**Informal Exclusionary Discipline Report**

What it is:

* This legislation would direct the Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) within the Tennessee Comptroller’s office to study the use of informal exclusionary discipline practices in Tennessee schools

The problem:

* Students with disabilities are uniquely subject to informal exclusionary discipline practices, which includes informal removal/off-books suspension, inappropriate use of homebound placement, inappropriate use of shortened school days, threats of expulsion over placement and expansive and time-consuming threat assessments
* These practices wrongfully exclude students from school, denying them a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) and their legally entitled due process rights
* This exclusion negatively impacts the academic, social and behavioral progress of students subjected to these practices
* These practices are, by nature, informal, which limits information and data to show the extent of their use, let alone their existence in Tennessee schools

Precedent:

* Oregon passed legislation in 2022 that provided extensive parental rights around the use of shortened school days
* The process that led to this legislation included a neutral, 3rd party report on informal exclusionary practices, which was critical to the successful passage of the shortened school days law

The solution:

* Establish the presence and extent of the use of informal exclusionary discipline practices in Tennessee school by commissioning a report from OREA
* In subsequent years, use the report to inform and develop legislation that addresses the use of these practices, with the intent of greatly reducing their prevalence or eliminating them altogether

Obstacles:

* The existence of these informal exclusionary discipline practices has been outright rejected by multiple influential legislators
* Leadership in the General Assembly may limit mandates to OREA over capacity, and it is possible there are several competing directives to OREA for research
* The Department of Education may oppose this bill, believing that it would reflect poorly on Tennessee schools and the department