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?

One of the goals is to address workforce shortages. This has historically been an area in which PA was able to help other areas of the country as PA was a major exporter of school psychologists and trainers. Well, that is no longer the case. In recent years, PA has realized an increasing shortage of school psychologists and trainers in rural, suburban, and urban districts. Several years ago, a group was assembled, of which I was a part, to brainstorm ideas that could address the growing shortages. We met with legislators and other associations who were experiencing similar challenges. Each year, PA training programs send on average 100 interns out for the 1200-hour internship, and on average 30 of them leave for internships in other states, never to return to PA. This past summer, after many years of advocacy, and through our efforts, the PA School Code was amended to include $5 Million to pay for internships for school psychologists and other pupil service providers. This will help to remove the financial burden that the internship year creates and hopefully will increase the number of students remaining in PA to complete their internship. Hopefully, this will translate into greater numbers of school psychologists remaining in the pipeline in PA to be hired by PA school districts. The internship funding bill is a huge accomplishment as it makes PA 1 of only 2 states to have such a program! I am very proud of this accomplishment as I spearheaded this push for PA and will be on the oversight committee at PHEAA that will work out the implementation details. We cannot rest on this accomplishment. We may celebrate it, but we must now continue our efforts to ensure that this program is successful. At the same time, we must continue to advocate for other ideas that may assist in growing the pipeline. Ideas include but are not limited to – increasing graduate assistantship funding, loan forgiveness, increased funding and/or expansion of training programs so that more school psychologists may be produced, etc. Fortunately, the work we have conducted and accomplished has increased the clout of school psychology in PA. I am proud of this as I have been a leader in this effort and will continue to be involved.