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?

Given my prior roles at the local and state levels, I've had the privilege of being involved in creating and implementing policies related to NASP's strategic goals. In Maryland, we've witnessed both successes and obstacles in the field of school psychology practice aligned with the below three NASP strategic goals.

There have been notable gains in our pursuit of the NASP Practice Model in Maryland. Many school districts have made significant progress in implementing this model, emphasizing comprehensive psychological services, including intervention and prevention consultation. This shift has enabled schools to adopt a more holistic approach to meeting our student's academic and emotional needs.

Nevertheless, we must acknowledge the persistent challenges of adopting the NASP Practice Model. Some school districts in Maryland face resource constraints and high student-to-school psychologist ratios. Additionally, ensuring consistent adherence to the model across diverse regions and districts presents an ongoing challenge that requires attention and innovative solutions.

We have seen promising gains in addressing workforce shortages within the school psychology field in Maryland. Collaborative efforts between universities and our state association contribute to a potential solution to this ongoing issue. Furthermore, various initiatives have been implemented to attract and retain a diverse group of school psychologists. These initiatives encompass financial incentives (continued advocacy with the Blueprint rollout), mentorship programs, and robust professional development opportunities aimed at supporting the workforce.

However, it's essential to recognize that workforce shortages remain a significant and pressing challenge in Maryland. The high demand for school psychological services often leads to overwhelming caseloads for professionals in the field. To effectively address this challenge, it is imperative to continue consistent investments in training programs, offer competitive compensation packages, and strive to improve working conditions to attract and retain school psychology professionals who can adequately meet the needs of our students and schools.

We have witnessed encouraging progress in our commitment to social justice within school psychology practice in Maryland. School psychologists have displayed a growing dedication to enhancing their self-awareness and critical consciousness concerning issues of equity and justice. At the state level, this heightened awareness has led to proactive engagement in various activities, such as training on culturally responsive topics, advocating for more inclusive policies, and MSPA’s Equitability core value; all contributing to a more equitable educational environment.
Yet, we acknowledge that challenges persist in implementing social justice practices. Some stakeholders may resist change, and systemic disparities in access to educational resources and opportunities continue to pose substantial hurdles. Achieving social justice in education is an intricate, long-term undertaking that demands sustained efforts to ensure that all school psychologists receive adequate training in social justice and possess the necessary resources to advocate effectively for the rights and well-being of all students.

In summary, Maryland has seen progress in implementing the NASP Practice Model and efforts to address workforce shortages and promote social justice in school psychology practice. However, challenges persist, especially in fully implementing the Practice Model equitably across the state, managing workforce shortages, and achieving equity in education.