The NASP Leadership Assembly has adopted three 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?

Some pressing challenges in Colorado revolve around a lack of high quality and diverse school psychologists in our workforce. Although there has been workforce improvement, an informal poll of some of our largest districts indicates shortage issues continue to plague our state. Jeffco has 12 unfilled positions, Denver Public Schools and DougCo each had two positions this year which were filled by either a contractor or a social worker. Poudre Schools filled all their open psychologists’ positions, although they lost a school psychologist mid-year. In the Pikes Peak region, Widefield district filled their two open positions this fall with contractors. In the south, the San Juan BOCES has historically struggled with filling psychologist positions therefore they developed a new model/position called ESS Team Specialist filled by ESS teachers and administrators. (Job description indicates not conducting cognitive nor affective evaluations.)

We have made gains around workforce shortages. According to the CDE, there has been an increase of 122 School Psychology licenses in one year. The current school psychologist rough ratio is 1:950 students for the state of Colorado. Although this is higher than the NASP recommendation of 1:500, this ratio has decreased over the last two years. Most of the 62 school psychology positions posted using the CDE centralized posting system were filled. Additionally, we have representation on the NASP Interstate Compact Taskforce for School Psychology Licensure for which NASP is partnering with the Department of Defense and the Council of State Governments to support the mobility of licensed school psychologists. According to the National Center for Interstate Compacts, “this additional licensing pathway will facilitate multistate practice among member states and reduce the barriers to license portability.” In time, this will allow school psychologists in other states to more easily gain licensure in Colorado.

Our state organization, CSSP, has rallied around the NASP Social Justice goal which states “school psychologists have the self-awareness and critical consciousness to engage in and advocate for socially just practices that protect the right of every student to receive high-quality educational access, opportunities, and experiences.” Our past president, Ron Glazier, was monumental in creating the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee to specifically address this goal for which Rasheeda Ouedraogo and Paige Powers are the co-chairs. The committee focused their work on ensuring proportionate diversity representing school psychologists in Colorado through presenting the NASP Exposure Project to all the high schools in the Cherry Creek School District last year. There are plans to expand the project to other districts in the state.

The DEI committee provided social justice professional development during the CSSP Summer Institute’s sessions “Facilitating Social Justice by Translating Critical Theories into School Psychology” and “Centering Families First in
our IEP Implementation.” In November the committee presented two DEI sessions at the annual CSSP conference in Vail.