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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by Mr Lim Swee Say, 29 April 2000, 5 pm

Singapore Government

MEDIA RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR LIM SWEE SAY, MINISTER OF STATE FOR
COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TRADE &
INDUSTRY, AT DUNMAN SECONDARY SCHOOL 37TH ANNIVERSARY
& PRIZE GIVING DAY/ COMMEMORATIVE TRANSIT LINK CARD
LAUNCH ON 29 APR 2000 AT 5.00 PM AT DUNMAN SECONDARY
SCHOOL HALL, 21 TAMPINES ST 45**

National Archives of Singapore

Mr Gan Chin Huat, Principal of Dunman Secondary School

Guests, parents, teachers and students,

A very good afternoon to all.

2 I am happy to join you in celebrating the 37th anniversary of Dunman Secondary School, and recognising the achievements of the school and its students over the past year.

3 Dunman Secondary was founded in 1963. The world has changed much in these past 37 years. Advances in technology have transformed the way we compete for a living, as well as the way we live our lives.

4 Living in this fast changing world, one can choose to be either a pioneer and early adopter, or a laggard. Those who choose to be pioneers and early adopters are change agents. They use their imagination, they ask “why not”, they are not constrained by what is known to be possible today. They are willing to take risks, hopefully “smart” risks, to explore new ground to discover new possibilities with new ideas and technologies. They do not fear the unknown, because to them, the unknown means opportunities, not threats, in this fast changing world.

5 As a school, I am glad that Dunman Secondary has chosen the role of a pioneer and an early adopter. Take school bags for example. Many people would ask the “why” questions, such as “why are school bags so heavy”. Here at Dunman Secondary, you choose to break away from the “why” mindset to embrace the “why not” mindset by asking “why not make better use of information technology to reduce the size and weight of our textbooks”. With this “why not” mindset, the School collaborates with industry to experiment with the EduPAD, which is a wireless handheld computer students can use to read textbooks, to send emails and to access online content through the Internet.

6 The EduPAD is a good illustration of how we can experiment with emerging technologies and push the frontiers of possibility if we dare to dream, dare to take risks, and dare to change for the better. It is important to recognise that tradition should not be the enemy of innovation, especially in the world of e-revolution driven by Internet and technological advances. With the rapid emergence of broadband Internet, wireless Internet and Internet Appliances, we will soon be able to access the Internet any time and anywhere, using almost any device to download any form of contents, including interactive broadband multi-media contents. There is no limit to how far and how fast one can innovate with the technology. In fact, the key limiting factor is our ability to think creatively, and to act decisively with a strong sense of purpose and passion.

7 As individuals, I hope many of you here, our young Singaporeans, will choose to be pioneers and early adopters as you grow up. Some of you come to school everyday to exercise your brains. You ask your teachers the “why” questions, because you want to better understand the world as it is today. This is good. I encourage you to continue to do so. At the same time, I hope some of you will come to school everyday not only to exercise your brain, but also to stimulate

your brain. How? You can stimulate your brain by asking not your teachers, but yourself all sorts of “why not” questions. If you do that, you will be able to help dream up a better world of tomorrow, and come up with some new and interesting ways of creating this better future. I hope many of you will embrace this “why not” mindset, because very often this is how bright ideas are generated, inventions created.

8 It is important to run fast in this fast changing world. However, competing for success is not everything in life. I am glad that Dunman Secondary School places balanced emphasis on imparting knowledge and instilling fundamental values. The School emphasizes community involvement, and takes on joint community projects with the Northeast CDC. This afternoon, I am happy to launch the School’s Commemorative Transit Link Card fund raising project to help further enhance the learning environment here in the School. This is a partnership with the Northeast CDC, which will match dollar-for-dollar for the funds raised by the School. I wish you all the best in your fund raising effort. In return for such strong support from the CDC, I hope the School will continue to deepen its ties with the community, and that our students here will grow up to be not just competent and competitive knowledge workers with good brains, but also caring active citizens with warm hearts.

9 I would like to end by congratulating all the prize winners for your achievements. I wish you continued success in the years to come. Please make full use of your school years to learn the known and explore the unknown, pursue your interests with passion, develop your talents to the fullest, and touch the lives of the people around you.