

## **CURTIS MIDDLETON**

**State Delegate Candidate: South Dakota**

*Statement 2*

**NASP Leaders have adopted five strategic goals that guide the association's work. In your state, what are some gains being made in school psychology practice related to these goals, and what are some pressing challenges?**

The NASP strategic goals include social justice, workforce shortages, leadership development, NASP Practice Model and Mental/Behavioral Health providers are all fundamentally important to our role as school psychologists. I believe that several of these goals could be identified as pressing challenges in the state of South Dakota. Being a rural state, many of our families lack access to mental health services. This is certainly an area where additional advocacy could go a long way towards addressing the mental health needs of our students. Having said that, some districts in SD have been adopting universal screeners to help identify at-risk students earlier. School Psychologists in our state have been more actively involved with conducting screeners to help identify students who are either at-risk or who are displaying suicidal tendencies. Our state association has an opportunity to advance this important goal identified by NASP.

Another area of advocacy important to me is the school psychology workforce shortages. Again, living in a rural state it is increasingly difficult and more expensive for professionals to go into school psychology due to the limited availability of higher education programs in our state. The SDASP board could be instrumental in advocating for regional programs or programs that offer instruction in a variety of ways to increase student enrollment.

In summary, these are important goals in the coming years that need to be addressed nationwide, as well as locally. I hope to help in this effort and work together with others to reach solutions to help the students we serve.