Thoughts on the initial HS evaluation

Its all in the referral

Referral questions

- Has there been a referral earlier in career? Check IEP online; check with parents
- Does transcript and grading history (check comprehensive file) indicate continual struggles with subject matter or is this something that arose suddenly (environmental barrier?)
- Does state assessment history show perpetual struggle (level 1) or did the struggles begin sometime after 3rd grade?
- Is there universal screening data to validate underachievement-e.g. DIBELS, Easy CBM, 3-minute write? I suggest that all three are given as part of the 25-day decision
- Are we really talking specially designed instruction or accommodations such as modified assignments or extra time (504)?

Alternative assessments

- In HS, I am running into two main 'motivators' for testing:
  - The high stakes assessment and the possibility of extra time in case of disability (this heads to 504)
  - 'Can't vs. won't' in terms of performance

Testing need for extra time

- Time to get creative- can you come up with a small battery (screening) that will demonstrate the need for extra time?
- ORF, the one subtest on the KABC-pattern reasoning, where you earn bonuses for thinking fast-
- Most ADHD kids I've ever met don't use the time they have- they may be distractible, but darn if they are going to spend more time on a test

Testing "can't vs. won't"

- This is all about motivation
- Take something short and sweet- the 3-minute write to prompt.
- Can you get the student to write a great paragraph or two in three minutes if prompt is interesting and a chocolate bar is at stake if they do a good job? Always works for me. If chocolate not sufficient- a long recess or lunch; some one:one game time with psych; date with a cheerleader etc.

Bottom line

- USE your 25 day pre-formal assessment to screen the student and make some preliminary hypotheses. Don't just jump into an initial evaluation at HS. Train your team to get all the available data before meeting (cum file transcript; history of state testing; etc.)

- Strengthen your SST (pre-referral) process- Team has to learn how to look for clues regarding possible sped and the data that would probably exclude student from sped