Advocacy has always been an integral component of effective school counseling (Field & Baker, 2004), however now more than ever, due to a growing diversified society and the specific needs of students who are considered marginalized, school counselors have been identified as key persons to serve as social justice advocates for all students. The identification of school counselors in this phenomenon is an effort to level the educational playing field by ensuring that each student receives just and equitable access to a quality education. Subsequently to validate the importance of the advocacy role for school counselors and to ensure school counselors’ advocacy efficiency, Ratts, DeKruyf, & Chen-Hayes (2007) outlined a social justice advocacy framework for school counselors based on the American Counseling Association (ACA) advocacy competencies. The framework discusses the important of school counselors being social justice change agents, the need of advocacy in schools, and how school counselors should employ the competencies.

However despite the social justice advocacy calling, not much research has been done on school counselors’ perceived knowledge of the ACA advocacy competencies or on their perceptions concerning this advocacy role. Thus, this dissertation focuses on the areas of perceived knowledge and perceptions of roles within a high school setting. A qualitative study using the phenomenology methodology was employed. Through this methodology, in-depth interviews were conducted to allow practicing high school
counselors the opportunity share their views.

Findings from this study will add to the literature of this phenomenon and will provide implications to support, guide and encourage all high school counselors in becoming true social justice advocates.

Keywords: advocacy, school counselors, knowledge perceptions, competency