**Statement of Purpose**

In the past decade there has been a push to include character education in the curriculum at all age levels. With the changes in standards needing to be met and the constant focus on test scores and results, teachers constantly have to alter their curriculum to meet these standards and federal requirements. Many classroom teachers already have a full curriculum schedule without adding character education. One way of implementing character education would be to place a major emphasis on character within the elementary school counseling curriculum.

The Character Counts organization has outlined a character education program that is compliant with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) standards. (Character Counts Organization) The program outlines the six pillars of character that will be the focus of this classroom-based counseling curriculum. The counselors will implement this program through classroom-based interventions on a monthly basis per grade level. The six pillars include, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Because these pillars of character overlap into all aspects of the students lives, little reminders about the pillars could be placed throughout the school, and faculty and staff could all have the valuable role of reinforcing these pillars.

The primary role of the counselor in this curriculum would be to educate the students about what each pillar means and about tools, or ways the students can work to build a strong character. “Character education involves specific, targeted efforts to communicate and integrate into the lives of children and youth widely shared, core character qualities (e.g. caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness).” (Ohio Partners in Character Education) These pillars of character are meant to positively impact the academic and social success of the students. “Professional school counselors can proactively combat unhealthy behavioral choices and their negative consequences by evaluating and adopting a character education framework.” (Britzman, 2005) Through combating unhealthy choices school counselors can aide students in their own personal growth, which will allow these students to obtain the skills necessary to make healthy choices. “Students who work hard, maintain a positive attitude and fight through adversity are able to get the most out of their academic abilities.” (Orndorff, 2005)