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?

NASP’s three strategic goals pertain to implementing the NASP Model for Comprehensive and Integrated Psychological Services, addressing workforce shortages, and social justice. In Arizona, the Arizona Association of School Psychologists has realigned its mission, vision, and strategic goals to align with NASP’s goals. Advocating for the NASP Practice Model may be challenging because one can advocate for additional school psychology positions to deliver comprehensive services only to have the position go unfilled. Ideally, we can address the goal for the NASP Practice Model and the workforce shortage in tandem by recruiting diverse, well-qualified school psychologists to fill positions that encompass duties beyond psychoeducational assessment.

The state’s two major university training programs have expanded with satellite programs into the more populous Phoenix area to attract more graduate students. The Arizona Department of Education works collaboratively with AASP to help support and promote the profession. Arizona school districts send representatives to NASP to recruit school psychologists from all over the country. Other districts participate in out-of-state job fairs to recruit school psychologists. I do my part to support the field by presenting at district career fairs and to high school psychology students and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Regarding the goal of social justice, times are challenging in Arizona. We are dealing with a backlash against social-emotional learning and a political movement to strip protections away from vulnerable youth. School psychologists walk the line as school district employees caught between following new parents’ rights laws and best practices in prevention and intervention. Our ethical obligations as school psychologists are paramount. Hopefully, we are making gains toward social justice even if it is through small steps at the student, school, or system level. It can be challenging when there is a policy that runs afoul of what we know to be validated practices. I have relied on NASP since my first semester as a graduate student to provide me with research, ethical guidelines, and support. With these tools and connections, I strive to work through the barriers in place to make a difference in my school and community.