

NCVPS Biographies



John Brim

Assistant Director and Chief Operating Officer

Mr. Brim began his career in instructional technology and media in the 1970's as a media specialist at Gaston College in Dallas, North Carolina. After earning a Master's degree in instructional media, Mr. Brim joined the Department of Public Instruction's Media and Technology staff in 1978. As a media consultant for the public schools Mr. Brim started the technology evaluation program in the Media Evaluation Section of the Department in 1980 where he supervised the evaluation of instructional software and technology for the publication *InfoTech* and wrote the monthly software review column in the national journal *School Library Journal*. Over the years at the Department, Mr. Brim worked on statewide programs such as the media and technology standards, *Learning Connections* and *IMPACT: Guidelines for Media and Technology Programs*. He served as the project manager for the Web site *NC WiseOwl* and helped develop the *Carolina Clips* and *Virtual Visits* Web sites. He received the national technology award, *Making it Happen in Technology* in 2000 for his work on *NC WiseOwl*. Mr. Brim worked with the Southern Regional Education Board to develop the *EvaluTech* Web site which features an online, searchable data base of recommended instructional resources. In 2001, the *EvaluTech* Web site won the national EdNet Pioneer Award. In 2002, Mr. Brim was named chief of the distance learning section of the Department of Public Instruction and supervised the transition from satellite delivery of high school distance learning courses to Internet delivery. During the following years, enrollment on the DPI online course program increased and average of 65% annually. In the summer of 2007, Peter Asmar, Associate State Superintendent, asked Mr. Brim to work on loan with the North Carolina Virtual Public School. In December 2007, Mr. Brim accepted the Assistant Director and Chief Operating Officer position at NCVPS.

Mr. Brim holds a bachelor's degree in English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a master's degree in Educational Media from Western Carolina University. He represents the State Superintendent on the University of North Carolina Center for Public Television Board of Trustees and on the Agency for Public Communications Board of Trustees.



David Edwards

Chief Communications and Professional Learning Officer

Mr. Edwards spent 10 years working in the printing and graphics field prior to making the transition into education. He began his educational career as the Distance Learning Coordinator for Lenoir Community College where he built the program from 1 telecourse to over 35 distance learning courses to include the first hybrid Court Reporting and Captioning program for distance learning delivery (internet and 2-way videoconference). Mr. Edwards spent the next 2 years working in economic development as a Technology and Distance Learning Systems Specialist for the NC Global TransPark. He eventually assumed the position of Director of Education and Training for the TransPark and served in that capacity for an additional 2 years. Under his direction, the education center increased programming and usage by 250% and was instrumental in bringing the Advanced Manufacturing Training Center to the TransPark. His advocacy for technology-led economic development also led to the design and implementation of the Virtual Incubator Platform for Eastern NC portal (www.vipforenc.com) in partnership with the e-NC Authority. Mr. Edwards also served as the e-Champion for Lenoir County. Mr. Edwards then spent 2 years leading the implementation of the IMPACT model as Technology Director for Lenoir County Public Schools. He was responsible for launching 2 additional initiatives that included a data warehouse for student and program accountability as well as developing a partnership with the International Society for Technology in Education to design and implement professional development for media and technology programs. Prior to becoming the Chief Communications and Professional Learning Officer in May 2007, Mr. Edwards was one of the initial NC Virtual Public School Advisory Board members.

Mr. Edwards holds a bachelor's degree from Mount Olive College in Business and Organizational Development and a master's degree in Instructional Technology from East Carolina University. He is currently beginning his doctoral work at NCSU in Curriculum and Instruction. His passion for making a difference in education and economic development has also led him to serve as the President of the NC Distance Learning Association and as Vice-Chairman of the NC Connectivity Council.



Chanin Rivenbark

Technology Officer

Mrs. Rivenbark started her career as a software engineer with BNR/Nortel where she worked in the global software group. She then served as a senior software engineer with Nortel Networks working on the DMS-10 code base for product deployment in 5 continents. After working with Nortel for a few years, she took some time off to have children.

She became the CTO of NCVPS in 2007. Her primary duties include planning, budgeting, training and roll out of learning management systems and data reporting tools.

Mrs. Rivenbark holds a Bachelor of Science in Materials Science and Engineering from North Carolina State University and is continuing her graduate studies in Computer Science.



Tammy Pearson

Administrative Assistant

Mrs. Pearson came to NCVPS/Learn and Earn Online with a background in public relations and special events promotion. She served as the Director of Special Events and Alumni Relations for the Health Science Division of East Carolina University and later served as the Event Coordinator for Rock Springs Center in Greenville.

