



Photos by Michele Freda

Terrence Shingler, Mike Morgan (center) and Charles Grayson (camera) of the Center for New Media and Promotion's Digital Media Branch create a video about the Statistics in Schools program by interviewing Westminster School students Hannah Yi and Kwaku Acquah on Nov. 6 at Census Bureau headquarters.

Eighth-Graders Tour Census Bureau Headquarters and Help Out Statistics in Schools Program

By Vicki Glasier
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Thirty middle school students recently spent a day in Suitland, Md., to learn more about the Census Bureau as a part of the Statistics in Schools program.

The students, eighth-graders from Westminster School in Annandale, Va., toured the headquarters building on Nov. 6 with their math teacher, Jim Hwang. Hwang is one of approximately 135 teachers nationwide who have volunteered to participate in the Statistics in Schools Early Adopter program. These teachers are using Statistics in Schools activities in their classrooms this school year to collect feedback and improve the program.

The teachers are in the process of reporting on how they used Statistics in Schools materials and which materials were effective. The program is making improvements to its website and activities based on input from early adopters and their students, like those from Westminster School.

The students started their day with a tour of the library and the broadcast studio. They listened to Tallese Johnson from the Racial Statistics Branch talk about race and the census and what the population looks like in the state of Virginia. Eric Newberger of the Communications Directorate entertained them with examples of how statistics have been important and relevant throughout history.



Jim Hwang, an eighth-grade math teacher at Westminster School, talks to his students about using Census Bureau data.

Hwang spent the afternoon teaching the students using activities from the Statistics in Schools website. Hwang taught his students an activity about walking to work using data from the American Community Survey and correlation and causation using data from the economic census. They also tested their knowledge of population data by playing the population bracketology game.



Eighth-grade student Rosy Sultana makes a presentation.

They spent the last part of their day by having a conversation with Census Bureau Director John Thompson. They asked numerous questions about the Census Bureau and his career.

The Center for New Media and Promotion's Digital Media Branch taped the student's afternoon activities as part of a series of videos featuring teachers and students introducing and promoting the Statistics in Schools program. The videos will show teachers how to incorporate Statistics in Schools resources into the classroom, emphasize the significance of students' understanding of statistics and data, and create awareness about the need for Statistics in Schools by understanding the program's history and purpose.

Additional videotaping of teachers using Statistics in Schools activities in the classroom have taken place at Bren Mar Park Elementary School in Alexandria, Va., and the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington.

What is Statistics in Schools?

The Census Bureau's free online Statistics in Schools program offers a growing body of resources to help K-12 students understand and work with statistical information. The program supports statistics education by providing grade-appropriate classroom activities in math and history, and many resources — such as maps, news articles, videos, infographics and games — for K-12 teachers to use. Staff from all areas of the Census Bureau worked together to create these activities. All Statistics in Schools materials can be aligned with Common Core State Standards and other state standards.

What is the Statistics in Schools Early Adopter Program?

The Census Bureau has recruited more than 130 early adopters — K-12 math and social studies teachers who are committed to boosting data literacy. Participant in the Early Adopter program have agreed to use Statistics in Schools materials in the classroom, evaluate the effectiveness of the resources and website, and let the Census Bureau know how their students respond. Teachers agreed to use the materials in their classrooms for the first few months of the 2014–2015 school year. They could choose to use the Statistics in Schools materials as they are or customize them to fit a specific curriculum, their students' needs or their own teaching style. They were asked to report on what works, what doesn't, what's missing and what should be considered for developing.



Eighth-graders from the Westminster School in Annandale, Va., gather for a group photo in the headquarters lobby.



Steven Mills and Garrett Johnson are enjoying their day at Census Bureau headquarters.



Divya Kumaran has her table's attention.