The Field Experiences Advisory Board (FXAB), established during the summer of 2013, is advisory to the director of field experiences and the dean’s office on matters related to field experiences. The FXAB expands the reach and collaboration between the unit and school partners as well as increases communications and coordination within the unit. By design, the FXAB is comprised of 15 stakeholders with very diverse experiences and alliances and all work closely with the director of field experiences who chairs the board (see attachment: Field Experiences Advisory Board, pages 2-3). Members include colleagues from the integrated elementary teaching program, the secondary teaching program, human development and family studies, school-university partners for educational research committee, educational leadership, school counseling, student advisement, college student organization representative, College of Liberal Arts, Truckee Community College, Washoe County School District, internship, and the business community. Members were strategically recruited for their other alliances and activities such as professional development, STEM education, Washoe Retired Education Association, field experiences, family and community engagement, school partnerships, international experiences, and intercultural diversity.

The Field Experiences Advisory Board (FXAB) dealt with two items in fall 2013 that impact field experiences and internship (see attachment: Field Experiences Advisory Board pages 3-4). First, the FXAB addressed the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) report that criticized the unit’s secondary program for unsupervised field experiences and private or parochial school placements. In fall 2013, FXAB reached consensus on a ‘broad’ definition for field experience supervision: to observe, gather data, evaluate and guide an individual or group of individuals to facilitate the application of learned knowledge. Further, the FXAB concluded that:

- Supervision may be delegated – for example: to an internal person such as a graduate assistant or even an external person where the field experience is hosted such as a teacher or agency director.
- Supervision may be direct, focusing on the candidate [student]. Supervision may be indirect, focusing on an activity, assignment or task. Indirect and direct supervision may be used concurrently.
- Supervision may differ depending on the number of candidates to be supervised (large numbers verses small numbers) and school locations (at the same school verses at various schools).
- Supervision may differ among courses, depending on the level of the candidate or student and the purpose of the field experience.
- All courses with field experiences shall be required to include a statement about supervision in the syllabus. This was implemented in January 2014.

Under this definition, it was determined that field experiences were indeed supervised but that this was not clearly articulated in some course syllabi which had fueled the NCTQ criticism. In their second meeting during the fall 2013 semester, the FXAB took a close look at the unit’s policy that prohibited private and parochial school internship placements. There are a growing number of non-traditional schools in the area such as themed academies and online hybrids. In anticipation of future requests by candidates, teachers, and principals, the FXAB decided to include non-traditional schools in this policy. The FXAB recommended the use of non-traditional, private and parochial schools for field experiences and internships with two stipulations: the director of field experiences will determine the appropriateness of the non-traditional, private or parochial school in response to a placement request, and the director will consult with legal counsel regarding parochial school placements. Though the FXAB did not object to parochial school placements, the institution’s general counsel did. As a result, the unit’s internship placement policy was overturned allowing private school placements and upheld denying parochial school placements. The internship placement policy was amended to include placements in non-traditional schools. Depending on the non-traditional school, the director may split the field experience or internship placement with a traditional school to provide the candidate or intern experience in both
settings. This policy change has increased placement options and brought about consistency throughout a candidate’s program by extending this policy to their field experience placements. This went into effect in fall 2013 and the very first private school internship placement will began spring 2014. One of the most significant tasks the FXAB will undertake in the future is to examine first year teacher evaluation data for the purpose of continuous program improvement. The unit has a teacher evaluation data share agreement in place with Washoe County School District (see attachment: Teacher Data Share Agreement).