

THE SCIENCE DIVIDE: WHY DO LATINO AND BLACK STUDENTS LEAVE STEM MAJORS AT HIGHER RATES? BY MORGAN SMITH.

Reviews of data from Beginning Postsecondary Study, which examines the racial and ethnic gaps that persist across post-secondary fields.

.....

This news article highlights conclusions from a review of data from the Beginning Postsecondary Study (BPS). The authors of the study discussed in the article are Catherine Rieggle-Crumb and Yasmiyn Irizarry (University of Texas at Austin) and Barbara King (Florida International University). Their longer study, entitled “Does STEM Stand Out? Examining Racial/Ethnic Gaps in Persistence Across Postsecondary Fields is available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.3102/0013189X19831006>

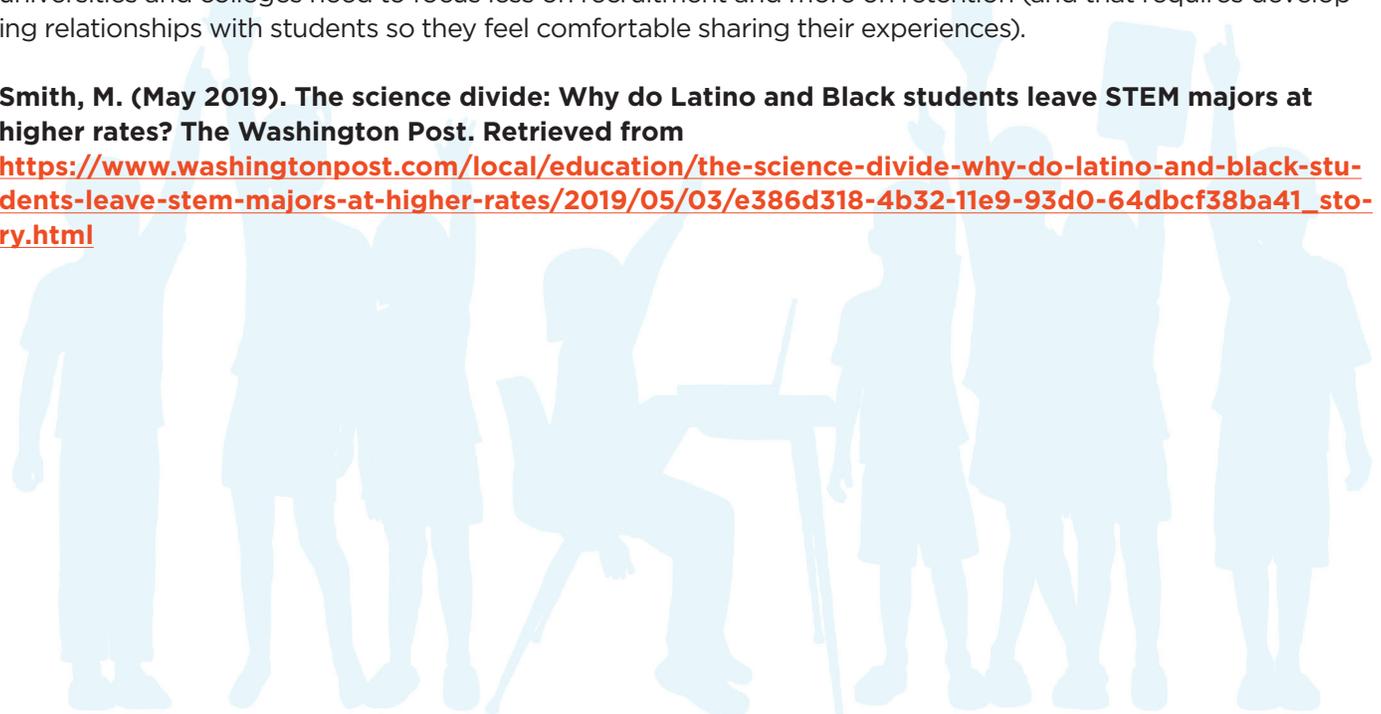
Black and Latino undergraduates transfer or drop out of STEM at higher rates than their white peers (based on data about more than 5,600 black and Latino students from the National Center for Education Statistics).

The data revealed that students from all three categories entered STEM programs at about the same rates (19% of white students choose STEM, 20% of Latino students and 18% of black students do as well). But the change in majors and dropout rates differed depending on the group (changing majors: 37% Latino, 40% black, 29% white; and dropout rates: 20% Latino, 26% black, 13% white). Data from other competitive fields did not display this level of variation for the three groups.

The study’s authors did not identify a cause or causes for the higher level of change and drop out in STEM programs, but they suggested possible factors: discrimination and bias in science and technology fields, and the greater proportion of Latino and black students coming from low-income families with less access to academic resources.

The reporter cites a Latino student at the University of Washington who said that feelings of exclusion and micro-aggressions (indirect, subtle and unintentional forms of discrimination) made it difficult to concentrate on her studies. The article concludes with the statement of a program administrator at Purdue University that universities and colleges need to focus less on recruitment and more on retention (and that requires developing relationships with students so they feel comfortable sharing their experiences).

Smith, M. (May 2019). The science divide: Why do Latino and Black students leave STEM majors at higher rates? The Washington Post. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/the-science-divide-why-do-latino-and-black-students-leave-stem-majors-at-higher-rates/2019/05/03/e386d318-4b32-11e9-93d0-64dbcf38ba41_story.html



Thanks to generous support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Our Neighborhood*, is a compilation of stories and research from the family engagement field. It is intended to be a living repository and guide for STEM Learning Ecosystems and other communities interested in cultivating strong community partnerships to prepare the next generation.

This annotated bibliography was compiled by TIES for *Our Neighborhood*.