Leaders '17

"The program will challenge you, stretch your understanding, and leave you equipped to lead when you leave."
Mark McCord (Leadership: An Evolving Vision '16)
Principal, Stockdick Jr. High

New and Aspiring School Leaders | November 3 - 6, 2018
» *New or aspiring school leaders with 0-2 years of leadership experience.*
Join a cohort of emerging school leaders to unpack common leadership challenges, clarify your vision of an effective school, establish your core values, and develop the foundational skills of an effective school leader.

School Turnaround Leaders | June 3 - 7, 2019
» *K-12 educators and change agents directly responsible for leading or overseeing school turnaround efforts.*
Develop a theory of action for turning around under performing schools, and learn strategies for successful implementation.

National Institute for Urban School Leaders | June 17 - 22, 2019
» *School leaders and teams working in urban settings.*
Explore in-depth the leadership skills needed to set high expectations for all and to accelerate learning across classrooms.

Improving Schools: The Art of Leadership | June 24 - 30, 2018
» *School leaders in their early careers with 1-5 years of leadership experience.*
Explore successful school improvement models and practice research-based techniques that will make you a more effective manager of innovation and change.

I chose "School Turnaround Leaders" as I was interested in culture and strategy rather than turnaround schools. This looked at what was more important, culture or strategy, how do you evaluate and change culture, and how to shift a strategic plan to a clear strategy.

The course was run at the start of June. The weather is fantastic then, but you do need to know that this is just after the end of the United States school year so if you intend to visit schools you may have to go earlier rather than later as they will be closed. Actually, not a great time for school visits.

The following were the specific topics of the course:

- Framing and reframing organisations in education
- Strategy in action
- The turnaround leader
- Shaping school culture
- School turnaround and instructional improvement
- Leading educators in using data wisely
- Cultural leadership
- Leading teams
- Socio-emotional learning
- Strategic engagement of families and communities
- Diversifying the human capital pipeline
- Human capital in action

The programme:

Each day starts with breakfast from 7.30-8.00am. Days generally start at 8am and finish at 7.30pm. There were two social events; a reception at a bar and a BBQ. I think it is important to note that it is expected that you attend both of these sessions and it is also stated that partners are not welcome (that's me being blunt not them).

The lectures are run as an interactive session and include:

- Open mike questions and answers
- Sharing with the person next to you
- Sharing with a small group in your vicinity
- Small work groups

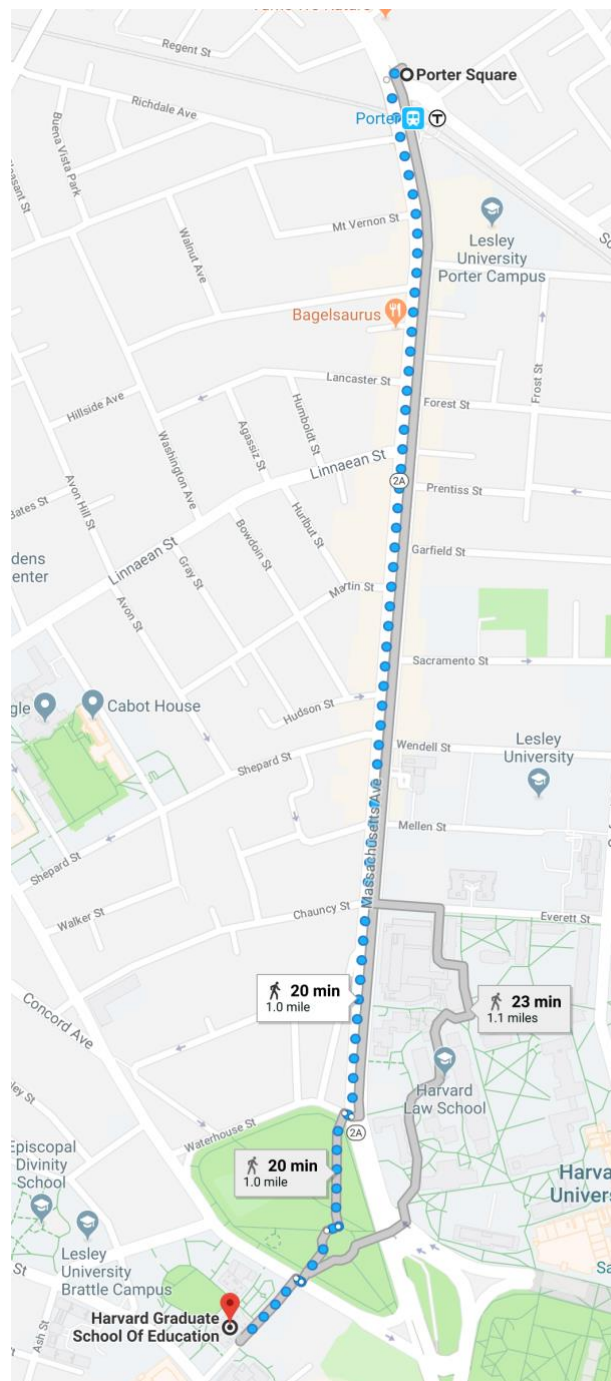
There is also a discussion group that meets each day (about 10 people with a post graduate student) and a consultancy group (about 4-5 people sharing an issue). You do need to be prepared to be involved. I was personally sad that I did not attend with others from our school as most people there were with larger groups from their schools.

