CELESTE MALONE
President-Elect Candidate

Statement 2

NASP leaders have adopted five strategic goals that guide the association’s work. Please describe what you see as the NASP President’s role in promoting these goals with special attention given to the challenges generated by COVID-19.

NASP’s strategic goals provide the foundation for its policies, practices, and advocacy efforts. They guide the association towards its vision of all children and youth receiving the “learning, behavior, and mental health support needed to thrive in school, at home, and throughout life.” As a Strategic Liaison on the Board of Directors, leading the social justice goal team and working with NASP boards and committees to address social justice issues, I have learned that we need the participation of all NASP members and leaders to achieve NASP’s vision. We also need organizational partners whose missions are aligned with NASP’s. It is important for the President to promote the strategic goals both within the association and to the public.

While members have some awareness of the strategic goals, they may view them as something specific to NASP leadership and not relevant to them as members. It is incumbent upon the President to communicate the importance of the strategic goals to membership and create opportunities for capacity building so members can engage in activities to advance these goals.

The President’s Message in the Communiqué is an ideal medium for this. In each issue of the Communiqué, the President can provide updates on current initiatives and progress towards attaining the strategic goals and increase member engagement by providing activities for members to promote the goals. The annual convention is another opportunity to promote the strategic goals to the membership. From the selection of the convention theme to the keynote speaker to the presidential strands, the NASP President has a significant influence on convention programming. The President can commission specific convention sessions to provide members with the knowledge and skills to engage in professional advocacy, practice, and graduate education aligned with the strategic goals.

The President also promotes the strategic goals among NASP leaders. By virtue of the office, the President serves as an ex-officio member of boards and committees across all program areas. This provides the President with a high-level perspective of the work occurring across the association related to the strategic goals. And, in partnership with the Board of the Directors, the President identifies specific activities to be delegated to the boards and committees and allocates resources and support as needed. To be responsive to the needs of the profession and the public, the President may create task forces to complete specific activities that may fall outside the purview of a standing board or committee, but are needed to advance the strategic goals.
Finally, on the public level, the NASP President serves as a spokesperson for the association and can engage in coalition building to develop partnerships with education, mental health, and community organizations to increase NASP’s reach and impact and provide additional leverage for its advocacy efforts.

Our strategic goals provide a roadmap for a comprehensive COVID response. This is the time for us to intensify our advocacy efforts to increase students’ access to high-quality school psychological services, practice in an expanded role consistent with the Practice Model, and promote school psychologists as mental and behavioral health providers. Moreover, the educational inequities illuminated and exacerbated by COVID call for school psychologists to be leaders in social justice advocacy. Despite the ongoing challenges generated by COVID, I see this as an opportunity for NASP to lean into our strategic goals and re-shape school psychology for the future.