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?

UASP has been working to support the needs of Utah school psychologists and the needs of Utah students. The goals and actions of the board in the past and especially in recent years has highly aligned with the three strategic goals set forth by NASP. I have been honored to support UASP and various UASP committees in various actions to support each of these goals. In thinking to the NASP Practice Model UASP has encouraged all school psychologists and local/state school leadership to support full implementation of the NASP Practice Model. I feel one of the most pressing challenges we face is that the role of a school psychologist and the tasks expected varies so widely across our state. Where one district may align highly with the Practice Model for their professionals a school district/charter 30 minutes in any direction may have a completely different utilization of their professionals. UASP continues to provide PD and advocate for a fuller utilization of the Practice Model at all school sites statewide.

Regarding social justice, UASP has facilitated various PD and strives to continue to learn and act in socially just manners. The political climate and public reaction to many practices surrounding educational practices has high variability in Utah, thus this is not a barrier to advocating for socially just practices but is a factor in implementation. When it comes to the area of shortages UASP has been very active in working with our legislature to increase awareness of our profession, advocate for lowered ratios, and encourage legislation and action be taken to support attraction and retention of professionals in Utah. Our association has also been collaborating with local IHEs to discuss how to increase the capacity of graduate students entering their studies. One of the most recent successes we had was during the 2023 Legislative season, where UASP and its membership were vocal and active to support two specific pieces of legislation/resolution (HB190 and HCR006). It is with pride to state that this advocacy paid off as school psychologists were added to the Grow Your Own Pipeline, thus adding our profession to the grant program provided to LEAs to award scholarships to current staff wanting to pursue a school psychology graduate program. One thing I have learned in my years with UASP and in particular with the Legislative Committee is that the work of advocacy is constant and can have momentary feelings of defeat, but each effort made DOES make a difference and the advocacy and efforts do add up with time and perseverance. I say this as a reminder that we will continue to face challenges in Utah for our students and our professionals, but I am dedicated and will strive to advocate for and alongside each of you regardless of if I am elected to this position or not.