Lunch each day is on your own and it is a two minute walk into Harvard Square where there are a number of restaurants.

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION <i>"In Principis Clavis"</i>		School Turnaround Leaders June 11 - 15, 2018			
Monday, June 11	Tuesday, June 12	Wednesday, June 13	Thursday, June 14	Friday, June 15	
	Continental Breakfast 7:30 - 8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast 7:30 - 8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast 7:30 - 8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast 7:30 - 8:00 a.m.	
Registration and Continental Breakfast <i>Aswith Hallway</i> 8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	Morning Overview, 8:00 - 8:15 a.m.	Morning Overview, 8:00 - 8:15 a.m.	Morning Overview, 8:00 - 8:15 a.m.	Discussion Groups [Work Plan/ Accountability] <i>Various Locations</i> 8:00 - 9:30 a.m.	
Program Welcome 9:00 - 9:45 a.m.	Shaping School Culture Quinton Courts 8:15 - 9:45 a.m.	Cultural Leadership for Transforming School Organizations Ebony Bridwell-Mitchell 8:15 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	Social-Emotional Learning Gretchen Brion-Miesels and Becca Bailey 8:15 - 9:45 a.m.		
	Beverage Break, 9:45 - 10:00 a.m.	Beverage Break, 9:45 - 10:00 a.m.	Beverage Break, 9:45 - 10:00 a.m.	Travel Time	
Framing and Reframing Organizations in Education Matthew Miller 9:45 - 11:30 a.m.	School Turnaround and Instructional Improvement Katherine Merseth 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Cultural Leadership for Transforming School Organizations (cont.) Ebony Bridwell-Mitchell 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Deepening Your Impact: Strategic Engagement of Families and Communities in Turnaround Schools Dawn Love 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Next Steps <i>Various Locations</i> 9:45 - 11:15 a.m.	
Beverage Break, 11:30 - 11:45 a.m.	Lunch <i>On your own in Cambridge</i> 11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Lunch <i>On your own in Cambridge</i> 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch <i>On your own in Cambridge</i> 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Beverage Break, 11:15 - 11:30 a.m.	
Framing and Reframing: A Case Discussion Matthew Miller 11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Leading Educators in Using Data Wisely Kathy Boudett 12:15 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	Discussion Groups <i>Various Locations</i> 1:00 - 2:15 p.m.	Diversifying the Human Capital Pipeline: Attracting and Retaining Teachers of Color Daniel Velasco 12:45 - 2:15 p.m.	Program Closing and Certificates Katherine Merseth 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	
Lunch <i>On your own in Cambridge</i> 1:15 - 2:30 p.m.	Snack and Beverage Break, 1:45 - 2:00 p.m.	Travel Time	Snack and Beverage Break, 2:15 - 2:30 p.m.		
Strategy in Action Elizabeth City 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.	Leading Educators in Using Data Wisely (cont.) Kathy Boudett 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Snack and Beverage Break, 2:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Human Capital in Action Mary Grasa-O'Neill 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.		
Snack and Beverage Break, 4:00 - 4:15 p.m.	Travel Time	Consulancy Demonstration, 2:45 - 3:00 p.m.	Travel Time		
The Turnaround Leader Nancy Gutierrez 4:15 - 5:45 p.m.	Discussion Groups <i>Various Locations</i> 3:45 - 5:15 p.m.	Leading Teams Katherine Merseth 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.	Travel Time		
Travel Time	Travel Time	Travel Time	Consultancy <i>Various Locations</i> 4:15 - 6:15 p.m.		
Discussion Groups <i>Various Locations</i> 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.	Reception Queen's Head Pub 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Consultancy <i>Various Locations</i> 4:45 - 7:20 p.m.	Travel Time		
			Cookout Radclyffe Quadrangle 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.		

Accommodation:

Most people choose accommodation close to the School of Education building in Harvard Square. I personally chose accommodation away from the square as it was substantially cheaper and a lovely hotel. This was in Porter Square and required a 20 minute walk (there is a bus) straight down the road the hotel was on, and was safe both in the morning and late at night. I found it a relaxing start to the day, however this was at the start of summer and a lovely 20-25 degrees. Across the road from the hotel were a number of restaurants, a supermarket and a fantastic bookstore/coffee shop. I booked my hotel on-line and only paid \$215US/\$325NZ a night (see attached accomodation guide).



Travel & Accommodations

The program will begin with registration at 8:00 a.m. on June 11 and will end on June 15 at 12:00 p.m. When making your travel arrangements, please allow two hours prior to the start of registration and after the end of the program for travel to and from the airport, train or bus station. Travel and hotel accommodations are the responsibility of the individual participant. A limited number of rooms have been set aside at local hotels at reduced rates.

