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Docket ID: ED-2017-OS-0074

Name: The “Dear Colleague Letter and Resource Guide on ADHD”

URL: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201607-504-adhd.pdf>

I request that the Department of Education retain the Dear Colleague Letter and Resource Guide on Students with ADHD, issued July 26, 2016, as active guidance.

ADHD is the most common mental health disorder among children and teens in the United States today. It affects the academic progress, social success, self-esteem, and overall happiness of 6.4 million American children. Without support and adequate services to mitigate ADHD symptoms in academic and social settings, a child may suffer poor grades, school failure, and long-term damage to self-esteem and learning.

The Dear Colleague Letter provides clear, well-informed guidance to help teachers and administrators identify and support struggling students with ADHD. It ensures that students with ADHD have access to a free and public education (FAPE), their guaranteed right under U.S. law. In the year since its release, the Dear Colleague Letter has received no legal, political, or scholarly objections. Furthermore, complaints to the Department of Education regarding discrimination against students with ADHD will almost surely continue to decrease as the Dear Colleague letter is adapted and heeded by schools across the country.

When ADHD symptoms are left unaddressed at school, the entire classroom can suffer devastating consequences. By retaining the provisions outlined in the Dear Colleague Letter, the DOE is empowering schools to provide more efficient academic support, save money, and bolster their students’ learning opportunities. This provision does not meet the criteria for elimination. It is not “outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective;” it does not “impose costs that exceed benefits;” and it does not “create a serious inconsistency.” Indeed, it is essential and should remain in place.

My son Jack struggled prior to his diagnosis of ADHD in December 2015. We again struggled to find the right medication to help focus on his schoolwork and be a better person in the classroom. Without the 504 services from his middle school and its teachers, Jack likely would have a C or D student with less self-esteem than he has now. With the 504 services and the support of his teachers, Jack went from Cs in trimester 1 to straight As in trimester 2 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. His 504 services have continued and are especially important in his freshman year of high school. The 504 services and the support of the teaching community should not be discontinued and must be maintained. Otherwise, we will have tens of thousands of kids struggling around this country.

Sincerely,

John Carreon