She currently works as the administrative assistant for the entire NCVPS/Learn and Earn Online office. Her primary duties are preparing and implementing budget items, serving as Human Resource Manager for hiring, coordinating payroll, managing contracts, and coordinating all communication and logistics of the NCVPS/Learn and Earn Online Advisory Board.

Mrs. Pearson holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communications with a concentration in Public Relations and a Minor in Sign Language Interpreting from East Carolina University.



Ellen Minter Woods

Curriculum and Instruction, Division Director, AP and Foreign Languages

Ms. Woods has served in public education since 1996 both in the classroom as a business and marketing teacher for the Alamance-Burlington School System (ABSS) and most recently as the Lead Technology Teacher for Middle and High Schools for ABSS. She has also taught for Alamance Community College in the business department as an adjunct faculty.

Ms. Woods served as the NCVPS Distance Learning Advisor for ABSS, prior to coming onboard as an educator-on-loan. Her experience in distance learning coupled with her vision for supporting students was highly sought by NCVPS. As a distance learning advisor, she championed the development of the ABSS Online Student Support portal and brought together key stakeholders regularly in roundtable discussions about online learning and how ABSS students can be successful.

In her current duties as Curriculum and Instruction Division Director, she is responsible for teacher retention/recruitment, managing the “High 5 Process” for AP and Foreign language course development, serving on outreach and partnership teams, managing teacher staff development and working with other teams to develop and implement online collaboration tools for NCVPS/Learn and Earn Online operations.

Ms. Woods holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Management from Elon College, a Master of Science in Business Education from UNC-Greensboro and has obtained additional teaching licensure in Marketing and Journalism.



Robert “Bo” Belton

Coordinator for Professional Development, Teaching and Learning – Eastern Region

Mr. Belton brings over 28 years of classroom and online learning experience to NCVPS/Learn and Earn Online. Mr. Belton served 18 years as a high school English teacher in Cumberland County and then served with the Cumberland Web Academy program as Special Projects Coordinator.

Mr. Belton current serves as a Coordinator for Professional Development, Teaching and Learning and an interim Curriculum and Instruction Division Director. His primary duties are coordinating all issues related to the “High 5 Process” for EOC/Exit courses (except for Algebra 1 and English 1), handling early graduation procedures and student transfer issues, developing assessment and evaluation processes for teachers, creating and delivering professional development based upon data analysis.

Mr. Belton holds a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education from UNC-Chapel Hill and a Master of Arts in Education from Campbell University. His vision statement for online learning says it all – “To be a 21st Century teacher, you must be wired-up”.



Sue Scott

Policy and Research Consultant

In November 1995, Ms. Scott joined the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Distance Learning Program. She was part of the team who converted the satellite delivery system to all Web based online courses in 2002. Her previous work experience was in NCDPI's School Library Media programs and she served as a consultant from 1974-81. Ms. Scott worked in the private sector as a regional sales representative for Social Issues Resources Series (SIRS) and a later as National Video Sales Executive with TVOntario. Ms. Scott served on the Board of Directors for VHS, inc. and is a member of NACOL and NCDLA. She is excited at the prospect of working with NCVPS "from the beginning and to nurture the growth of the program throughout NC."

Currently Ms. Scott's role with NCVPS is in the areas of research and policy. She is promoting awareness of the NCVPS program and facilitating collaboration between NCVPS and other state agencies including NCDPI programs such as Accountability, NC Wise, and Curriculum and Instruction. Ms. Scott is the primary contact between NCVPS and our out-of-state course providers. In the Learn and Earn Online program, she serves as a liaison between NCVPS and UNC-G iSchool.

Ms. Scott holds a Bachelor of Arts in Education degree in education (Social Studies) and a Master of Education degree (Educational Media) both from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Michelle Lourcey

Coordinator of Professional Development, Teaching and Learning – Western Region,
Credit Recovery Specialist

Mrs. Lourcey served 13 years as a high school English teacher in both Cumberland and Iredell counties, teaching all levels of English as well as Journalism and Speech and Debate; she also taught English online for 7 years. Mrs. Lourcey served as Curriculum Specialist for English Language Arts for all middle and high schools in Cumberland County. She also served as Curriculum Coordinator and then Director for Curriculum and Instruction for the Cumberland Web Academy. Mrs. Lourcey spearheaded the development of the online credit recovery program for the Cumberland Web Academy. Her awards include Cumberland County Teacher of the Year (1994), NC Speech and Debate Coach of the Year(1998) and Iredell Statesville Schools Teacher of the Year Runner Up (2002).

Her primary duties for NCVPS/Learn and Earn Online include developing, coordinating, implementing, and expanding the development and operation of the credit recovery program; identifying, developing, and deploying needed staff development opportunities for LEAs and NCVPS teachers; and promoting best practices for teaching and learning in the organization.