[The Charles Hotel](#)

[1 Bennett Street, Cambridge, MA 02138](#)

Reservations: 1-800-882-1818

Reference: HGSESTL18

Rate: \$369 per night, plus applicable taxes

Earliest Check-in: June 10, 2018

Latest Check-out: June 15, 2018

Rooms are available on a first-come, first served basis

Rate valid until May 14, 2018

[Harvard Square Hotel](#)

[110 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138](#)

Reservations: 1-800-458-5886

Reference: GSE School Turnaround Leaders or 528515

Rate: \$299 per night, plus applicable taxes

Earliest Check-in: June 10, 2018

Latest Check-out: June 15, 2018

Rooms are available on a first-come, first served basis

Rate valid until May 21, 2018

[AC Hotel by Marriott Boston Cambridge](#)

[10 Acorn Park Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140](#)

Reservations: 1-617-876-6190

Reference: STL Professional Education

Rate: \$299 per night, plus applicable taxes

Earliest Check-in: June 10, 2018

Latest Check-out: June 15, 2018

Rooms are available on a first-come, first served basis

Rate valid until May 17, 2018

[Boston Marriott Cambridge \(Kendall Square\)](#)

[50 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02142](#)

Reservations: 617-494-6600

Reference: M-A3UL8YP or STL (School Turnaround Leaders)

Rate: \$309 per night, plus applicable taxes

Earliest Check-in: June 10, 2018

Latest Check-out: June 15, 2018

Rooms are available on a first-come, first served basis

Rate valid until May 18, 2018

[Doubletree Suites by Hilton Boston Cambridge](#)

[400 Soldiers Field Road, Cambridge, MA 02134](#)

Reservations: 1-800-222-8733

Reference: HGSE-STL

Rate: \$279 per night, plus applicable taxes

Earliest Check-in: June 10, 2018

Latest Check-out: June 15, 2018

Rooms are available on a first-come, first served basis

Rate valid until May 4, 2018

[Porter Square Hotel](#)

[1924 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140](#)

Reservations: 617-499-3399 or 1-888-229-1615

Discount Code Reference by phone: HGSE PPE

Rate: 20% off the current rate, plus applicable taxes

Rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis

Rate valid until supplies last

The Costings:

The following is a cost table for the week long course at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. I personally arrived the Sunday before the course started and then left the Sunday after (one full week) to give me a day exploring the Freedom Trail in Boston. This was a great walk - you follow a brick inlay in the sidewalk and it takes about 2½ hours, starting at the oldest park in the USA (Boston Commons) and ending at Bunker Hill over the river. You walk through little Italy so make sure you buy a slice of pizza!

Core Expenditure	US\$	NZ\$	TOTAL
Course cost (1 week full tuition)	3675	5550	5550
Flights – return Chch – Boston (via San Fran/LA)		2900	2900
Accommodation – Porter Square Hotel – 5 Nights	215	325	1625
Uber to and from airport	60	90	90
Lunch 5 days	20	30	150
Dinner 3 nights	30	45	135
TOTAL			\$10450

Monday	Course finishes at 7.30pm –	Dinner \$30US
Tuesday	Reception – snacks provided, drinks to be paid for	Drinks \$30US
Wednesday	Course finishes at 7.30pm –	Dinner \$30US
Thursday	Cookout - Drinks and dinner provided	No cost
Friday	Course ends 12.30pm –	Dinner \$30

Additional Expenditure	US\$	NZ\$	TOTAL
Accommodation – Porter Square Hotel – 2 Nights	215	325	650
Uber to and from Boston Commons (Freedom Walk)	40	60	60
Additional Food/Expenses for 2 days	130	200	200
Harvard Sweater	45	68	136
TOTAL			\$1046

Evaluation:

This was a fantastic course. Whilst the days were long, they were broken up well and the teaching and learning was based on a strong pedagogy of pair/share, individual answers, group work and more in depth discussion and consultancy groups. It was a pleasure to be involved in professional development that modelled strong pedagogy rather than simply talk about it via a powerpoint presentation.

There were aspects of the course that were not relevant. This included strategies for increasing the pipeline for Latino and Black teachers, and areas where they were further behind than us such as engaging in communities and whanau. The areas of culture and strategy were the best presentations I have been too, and the consultancy group where you shared a problem and worked on a solution placed me outside my comfort zone (especially when they talk about you and your problem in a room while you sit in the room facing the corner), but it was incredibly deep and worthwhile.

I was the only person from New Zealand. There were five Australians (although they called themselves Tasmanians) and a large group from Botswana. The rest of the 180-200 people generally were made of leadership teams, school inspectors and educationalists. Most people attended as a team, and being an individual meant at times that you had to join groups to complete some of the tasks.

I have already begun planning for next year with respect to how the Board will implement a change in strategic plan, and the strategies to implement that plan. As a staff we have begun evaluating our school culture to review how our artifacts and norms of behaviour support (or not) our school values and beliefs. This will be an interesting journey.

The two pieces of information that I took away which matter most to me would be:

1. Culture eats strategy for lunch...and now I have the tools to evaluate our culture and to implement our strategy.
2. Your strategy must be focused on the instructional core (the teaching and learning). Too often we focus on strategies that support the core (eg. well-being) and forget to place teaching and learning at the heart of what we do. *Teaching matters.*