2018 was an exciting year for NASBE as we marked our 60th anniversary and celebrated the many contributions and accomplishments of state boards of education throughout the years. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to read “NASBE at 60,” written by former president and CEO Kris Amundson and released at our annual conference in Denver, which chronicles how the history of U.S. public education parallels the evolution of state boards of education across the decades.

The crowning accomplishment of 2018 was the development of a dynamic strategic plan that will guide our organization into the next decade. Led by former chair John Kelly, the NASBE board of directors and staff crafted a powerful mission statement based on a set of core beliefs that will permeate all our association’s actions and decisions for years to come.

With equity and excellence at its center, the name of the plan says it all: “Our Members, Our Mission: A Strategic Plan for the National Association of State Boards of Education.” Our theory of action is this: If NASBE develops, supports, and empowers our member boards to strengthen public education systems by 1) recruiting, retaining, and engaging member boards; 2) building their knowledge and elevating their roles; 3) using a trusted, knowledgeable, and expert staff; and 4) focusing on equity, excellence, and efficient internal operations, then students of all backgrounds and circumstances will be prepared to succeed in school, work, and life.

A set of core beliefs undergirds this theory of action:

- **We believe in equity and excellence:** We believe that students of all races, genders, and circumstances deserve the supports they need to thrive in school. We believe all students can learn at high levels and must have the opportunity to do so through state policies that address their diverse learning needs.

- **We prioritize state leadership of public education:** We believe that state boards of education, in partnership with chief state school officers, governors, and legislatures, are best positioned to craft, promote, and oversee state education policies.

- **We empower citizen leaders:** We build the capacity of state board members to question, convene, and act boldly with and for students, educators, and families.

- **We elevate evidence in policymaking:** We ground our resources, tools, and services in the strongest evidence available and help our members make informed decisions in the best interest of students.

- **We build community:** We facilitate productive dialogue and nonpartisan exchange among members with diverse perspectives, creating lasting channels for the sharing of evidence-based strategies and solutions.

- **We collaborate:** We promote respectful collaboration, both among our members and between our members and the broader education community.

It is my distinct privilege to enter 2019 as NASBE’s new president and CEO. I look forward to working hand in hand with each of you as we seek to elevate state boards of education nationally and within your states. I’ll be using this space in the Standard to talk with you about our strategic goals and our progress toward implementation. Contact me at any time with questions, suggestions, or any other matter of importance to you and your colleagues.