

# NATIONAL SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS TROUBLING GAPS AND BIG OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN HISPANIC STEM PIPELINE

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**WASHINGTON, DC** – The Student Research Foundation in partnership with the Hispanic Heritage Foundation (HHF) and Google.org released [Gen Z Hispanics and STEM](#) -- a report designed to deepen the understanding of the STEM educational and career aspirations of Hispanic high school students and inform evidence-based strategies to strengthen the STEM pipeline. The report was published with additional support from the Research Consortium on STEM Career Pathways, which includes APPT, National Girls Collaborative Project, NAPE, and Destination Imagination.

The STEM report, which analyzed data from a national survey of more than 16,000 high school students, comes at a critical moment for the U.S. labor market with demands for STEM workers [continually rising](#), making the STEM education of today's students more critical as teachers navigate teaching through the pandemic.

Among the findings: Interest in STEM among Hispanics rivals that of their White/Asian peers — groups historically overrepresented in STEM. Hispanics and the overrepresented groups (or “ORGs”) like STEM subjects (86% and 89%, respectively) and aspire to STEM careers (47% and 50%) at similar rates, but Hispanics continue to be underrepresented in STEM occupations.

The new report identifies four key differences that may affect retention of Hispanic students in the STEM pipeline:

• **Participation.** Hispanic high school seniors are less likely than ORGs to report taking seven or more STEM courses (20% vs. 31%). Contributing factors include lack of access to STEM courses and fewer connections to adults with STEM-related experience. This preparation gap can make it harder for Hispanics who aspire to STEM careers to be accepted into postsecondary STEM programs.

• **Preparation.** Hispanic students have lower GPAs than their peers. Among students aspiring to STEM careers, fewer Hispanics report being “A” students than ORGs (34% vs. 52%).

• **Confidence.** Hispanics lack confidence in their STEM abilities. Fewer Hispanics score high on STEM confidence than ORGs (26% vs. 31%). The gap in STEM confidence widens among Seniors with 7+ STEM courses, with fewer Hispanics than ORGs scoring high on STEM confidence (42% vs. 53%).

• **College plans:** Among seniors, Hispanics more frequently aspire to attend community college than ORGs (26% vs. 14%). The finding is consistent with previous research that community colleges are key to serving Hispanic students interested in STEM careers.

“By activating today’s Hispanic and Latino youth as a talent pipeline for these fields, we can tap into a new generation of STEM leaders to spearhead innovation and progress,” said Sylvia Acevedo, CEO of Girl Scouts of the USA, and contributor to the report’s forward. “We’re deepening our understanding of why these gaps in opportunity and attainment have persisted—and strengthening our ability to address them. We have the chance to do better for this generation and the next, especially for girls.”

The report also compares gender differences that may affect Hispanics’ retention in the STEM pipeline. Although Hispanic females are more likely than males to report being “A” students (40% vs. 29%), they are less likely than Hispanic males to have a favorite STEM subject (81% vs. 91%), aspire to STEM careers (28% vs. 64%), or score high on STEM confidence (22% vs. 30%).

In addition to the data, the report provides evidence-based insights into how to retain Hispanic students in the STEM

pipeline. Suggested actions include:

• **Continuing efforts to raise Hispanics' interest in STEM.** Schools must work to maintain the momentum that has boosted interest among Hispanic students in STEM courses and careers.

• **Ensuring STEM equity regardless of ZIP code.** Schools must provide high-quality STEM curriculum, then find ways to equalize enrollment rates in STEM courses among Hispanics and ORGs.

• **Boosting academic achievement of Hispanic students.** Legislators and community leaders should collaborate to address inequalities, which may include home access to the Internet, bias in assessments and access to mentoring and tutoring.

• **Increasing STEM confidence.** Educators, and other supportive adults, must make concerted efforts to encourage Hispanic students, particularly female Hispanics, in order to retain them in the STEM pipeline.

• **Supporting postsecondary education across the spectrum.** The strength of community colleges may determine whether Hispanics and ORGs have equitable access to the STEM pipeline.

“STEM fields are missing out on too many talented Hispanic students because of a lack of confidence and preparation—not a lack of aspiration or potential,” said Jose Antonio Tijerino, President and CEO of the Hispanic Heritage Foundation. “Evidence-based interventions to retain more Hispanics in the STEM pipeline can help more students achieve their dreams, provide the U.S. with the talent to fill STEM jobs, and maximize America’s potential to leverage our unique advantage in global competition: our diversity.”

As one in four school age children are Hispanic (25%), engaging Latinos in tech and all STEM fields—such as through Google.org’s effort with HHF and YWCA to engage and teach 1 million Latino/a students to code—is key to Gen Z’s success.

Download the full report, *Gen Z Hispanics & STEM*, [here](#).

### **About the Student Research Foundation**

The Student Research Foundation, a nonprofit research organization, produces analysis and research that helps young people evaluate their post-high school education and career options. SRF believes success comes from having clear goals and understanding for achieving those goals. By defining career pathways and helping students reach those paths, the foundation strengthens the nation, its economy and its citizens. Follow the Student Research Foundation on Twitter (@SRF\_HQ) and visit: [www.StudentResearchFoundation.org](http://www.StudentResearchFoundation.org).

### **About the Hispanic Heritage Foundation**

The Hispanic Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit originally established by the White House in 1987, inspires, prepares, positions and connects minority leaders in the classroom, community and workforce to meet America’s priorities. HHF also promotes cultural pride, accomplishment, and the great promise of the community through public awareness campaigns seen by millions. HHF is headquartered in Washington, DC, and has offices in Los Angeles, New York, and Miami. (Visit [www.HispanicHeritage.org](http://www.HispanicHeritage.org)). Follow Hispanic Heritage Foundation on Facebook and IG @HispanicHeritage, and @HHFoundation on Twitter.

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