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?

In Iowa, the work of our state association is guided by the NASP strategic goals. The NASP strategic goals include implementing the NASP practice model, creating solutions to workforce shortages, and advocating for socially just practices for every student.

The Iowa School Psychologists Association (ISPA) is actively engaging in advocacy related to each of these goals. The goal of our legislative and advocacy committee is to improve school psychological practice in Iowa in order to better align with the NASP practice model. Some of our legislative priorities include advocating for strategies to improve our practitioner to student ratios, having school psychologists explicitly recognized as mental health providers, and advocating for equitable school funding across the state. Our association works closely with our lobbyist in order to ensure legislators in the state capital hear our voices and to ensure we can attain our legislative goals.

At our state association conferences, we regularly provide professional development related to the NASP strategic goals. We have hosted sessions in recent years related to mental health services, ethics, behavior and academic interventions, self-care, and virtual services in order to ensure our practitioners are prepared to work in a more comprehensive role that matches the NASP practice model. We regularly host the NASP President at these conferences to ensure our attendees are aware of how NASP can support them. This year, we are engaging in targeted learning related to the social justice strategic goal. Additionally, for our upcoming conference, I am ensuring that each of our sessions are matched to the NASP practice model domains so attendees can immediately see which parts of the practice model their learning will be focused on.

Though we have made some gains related to the NASP strategic goals, there are still areas of need within our state. My first delegate statement talked about the challenges Iowa faces related to the shortage of school psychologists in the state. Our legislative advocacy is going to be important in remedying the shortages we face, but we cannot stop there. In addition to advocating for additional programs and support for school psychologists, we need to get additional applicants into our programs and additional practitioners into our schools. We also need to have additional graduate educators to fill any vacancies within new or existing graduate programs. As a state association, we need to make sure we are engaging in outreach to help students see school psychology as an option for their career. We have made gains in the awareness of the profession, but there is still work to do. As your state delegate, I plan to assist our state in examining our current practices, aligning our action steps with our goals, and enhancing our advocacy. These are the steps we need if we are going to remedy the shortages and contribute to the NASP strategic goals.