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It has been nearly two years since schools were last "normal." To put this in perspective, elementary school students in grades two or lower have no experience of schooling that does not include pandemic protocols - masks, social distancing, hand sanitizer, Chromebooks, quarantine, online lessons, angry parents, and "zombied" teachers. Their mates in grade three have not fared any better. They have had more years of pandemic schooling than normal school experiences. Students in higher education were not spared this deviation from the norm. The current class of college sophomores survived a traumatic high school exit experience (truncated sports seasons and canceled graduation festivities) just to miss out on traditional college entry rituals that have been handed down over many generations. Some college sophomores did not even set foot on a college campus throughout their freshman year. These are just not normal times. It is not normal for the students and certainly not normal for their educators, many of whom are deeply attached to the routine and normalcy of working in schools.

It is therefore not surprising that as the COVID-19 pandemic lingers, many educators are beginning to wonder, "...how much longer can we go on like this? How much more of this can we really take?". A number of educators are answering these questions with an unprecedented wave of attrition in the field brought on by stress and burnout. Others are doing their best to hold the fort and keep the flag flying. For instance, despite the high levels of burnout and attrition, there are clear indications that educators and schools can adapt to new teaching and learning methods. From PreK to university, educators at all levels have worked tirelessly using technology and tenacity to provide consistent instruction despite the challenges of COVID-19. However, because of the burden that unexpected change can levy, all teachers have undoubtedly experienced a

sense of enervation. This change may seem less taxing for the digitally savvy, but the pandemic has induced feelings of stress and frustration for others who prefer the brick-and-mortar setting.

And although educators are accustomed to and are typically resilient to changing circumstances, the COVID-19 pandemic has proven to be a formidable foe, infringing deeply upon our personal lives and attacking us on all fronts. Many educators have experienced the loss of jobs, loved ones, savings, and some are struggling to motivate themselves for tasks that were once considered routine. And even when we have made efforts to ameliorate these challenges with a positive mindset, our actions are stifled by the ongoing struggle of sifting through the conflicting information about the pandemic coming from traditional and social media outlets. For educators, extensive consumption of unverified information and rhetoric can have dire consequences as these biases will seep into their classroom discussions and practices. As such, we must remain vigilant to ward off the threats from misinformation aimed at obstructing teaching and learning. In other words, we must be ready and prepared for the battle that lies ahead.

In the parlance of teacher and school administrator preparatory programs, we describe candidates as being prepared for work in "the trenches." This metaphor draws from peacetime trenches, the type created to facilitate construction, water lines, and other development. But trenches can also be a tool for warfare, destruction, or used to prevent progress. The latter are dug deeper and are well-fortified, often leading to a stalemate. This trench warfare statement was the experience of troops during the First World War, during which troops spent weeks at a time hunkered down in their trenches. The physical and psychological damage resulting from the trench warfare in World War I was profound.

So as we begin to step out of the trenches of the current war front, we must remember the lesson of the previous trench wars. We should be prepared to extend olive branches of peace and work together to resolve the current war at school. We owe it to ourselves, students, parents, and the world around us. The arduous task of delivering sound education is a constant battle as threats will continue to emerge from their trenches disguised as social justice, political correctness, or religious morality. They will also manifest as discouragement, fatigue, worry, or distraction as we attempt to cope with the challenges brought on by the pandemic. Educators must be ready to combat these adversaries with the fervent and anchored resolve that comes with the momentous responsibility of helping shape the society of the future. We can fight our way out of these trenches with

the strength and energy teachers bring to the classroom each day.

Indeed, our commission as educators is to inspire students to overcome challenges and identify strengths. These enriching experiences will effectively prepare students for the daunting and competitive workforce that lies beyond the four classroom walls. Amid the pandemic, educators must not lose sight of the integral role that education plays in the development and advancement of society. Therefore, as the editorial team of JGER, we encourage all educators to hold the line and continue to inspire upcoming generations, having complete confidence that even this current trench war will come to an end.