

# The Wilson Daily Times

## Senator pushes global test

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N.C. Sen. A.B. Swindell wants to see more of a focus on Asian countries in school curriculums because of that area's impact on the economy in North Carolina and nationwide.

Swindell intends to introduce a bill that would push these curriculum changes when the General Assembly reconvenes next week.

Swindell is pushing a concept he calls "global education." He observed that the state and nation are part of a global economy and students

must be prepared to become a part of it by learning the cultures and languages of Asian nations.

Swindell, who chairs three



Swindell

Senate education committees, said he would not be surprised if many of the state's school children would be unable to point out Indonesia or other Asian countries on a blank map of the world, before the Dec. 26 tsunami which has killed more than 220,000 people.

Swindell said it was important for school-age children to know where these coun-

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## GLOBAL: Asia a factor

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tries are because so many U.S. jobs are going to those countries, and investments are coming to the United States from Asia.

"In order for our students to be prepared for the world, they need to better understand it and how everything is intertwined now," said Swindell, a Nashville Democrat beginning his third term.

No bill has been written to implement Swindell's concepts, but he said he had received some support from other members of the Senate education committees.

Swindell said most people do not realize how economically linked North Carolina and Asia really are. He said North Carolina has an annual trade of \$300 million with Taiwan.

"The Asian countries are the future of our marketplace," Swindell said. "We need to reinvent our work force. The community colleges are doing this, but we need to start sooner.

"Teaching Spanish and French is important, but we need to look to learning the language and cultures of Japan, China and other Asian countries," Swindell said.

He said more and more companies with Asian roots are investing in North Carolina. An example would be the Japanese company LiveDo, which opened a factory in Wilson late last year. Bridgestone/Firestone, Wilson County's largest employer, is based in Japan.

There are several other Asian companies located across the state that do big business, he said. Three years ago Chinese diplomats came to North Carolina to learn more about the ways tobacco is grown and processed in this state. He said the federal government is constantly working on opening the Chinese market to U.S. products, which has largely been an untapped resource.

Swindell realizes there are some costs associated with the emphasis on global education, but he said they would pay for themselves down the road.

"People always want to know what it's going to cost, but we can't shirk our duty when it comes to education. Education is the key to future economic success," Swindell said.

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