Mrs. Lourcey holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Mars Hill College, a Master of Arts in English from Western Carolina University and will soon complete her Principal's licensure from Appalachian State University.

Personal Vision Statement

Every student deserves the opportunity to learn in an 21st Century environment that is engaging and challenging; my commitment is to develop learning opportunities for students that use the interactive components of their 21st Century world while providing them a high level of teacher support and interaction. Improving student learning is our first priority.



Jennifer Nobles

Regional Student Services Consultant/Credit Recovery Specialist – Eastern Region

Mrs. Nobles started her education career as a Mathematics teacher, serving in Wake, New Hanover and Cumberland County. She came to NCVPS/Learn and Earn Online from the Cumberland Web Academy where she served as an online math teacher and credit recovery coordinator.

Her duties as a regional student services consultant are to train, coach and troubleshoot through prompt communication with regional distance learning advisors. Mrs. Nobles also handles the development and implementation of both face to face and online training for distance learning advisors. She currently serves as the lead project manager for Web 2.0 tools and 'virtual environments' for student services support as well as a member of the credit recovery team for Algebra 1 and English 1 revisions.

Mrs. Nobles holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics Education from North Carolina State University.

Personal Vision Statement

Every North Carolina student regardless of their geographic location or local school budget deserves the opportunity to compete academically. Online learning offers those opportunities through access to advanced placement and college level courses in a 21st Century environment. My commitment is to provide opportunities for success for all students.



Adam Renfro

Regional Student Services Consultant – Central Region

Mr. Renfro came to NCVPS/Learn and Earn Online from the Cumberland Web Academy where he served as the lead professional development manager in preparing online instructors. Additional duties with the Web Academy included Director of Summer School and Assessment. Mr. Renfro brings 11 years of classroom experience to NCVPS/Learn and Earn Online as a high school English and Journalism instructor. He also served as an online English and Journalism instructor for the Web Academy.

His primary duties as a regional student services consultant are assisting distance learning advisors in helping to assure online student success. Mr. Renfro conducts online and face to face training for distance learning advisors and currently serves on the documentation and procedure development team for distance learning advisors.

Mr. Renfro holds a Bachelor of Arts in English and Psychology from Indiana University and has completed additional coursework with both Indiana and Fayetteville State University.

Personal Vision Statement

I believe that we must prepare North Carolina students for the 21st century and make them globally competitive through online instruction. I believe that online education will help narrow the gap in education and that all NCVPS students benefit from quality online education that is aligned with state goals.



Don Lourcey

Regional Consultant for Student Support Services--West Region
Coordinator for Professional Learning and Teaching--Central Region
Textbook and Instructional Materials Coordinator

Mr. Lourcey is a National Board Certified teacher with over 17 years of classroom experience and over eight years of online teaching and course design experience. He previously served as an English teacher in Cumberland and Iredell counties and most recently as an online English teacher and course designer for the Cumberland Web Academy. Mr. Lourcey also serves as a National Board Candidate Support Provider and Assessor Trainer. For 3 years, he served as lead teacher for North Iredell High where he coached and modeled for teachers in principles of continuous improvement and data analysis.

His primary duties for NCVPS/Learn and Earn Online are to Extend support to the Distance Learning Advisors in the Western Region of the state. This support includes coaching and training DLAs in providing a high level of interaction and support as they work with students at the school-level. Mr. Lourcey coordinates textbook and instructional material requirements for all regions.

Mr. Lourcey received his BA in English from Mars Hill College and MAEd in English from Western Carolina University, He is currently seeking is Principal's license through Appalachian State University.

Personal Vision Statement

Students learn so differently today than they did even 5 years ago, even 10. We need to tap into what interests them, what engages them. We can no longer "enrage" them with rote memorization, irrelevant information, watered-down curriculum. We need to "engage" them. Online learning is 21st century learning. I get so excited to know that I have a role and responsibility in helping my colleagues out in the field transform their thinking from 20th

century paradigms to 21st century paradigms--retooling thinking, if you will. I am committed to moving DLAs forward so they too can move students forward, to provide resources and opportunities to facilitate future readiness in all students.



Connie Joyner

Coordinator, Student Support Services

Mrs. Joyner worked full time in the Dean of Student's Office at Atlantic Christian College while taking classes to accomplish her undergraduate degree in 1985. In September of 1985, she contracted with DPI and a team of Arthur Anderson consultants to work on a statewide education central payroll system. In 1986, she was a part of the beginning phases of our existing TIMS in education. The following year, Mrs. Joyner was offered permanent employment at DPI, and pioneered the DPI Helpdesk, providing statewide training and troubleshooting for 13 years starting with the transition of manual methodology to newly developed e-systems for finance and payroll. During her customer service consulting days, she assisted statewide and NCDPI agency wide staff in Analyst for the Divisions for Exceptional Children and Workforce Development; then joining the NC WISE Professional Development Team for a couple of years before being recruited into the virtual world of NCVPS/Learn and Earn Online in January, 2008.

