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**SPEECH BY MR TANG GUAN SENG, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(EDUCATION), AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS BRANCH INTER-ZONE  
"SHARING OF EXPERIENCES" AT THE REGIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE  
ON THURSDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 1986 AT 8.30 AM**

The development of education in Singapore, after the quantitative expansion of the 1960s, has been aimed at quality. All these years, we have been trying to find ways and means to improve curricula, instructional materials and teaching methods.

I am happy to learn that in the early part of this year, you have shared some of the more successful projects with your colleagues in presentations within your zone. Today's "Sharing of Experiences" is to enable you to share your projects nationwide. This augurs well for Primary Schools and they clearly reflect the strong desire to assume greater professionalism in the pursuit of educational excellence.

Educational excellence is not an empty slogan. As a small nation of 2.5 million people, our political and economic survival and advancement depend on the development of our scarce human resource. As Singapore's needs are varied and diverse, the necessity to expand its pool of talented people becomes greater. It follows, therefore, that every individual must receive an education that brings out his potential. An educated and skilled workforce becomes a value-added resource which will attract investors to put their capital in Singapore.

The Government is committed to helping schools achieve quality and excellence in education. The Ministry of Education, on its part, has taken concrete and practical steps to improve the quality of education. Courses,

workshops, seminars and symposia are organised regularly for school principals and teachers to acquire up-to-date skills, expertise and knowledge for more efficient, effective and productive work. In promoting innovations in schools' instructional programmes, financial grants are available. Vast sums of money have also been expended on physical improvements to existing facilities in schools.

However, improving the quality of education calls for more than these. It calls for the creation of a new set of conditions for creativity and innovation to flourish. The Ministry of Education is therefore advocating the bottom-up approach in its endeavour to draw initiative from schools. However, this approach can only be successful if it is also promoted at school level, in other words, principals must also support the bottom-up approach in schools by encouraging their teachers to come out with innovative programmes and creative projects. To achieve this objective, principals must set an example by having an open mind and be prepared to accept good ideas at all times. In this way, principals with the assistance of teachers can help to evolve a special character and distinctive feature for the schools.

I am confident that today's inter-zone presentation will give an opportunity to schools in articulating and disseminating good ideas that will benefit all. I would like to congratulate the Primary Schools Professional Committee for organising this presentation. I would also like to congratulate you on your production of a publication called "QUEST". This publication produced jointly by principals, vice-principals, teachers and inspectors, provides a vehicle for the dissemination of school-based projects and other professional information.

I wish you a fruitful time at today's "Sharing of Experiences". #####