

## Educator to Speak

By [Elizabeth Cook](#)

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When Dr. Willard Daggett spoke at an education summit in Salisbury in early 1992, Fieldcrest Cannon was still churning out Royal Velvet towels, and Cone Mills' Salisbury plant hummed with activity.

China had only just announced its intention to become a socialist market economy.

And Ross Perot had not yet warned about the "giant sucking sound" of U.S. jobs going south with NAFTA.

But Daggett, an education consultant, said trouble was in store for the nation's schools.

"The needs of our young people have outstripped the ability of schools to meet the needs," he said then. "Our children must compete against the children of Europe and Asia."

Much of what Daggett predicted during visits here in 1992 and 1996 — including the impact of China's plentiful low-wage workers on the U.S. economy — has come to pass.

"It's not that I was clairvoyant," Daggett says in a recent telephone interview. "If you study what I call the megatrends, they become increasingly clear."

This Wednesday, Daggett returns to Salisbury for another education summit, this one sponsored by Rowan Partners for Education. It will be held from 3:45 to 5 p.m. at Keppel Auditorium and is open to the public.

The summit will focus on Education Challenge: Preparing Our Students for a Changing World.

President of the International Center for Leadership in Education, Daggett started his career as a teacher and administrator in New York state. Since becoming a consultant, he has spoken to hundreds of thousands of educators and education advocates in all 50 states.

Not all of Daggett's predictions have come true. He estimated 16 years ago that it would take at five to 10 years to fundamentally change the American system of public education.

"That, sadly, has not happened," Daggett says. The system has changed some, he says, but "at a rate much slower than the rest of the world."

The rate of change in schools is a fraction of the rate in society, he says. "So we have a skills gap."

Within five years, he now predicts, India also will be competing for jobs globally along with China. At stake, though, will be more high-end technological jobs, he says.

"What technology and global competition did to manufacturing is now about to happen in the information sector," he says. And Indian workers skilled at information technology will work for a fraction of what U.S. workers will, he says.

In some sectors, that has already happened.

Daggett's message echoes Thomas Friedman's popular 2005 book, "The World Is Flat." Starting with a visit to India, Friedman shows how globalization has changed core economic concepts and leveled the playing field between developed and developing countries.

Another issue Daggett says he will speak to on Wednesday is "the fact that we as a nation have burned all our economic assets and increasingly mortgaged our children's future."

He recommends reading a recent Atlantic Monthly issue that focused on China.

James Fallows' article, "The \$1.4 Trillion Question," says Chinese workers are subsidizing the American way of life.

"This is the real meaning of the vast trade surplus—\$1.4 trillion and counting, going up by about \$1 billion per day—that the Chinese government has mostly parked in U.S. Treasury notes," Fallows writes. "In effect, every person in the (rich) United States has over the past 10 years or so borrowed about \$4,000 from someone in the (poor) People's Republic of China."

Some have called this a "balance of financial terror."

Daggett says no nation has remained the pre-eminent world power for more than 100 years, and the United States' dominance may be over.

That makes catching up in education — particularly when it comes to technology — all the more important.

"I'm nervous for my grandkids," Daggett says.

Daggett gives No Child Left Behind mixed reviews. An advocate of outcome-based-education, he credits the federal program with forcing an output requirement on schools.

"The challenge is, we're only looking at one indicator, test scores on a basic test," he says.

He advocates including other indicators of student success in the overall equation — performance on Advanced Placement tests, for example. That is one of the changes being discussed on Capitol Hill as Congress considers reauthorizing No Child Left Behind.

Daggett also criticizes the program for over-regulating — expecting 15,000 hours worth of instructional material to be covered in 9,000 hours.

"We've put too many standards out there. We've never seen a standard that we don't like."