

Dear Senator Champion,

Two articles in the Winter 2020-2021 *American Educator*, published by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) are relevant to the Education Committee's work. This is the first of the two.

Knowing that the Senate Education Committee is looking closely into improving reading, I attach "[Identifying/Teaching Students with Significant Reading Problems](#)." The article covers research about helping children learn to read, noting that, unlike walking and talking, reading is not a natural process. Catching up "is very difficult if mastering the alphabetic principle is delayed. That is why **prevention is more effective and less costly than remediation**" (see p. 6 top right).

The section "How Should Educational Systems be Organized So That the Vast Majority of Students Learn to Read" (p. 7, top) has three recommendations, one of which is utilizing RtI/MTSS. Currently, Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is underutilized and inconsistent in Vermont educational practice. When MTSS is appreciated and effective, educational outcomes will improve. The Agency of Education's *VTmtss 2019 Field Guide* weakens this effective teacher tool.

The sidebar "18 Common Misunderstandings of Dyslexia" on p. 6-7 also contains good information. #6 points out "Many educators have not had opportunities to develop the knowledge necessary to provide evidence based screening , assessment, and interventions for students with dyslexia." Several of your testimonies have observed that this is true for Vermont.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Gardner-Morse, M. Ed.  
Literacy Tutor