

What a headache lawyers and the law can be when you're trying to run a K-12 school or a district—or just teach in the classroom. When can you just use old-fashioned common sense and “wing it”? When must you call the attorney before you say a word? Who knows? Is there any place at all where others' threats of “calling the lawyer” don't unblissfully intrude? So we asked a lawyer, and picked the best: Brian Schwartz, who speaks nationwide, practices law, teaches others at college, and is the associate director and general counsel to the Illinois Principals Association. The kindest favor? Brian writes about the law in easy-to-understand English! Our contention is that there is a huge “middle ground” between the law and administrative leadership and on-the-spot (or long-range) problem-solving. But how and where do we find it? And what does it look like? So we brought in the best K-12 administrator we could find: Jim Burgett, who has been chosen both Illinois Superintendent of the Year and Illinois Administrator of the Year, was a Blue Ribbon Award winner, and has written three popular books: *Teachers Change Lives 24/7*, *What Every Superintendent Needs to Know*, and *The Perfect School*. We figured that knowing the law is only half the answer. That blending it with common sense and applying it with prudence and love completes the process of solving and preventing problems. This book, *Finding Middle Ground in K-12 Education: Balancing Best Practices and the Law*, is the result! Finally, we asked Jim and Brian to discuss a dozen of the most serious everyday administrative topics, and begged them, please, to keep their text practical and usable, give us believable examples—and maybe slip in some appropriate humor too! What were the topics they addressed? ? How to Keep Yourself Legally Safe; ? Student Free Speech and Due Process Rights; ? Search and Seizure; ? Student Discipline for Off-Campus Conduct; ? Educational Issues Regarding Homeschool Students; ? Safeguarding Student Privacy and Records; ? Teacher, Administrator, and Board Member Rights and Responsibilities; ? Dealing with Divorce, Difficult Parents, and Other Family Issues; ? Managing Money and Student Activity Accounts; ? Accommodating Gay, Transsexual, and Other Minority Student Populations, and ? Technology and the Schoolhouse. Mix in 18 case studies and this book is a must for every educator's and school board member's reference shelf! As you will read, Brian has a masterful way of making complex laws understandable, and Jim has a gifted hand in creating win-win solutions. We also dare you not to break out laughing every few pages. What do others say about *Finding Middle Ground in K-12 Education*? “... a great book... outstanding resource for all teachers and administrators.” Dr. Brad Colwell, President-Elect, Education Law Association “... should be required reading for all ed leadership law classes--practical and relevant.” Jason Leahy, Executive Director, Illinois Principals Association “... a welcome addition to the professional libraries of administrators, teachers, and parents.” Charles J. Russo, J.D., Ed.D., Panzer Chair in Education and Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Dayton. ”... a must for school administrators' desks.” Dr. Michael Johnson, Education Director, Illinois Association of School Boards The Middle Ground is that hallowed ground between leadership and school law. Here's a map that helps you find it when help is most needed!

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