Contents

Foreword v

Preface vii

Introduction 1

- Why Rational Numbers? 1
- Understanding Rational Numbers 2
- The Big Ideas and Essential Understandings 3
- Benefits for Teaching, Learning, and Assessing 4
- Ready to Begin 5

Chapter 1 7

Rational Numbers: The Big Ideas and Essential Understandings

- Extending Our Use of Numbers: Big Idea 1 10
  - From counting to measurement 11
  - Defining *rational number* 13
  - Finding closure with rational numbers 17
- Making Sense of Rational Numbers: Big Idea 2 19
  - *Unit* as the basis for interpretation 19
  - Multiple interpretations: Rational numbers as part-whole relationships 20
  - Multiple interpretations: Rational numbers as measures 21
  - Multiple interpretations: Rational numbers as quotients 24
  - Multiple interpretations: Rational numbers as ratios 25
  - Multiple interpretations: Rational numbers as operators 27
  - An expanded view of *unit* 28
- Rational Numbers and Equivalence: Big Idea 3 30
  - Representing rational numbers as equivalent fractions 30
  - Rational numbers and density 34
  - Representing rational numbers in decimal form 36
- Computing with Rational Numbers: Big Idea 4 42
  - Interpreting rational number operations and algorithms 42
  - Estimation and mental math with rational numbers 55
- Conclusion 56

Chapter 2 59
Connections: Looking Back and Ahead in Learning

Building from Whole Numbers to Rational Numbers 59
Counting, unitizing, and multiplication 59
Fractions and division 60
Decimals and place value 60

Using Rational Numbers across the Curriculum 61
Measurement 61
Ratios and proportional reasoning 61
Percents 62
Probability and data analysis 63
Algebra 64

Extending beyond Rational Numbers 66
Negatives of fractions 66
Irrational and real numbers 66
Other numbers 67

Conclusion 68

Chapter 3 69
Challenges: Learning, Teaching, and Assessing

Relating Rational Numbers to Whole Numbers 69
Shift 1—From unrelated system to natural extension 70
Facilitating Shift 1 70

Multiple Interpretations of Rational Numbers and Units 72
Shift 2—From one model to many representations 73
Facilitating Shift 2 74

Understanding Rational Number Equivalence 75
Shift 3—From whole number–based to equivalence-based comparisons 76
Facilitating Shift 3 76

Making Sense of Rational Number Operations 77
Shift 4—From "rules" to sense making 78
Facilitating Shift 4 78

Conclusion 80

References 81