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# *Preface*

Teachers face enormous legal challenges as they attempt to execute their legal duties of providing instruction, supervision, and a safe environment for students under their care. To properly fulfill these important duties, teachers must be aware of the legal forces that affect them on a daily basis. Teachers must also possess the necessary legal knowledge that will allow them to make legally sound decisions as they attempt to operate within the boundaries of the U.S. Constitution, federal and state laws, and school district policy.

The goal of this book is to provide a comprehensive set of carefully crafted legal questions and responses that will provide invaluable information to assist teachers in performing their duties effectively while minimizing their exposure to legal challenges. The information contained in this book is designed to be used by preservice teachers, inservice teachers, educators, and policymakers as a means of familiarizing them with basic aspects of law that impact them daily. Familiarity with aspects of law will lessen their anxiety and provide clarity regarding practices that are legally defensible and those that are not. In all cases, teachers and other professional educators should consult their school district policies for the specific application of law to their particular duties and responsibilities.

This text is not intended to provide legal advice but rather to present a wide range of legal topics in question-and-answer format based on the U.S. Constitution, federal statutes, and court decisions. The text is intended as a general guide regarding legal issues. While the information is deemed accurate at the time of publication, it does not constitute specific legal advice for teachers. These questions and answers are intended to provide guidance and direction for teachers and policymakers as they perform their professional duties.

One salient feature of this book is the inclusion of carefully selected tables that amplify and reinforce concepts covered in various chapters. Additionally, chapter guides are included that summarize key concepts discussed in each chapter. The text is written in a very simple and practical format free of legal jargon. It provides for easy reading and a direct response to legal questions raised throughout the book. Legal citations are

provided to support various topics discussed, thereby allowing the reader to readily identify the legal source of authority related to specific topics. This text does not cover all issues regarding school law, but it does address legal issues that should be most pertinent to preservice teachers, inservice teachers, and professional educators. Finally, the text concludes with a resources section that includes selected amendments to the U.S. Constitution as well as annotated federal statutes that provide additional background information to assist teachers in understanding the relevance of the legal framework to the daily operation of their schools. A compilation of professional associations for teachers is included. A glossary of relevant terms is also provided to reinforce an understanding of concepts discussed in the text.

Although this text includes a range of legal questions and issues confronting teachers, some issues facing teachers may not have been presently addressed by the courts. However, the book does provide practical and useful information that will enable teachers to perform their important duties more effectively as they provide an optimal learning environment for students.