



## Tacoma Public Schools

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**—Wes Burmark**

*Director of Instructional Technology  
Tacoma Public Schools, Tacoma, WA*



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## Epson 3LCD PowerLite® Projectors

### Get High Marks at Tacoma Public Schools

When Wes Burmark took over the helm of the Instructional Technology Department at Tacoma Public Schools, he was already sold on digital projectors as effective teaching tools. Serving 30,500 students, the school district is located in the bustling, mid-sized port city of Tacoma, Washington under the watchful eye of snow-capped Mount Rainier. “Today you can’t walk by a classroom in any of our 37 elementary schools, 11 middle schools or 5 high schools without seeing a teacher using a projector,” said Burmark, Director, Instructional Technology.

There was a time when a cloud of chalk dust was a more likely sight than a projector in each classroom, but Tacoma Public Schools today presents a different image. Burmark’s passion for the district is deeply rooted in his 50 years as student, classroom teacher and technology expert at Tacoma Public Schools. Earning a master’s degree in instructional technology, he was on the front line as school technology accelerated from AV carts with TV monitors, to standalone computers, to a LAN network linking all 57 sites throughout the entire district, to computers and a projector in each classroom. “It was only a matter of time before we had Internet availability in all classrooms, and every teacher had a desktop computer,” he said.

#### Projectors Make the Grade

Watching teachers and students use everyday classroom technology, Burmark was most intrigued by how projectors took learning into new realms, even with perennial assignments like the book report. Rather than reciting a memorized report, a student could refer to a prepared script while projecting a colorful PowerPoint presentation and web pages of a recent movie adaptation. “The projector energizes the classroom, whatever the subject is at hand, working seamlessly with other technologies,” he said. “We knew we were onto something great because our kids were engaged, excited and achieving.”

Burmark’s challenge was to standardize projectors using 3LCD projection display technology throughout the district. He wanted to promote student learning with the projectors, while keeping overall costs in check, improving image quality, increasing reliability and reducing maintenance. One of his first actions as the department’s director was to cancel the plans for 30-inch TV sets in the district’s newest high school and replace them with ceiling mounted projectors. “TV screens were difficult for students in the back rows to read, so we had to find a cost-effective solution that would make the image accessible to all,” he said.



### New Chapter for Tacoma Public Schools

"Putting a projector into each of our classrooms is a major new chapter for Tacoma Public Schools," said Burmark, who went on to successfully expand his projector vision district-wide. He presented a "Tech Equity Deployment" proposal to the school board that included a call for an Epson 3LCD projector in each of the district's 2,000 plus classrooms.

Shortly thereafter, Tacoma Public Schools gave each elementary, middle and high school the green light to put an Epson PowerLite Multimedia Projector in every instructional classroom. The projectors deliver up to 2200 lumens of light, using 3LCD (3-chip) technology for bright and natural color, precise detail and high reliability. Plus, they offer up to 50 percent more lamp life than competitive models. No matter how bright the classroom, students can now easily see the projected image from any seat in the room. Remote technology allows teachers to move freely about the room. They appreciate the high quality and color accuracy of the projected image, whether teaching traditional subjects like science, geography and math, or Kid Pix Paint Zone® and Photoshop®.

The projectors joined the ranks of other Tacoma classroom technology including Internet-connected Mac and PC computers, document cameras, a touchscreen remote control system, digital cameras, printers, scanners, laptop docks, VHS/DVD players, among others. "It's essential that we don't drop this technology on the teacher's desk like the latest pile of standardized textbooks," said Burmark. "Our school's technology team not only assists with support in purchasing and integrating our current line of approved technologies, but we also continually help teachers and students get up to speed."

### Passes Reliability Test

Tacoma Public Schools put the projectors to the test on a daily basis, each running an average of five hours per day or about 915 hours per year. "The projectors pass each reliability test that we give them with flying colors," said Burmark. He selected the projectors primarily for their reliability, low maintenance and low cost of ownership.

"From my experience, the Epson projectors have been very reliable with very low maintenance requirements," he said. "They have far fewer service issues than other technology products we use in our classrooms." He knows the projectors are working in top form because teachers get so much mileage out of them.

### Epson 'Gets' the Education Market

Making the projectors an everyday teaching tool was a key part of Burmark's departmental goal to create engaging and relevant lessons for teachers to present and integrate into their curriculum. Following the technology component of the *No Child Left Behind* Act, the district's charge is to have all students technologically literate by the time they graduate from the 8th grade.

"After five years using 3LCD technology, we find that Epson really 'gets' the education market and the needs of a district like Tacoma Public Schools," he said. "Not only did they provide a superior product that enhances education, but they also gave us competitive pricing, extended warranties, and enhanced service and support. I can't tell you how important it is for a school to actually end up with the lower total cost of ownership it was looking for, along with high reliability, exceptional image quality and outstanding support."

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