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 It is not “outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective;” it does not “impose costs that exceed benefits;” and it does not “create a serious inconsistency.”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.

Our son is now in 5th grade and it has been an absolute struggle for our entire family to get our son the appropriate accommodations he needs and deserves. Not only does he have inattentive ADHD, he also has life threatening food allergies. Even with the few accommodations we have fought to so hard to get for him, it is still a daily struggle. We obviously cannot be in the classroom with him to ensure he stays on track and “focused.” The 504 plan and constant communication with his teachers and guidance counselor are the only way we can work to help him reach his full potential as a student and a student of life. We refused to sit back and watch him struggle simply because he learns differently than his peers that require little to no assistance in the classroom or at home. He has the absolute right to the accommodations available to him to level the playing field so that he can be successful and confident in his abilities and skills. Taking away these accommodations will be devastating to not only our family but thousands upon thousands of families across our country. Please do the right thing for our son and ALL children with ADHD.

Sincerely,  
Eric and Sulem Aho