



Albemarle teacher helped develop national online education tool

BY MICHAEL BRAGG
Nov 24, 2016



Chris Bunin (right) works with student Ellie Cain while using "Statistics in Schools," a newly updated U.S. Census Bureau program, in a computer lab at Albemarle High School.

Ryan M. Kelly/The Daily Progress

An Albemarle High School teacher has helped create online lessons that are not only accessible for his students to use, but for any students or classrooms in the nation thanks to a program through the U.S. Census Bureau.

Chris Bunin was part of a team of teachers from across the country to work on the bureau's Statistics in Schools program, which offers K-12 educators access to free classroom activities and lessons in geography, history, math and sociology.

"It's really cool to write something on a national level for not just a school in Albemarle County, but to know that you're trying to create something for the people," he said.

The goal of the program is to offer free lessons, activities and resources that use current and past data from the U.S. Census in order to help students across the country use and understand applications of statistics in the real world.

Bunin was one of 38 educators and consultants who contributed to the program, and he was a part of the team specifically putting together the geography portion of the program.

Bunin helped create three lessons. The first involves comparing the population demographics of one locality to another and lets students determine what public policy priorities the two would have in common or how they might differ.

“It was a way of trying to think of - why do these statistics matter?” he said.

The second deals with population density, and the third one consists of interactive maps to help students understand the distributions of race and ethnicities across the country. All three are geared toward students at the high school level.

Vicki Glasier, a U.S. Census Bureau spokeswoman, said Bunin was instrumental in getting the geography component to Statistics in Schools off the ground.

“He offered the classroom perspective where our subject matter experts at the Census Bureau had their perspective, and we worked together to get that done,” she said. “So he was our champion for that - getting it in the classroom.

There were a number of challenges Bunin said he and others faced as they created the lessons, but the central component he had to remind himself of was that the lessons had to be accessible and relatable to students across the nation, not just the ones in his classroom.

Bunin said the team constantly talked about remembering who their audience was and how to make the resources relevant to anyone who would want to access it.