



New Jersey Center for
Teaching and Learning
www.njctl.org

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The Gateway to the Future for Science Education

The Progressive Science Initiative (PSI) is the gateway to the future for our children's science education. According to CTL spokesperson, Timothy Panebianco, "there are over 5,000 students taking physics in three urban districts in New Jersey. We already see a significant increase in the number of students going on to advanced sciences in Newark, Paterson and Jersey City, where we launched PSI less than two years ago and we predict a dramatic impact over the next few years. PSI is a forward thinking approach to a nagging problem that continues to plague our nation."

The Nation has cause for concern over student performance in science education, according to the [2009 NAEP results](#) released this week. The report revealed that only 21% of the 12th graders tested performed at or above the proficiency level in science. It also revealed what CTL Director Dr. Robert Goodman already knew, "that for students to be internationally competitive in science, they need access to more advanced science courses, including physics."

NAEP results demonstrate that students who took biology, chemistry and physics performed higher on average than those who took biology and chemistry only. Those taking biology and other sciences, without physics and chemistry, performed on average in the lowest group.

CTL has begun to remediate the situation. Dr. Goodman said that "the CTL believes that all students can learn science and that all students should have access to advanced science courses. The PSI approach is to ensure that every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, location or academic ability, has access to a highly effective science education."

On average, only about a dozen teachers each year receive an endorsement to teach physics in New Jersey," according to Panebianco. So CTL partnered with Kean University to create courses that lead to a physics endorsement.

This is a solutions oriented approach to address the critical shortage of science teachers. In Newark the number of physics teachers jumped from 14 to about 35 in less than two years. More than 80 teachers are teaching physics in Paterson, Newark and Jersey City, as a result of

PSI. Dr. Goodman stated, "This is still not sufficient to meet the needs of all of our students but PSI is a dramatic step in the right direction for the future of our children."

CTL is an independent 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to empower teachers to lead school reform. For more on CTL, check out www.njctl.org

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