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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SFRA REMAND TRIAL SET TO BEGIN ON FEBRUARY 14 NJ SUPREME COURT DENIES STATE'S APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION

Newark, NJ -- February 1, 2011

The January 13 order of the NJ Supreme Court appointed a Special Master to conduct a fact-finding hearing on the impact of cuts in school aid under the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA) on educational programs in districts across the state. In its order, the Court instructed Judge Peter E. Doyne, the Special Master, to issue a report on his fact-finding to the Supreme Court by March 31.

To meet this deadline, Judge Doyne advised the Attorney General and Education Law Center that the fact-finding hearing will begin on February 14. It is expected that the hearing will take one to two weeks.

In the meantime, the State filed a separate motion on January 26 asking the Supreme Court to extend the deadline beyond March 31. They also asked the Court to allow evidence of the State's budget difficulties to be included in the fact-finding proceeding.

Today, the State's requests were denied by the Court.

The State, which bears the burden of proving that the school funding cuts did not affect the districts' core educational program, will be the first party to call witnesses on February 14. ELC, which argues that aid cuts to schools in the FY2011 State Budget are unconstitutional in light of the Supreme Court's May 2009 decision in support of a fully funded SFRA, will have the opportunity to cross-examine the State's witnesses.

ELC expects to have witnesses from representative school districts across the state make presentations at the fact-finding hearing on the impact of the funding cuts on their students.

It is expected that ELC will begin to call witnesses the second week of the hearing.

The public is welcome in the courtroom during the remand hearing, which will take place at the Bergen County Courthouse located at 10 Main Street in Hackensack. For directions to the courthouse, please see: <http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/directions/berdirect.htm>.

Related Story:

[**Court Directs Hearing on Impact of State Cuts On NJ Students**](#)

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