Her primary duties as Coordinator for Student Support Services are managing a team of three consultants to provide oversight and leadership for the network of 750+ distance learning advisors (DLAs). She is responsible for communicating all pertinent information to local district and school-based DLAs through weekly E-lets and conference calls. Her duties also include training and awareness on the graduation project and online partnership development.

Personal Vision Statement

The NCVPS Student Services Division is committed to the overall NCVPS goals towards acclimating today's students, parents, school staff and community to be prepared and successful in the 21st Century learning environment.



Nathan Thanos

Blackboard Administrator

Mr. Thanos started his career with the State of North Carolina as a technical support provider in the Department of Public Instruction – Financial and Business Services division. He joined NCVPS in March 2008 as a Blackboard Administrator.

His primary duties include technical support and management of learning management systems, data compiling and reporting, infrastructure development and training.

Mr. Thanos holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Computer Information Systems from Appalachian State University.

Personal Vision Statement

I am eager to be an integral part of redefining and restructuring education for North Carolina. I aspire to introduce new educational opportunities to students and teachers through the latest technology available.



Karen Creech

Curriculum and Instruction, Division Director, NCVPS Course Electives

Mrs. Creech began teaching in 1987 in Nash/Rocky Mount Schools. In 1995, she became an Educator-on-Loan for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI). For the last 10 years, Mrs. Creech has worked in the Instructional Technology Division. She has traveled across the state providing professional development to K-12 teachers on the integration of technology, project-based learning, and Web Quest development.

While at DPI, Mrs. Creech co-developed eBistro, (<http://www.ebistro.org>) a free online digital portfolio for teachers that addresses the integration of technology, Becoming a Modern Day Pirate: Using GeoCaching to Understand Community, Project-Based Learning and Emerging Technology, (<http://www.ncwiseowl.org/impact/ncgeocache/>) a project that shows teachers how to integrate the use of GPS devices across the curriculum, and co-developed the Impact for Teachers Web site - <http://www.ncwiseowl.org/kscope/impact/>.

Mrs. Creech worked with the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to develop the criteria for evaluating online courses - and evaluated online courses for the Research and Development Section at DPI.

In October 2007, Mrs. Creech began work on loan with the North Carolina Virtual Public School. In April 2008, Mrs. Creech was named as a Curriculum and Instruction, Division Director at NCVPS.

In her current duties as Curriculum and Instruction Division Director, she is responsible for coordinating all issues related to teachers, Research Development and Innovation (RDI), Department Chairs, processes for English I & Algebra I, managing the "High 5 Process" for all elective course development, serves on SREB/AT&T National Grant initiative, oversees Web 2.0 processes for course design, serves on elementary BETA team, and handles consistent communication processes across divisions.

Mrs. Creech holds a BA Degree in Elementary Education from Atlantic Christian College, a Master of Education Degree Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technologist Specialist from North Carolina State University and holds a Carolina Online Teachers (COLT) Certification for developing and facilitating online courses from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Education.



Tracy Savell Weeks, Ph.D.
Chief Academic Officer

Dr. Weeks began her career in education as a math teacher at Hickory High School in Hickory, NC. While at Hickory High, Dr. Weeks became a leader in the use of technology in the classroom and provided staff development to her peers on several applications. While continuing to teach, Dr. Weeks relocated to Raleigh, NC to pursue a Master's Degree from NC State University.

Upon completion of her M.Ed., Dr. Weeks accepted a position as a Change Management Analyst with Andersen Consulting (now Accenture) and spent a year developing online training for clients in the military and telecommunications industry. Realizing during this time that public education is where her heart lies, Dr. Weeks began work with the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools as an Instructional Technology Specialist at East Chapel Hill High School where she worked with teachers and students to increase the use of technology in the classroom. During this time, Dr. Weeks completed her doctoral studies at NC State University and was promoted within the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools to Director of Instructional Technology and Media.

Dr. Weeks has a passion for current technologies and their role in the classroom and is an active education blogger. For the past three years, she has taken the lead in training teachers and administrators in the use of web 2.0 and other collaborative tools for the purpose of educating students. She believes that 21st century learning should be accessible to all students and holds equity in education as one of her core beliefs.

Dr. Weeks holds a bachelors degree in Secondary Math Education from UNC-Chapel Hill, a Masters of Education in Instructional Technology with a Statistics minor and a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction from NC State University. She is a NC Teaching Fellow and a member of Phi Kappa Phi. Dr. Weeks has been a member of the NC Virtual Public School Advisory Board and serves as an Adjunct Professor at NC State University.