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?

The Hawai‘i Association of School Psychologists (HASP) recognizes and works to achieve NASP’s strategic goals in the State of Hawai‘i. Each year we receive a proclamation from the governor’s office during National School Psychology Week acknowledging the importance of School Psychologists, the critical shortages in the State, and the need for comprehensive services in line with the NASP Practice Model. In the past year the Hawai‘i Government Employees Association (HGEA), the Union that represents School Psychologists, has gained a deeper understanding of the work of School Psychologists. This deeper understanding has resulted in clearer and more effective advocacy work from HGEA by aligning their messaging with HASP and NASP around School Psychology and the NASP Practice Model.

Regarding workforce shortage solutions, we have partnered with key legislators at the State and Federal levels to raise awareness regarding the driving factors producing the severe shortage and underqualified staffing issues in the State. We have participated in interviews with local news outlets raising awareness of these issues as well. As a result, there is broad agreement that the State has a severe shortage of school-based mental and behavioral health staff and the barriers getting in the way. Our ongoing work is passing legislation and improving Union contracts to remove these barriers.

Finally, HASP promotes strategic goal c, social justice, in several ways. First and foremost we support and advocate for the sovereignty and land rights of the Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians). HASP formally recognizes that Her Majesty, Queen Lili‘uokalani, surrendered her kingdom under duress to save her people from bloodshed. Nearly all School Psychologists working in Hawai‘i are originally from the mainland. We are actively working with institutions of higher education in the State to establish a training program for School Psychology to train, recruit, and retain Native Hawaiian practitioners. We are simultaneously, through our Union work, addressing systemic issues that have pushed existing Native Hawaiian practitioners off of the islands. Finally, we are intentionally soliciting presenters for ongoing professional development that reflect the backgrounds and experiences of the local communities on the island, and are working to increase the level of multicultural organizational development that we engage in.