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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by Mr Peter Chen, 15 Apr 00, 5pm

# *Singapore Government*

## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

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**SPEECH BY MR PETER CHEN, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
EDUCATION & MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR HONG KAH GRC  
(NANYANG) AT JUYING SECONDARY SCHOOL 5TH ANNUAL  
SPEECH DAY AND OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE IT BLOCK ON  
SATURDAY 15TH APRIL 2000 AT 5.00 PM**

National Archives of Singapore

Good, evening,  
Mr Richard Dawson, Superintendent, West 1,  
School Advisory Committee members,  
Miss Grace Ng, Principal,  
Ladies and Gentlemen, and Jyians

1. I am delighted to be here to celebrate your school's 5th Speech Day. It does not seem so long ago when I was here to officially declare the school open. Although only five years old, Juying Secondary School has made an impact on the community at large with her contributions and achievements. You can be very

proud of your school that for two years running, the school has achieved value-added results for the first two batches of graduating pupils. The programmes and activities organised by the school are clear evidence of the continuous effort by the school to develop the pupils holistically. This, in essence, is what education is all about.

2. The school places strong emphasis on community involvement as can be seen by their participation in many of the activities organised by the Nanyang Community Club and the Residents' Committees. A bond between the community and school will encourage teachers and pupils to feel that they have a direct responsibility towards the community of which they are a part. Conversely it will also encourage the community and parents to feel some ownership for the success of the school that serves their community. Here, I would like to thank Dr Ong Ann Tee, Chairman of the SAC and his team for their strong support of the school.

3. In Singapore's early years, when education was not prevalent, communities had to establish their own schools. I am told that Juying has roots that go back to the early 1940s. Community leaders already had the foresight and understood that the future of a Nation lies in its younger generation. Ju Eng School, a primary school, was set up by community leaders with the mission to train leaders from among their students. The school was said to have been founded by a Mr Ang Oon Hue. Beyond that, I do not know any more about the history of the school and perhaps one day we will.

4. What is the relevance of the history of a school. We can assume that schools are founded by people with vision, ideals and a strong community spirit. We can take pride in our origin, however humble our beginning may be. We also have much to learn from our own history, just as we learn from others around us. But we should not slavishly follow even our own history. That which is laudable, we emulate; that which is not, we learn to avoid. This is the essence of one of the many teachings of the great teacher Confucius.

5. After an existence of some 40-50 years, the original Ju Eng School closed down in 1987. By then, it had made sufficient significant achievements for the Ministry of Education to continue its name by establishing Juying Primary and Secondary Schools. Today these two schools continue to keep the name of Juying flying high and continue to produce leaders from among them.

6. As we move into the 21st century towards our vision of 'Thinking Schools,

Learning Nation', our schools will have to develop in our students a number of important attributes. The citizens of the new century will have to be technologically savvy, able to think critically and creatively and to master change. As learning will not end with formal education, we will need to teach our students how to learn, and imbue in them the enthusiasm for learning.

7. More and more IT will play a critical role in fostering creative thinking and in the delivery of lifelong education. IT literacy has already become a basic competency in today's workplace. Everyone must feel comfortable with it in order to work and function in every day life in the 21st century world. To prepare ourselves for this future world our government is committed to exploit the potential of IT in education and to enable our young to be IT-savvy. US\$1.2 billion dollars will be invested to create an IT-based teaching and learning environment in every school. By 2002, the overall ratio would be as high as 1:1 and teacher to computer for students the overall ratio is 2 students to 1 computer. With fully networked schools, teachers and students can extend their learning beyond the classroom, accessing educational resources from any part of the world.

8. The opening today of Juying Secondary School's new IT block is a clear manifestation of our commitment to provide an IT-based teaching and learning environment. To-date, the school has 5 fully equipped Computer Labs, 3 IT Resource Rooms and several free-assess computers for pupils to use during their free time. This is indeed very good provisioning and the challenge is with the school to make maximum use of these facilities.

9. We equip our young with technological skills, the ability to think creatively and to learn independently. Their education will be incomplete or lopsided if that's all we teach. All these will have to be balanced with the inculcation of the right values, a sense of obligation to society and loyalty to nation. We must develop future citizens with sound moral character who can contribute to their community and country. Parents, teachers and community leaders must all be aware that they are watched by the young as their role model.

10. I would now like to congratulate all the award recipients today together with their parents and teachers for their fine effort. However, nothing is static or given; recipients of the award today will continue to work hard to stay on top. Those who are not awards recipients will be encouraged to work even harder to get up there.

11. Thank you.

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