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Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Dr Aline Wong, 15 Jan 2000, 6pm

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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Speech by Dr Aline Wong, Senior Minister of State for Education and member of parliament for tampines grc (changkat), at the CHANGKAT EDUSAVE AWARDS presentation ceremony ON saturday, 15 jan 2000, 6.00 PM AT the changkat community centre, 13 TAMPINES sT 11

Grassroots Leaders of Changkat,

Parents, boys and girls,

A very good evening to all of you.

I am very happy to be here with you this evening at our annual Edusave awards ceremony. My heartiest congratulations to the 546 students who will be receiving the Edusave Merit Bursaries at this ceremony. You have done your parents, teachers and the community proud by your good academic performance. I hope that you will be further motivated to do better every year.

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2 School is a place where pupils are given the opportunity to learn and be nurtured into thinking adults and good citizens. School should be a time to be cherished by all. Academic performance, though important, should not be your only focus in school. You should strive for an all-rounded education that enriches you intellectually, builds up your character, involves you in community service and helps you develop your talent and abilities in areas such as arts or sports.

3 For Singapore to survive and thrive in the knowledge-based economy, our education system must produce students who are creative and innovative. Co-curricular activities have an important role to play. These activities complement the formal curriculum in achieving our Desired Outcomes of Education. Activities like music, dance, drama and art are known to stimulate a person's imagination and foster creativity. A good sportsman develops the confidence to face adversity and the mental strength to stay focused in the heat of the battle. Through community work, the student learns to empathise with those who are less fortunate; he also learns to communicate and work with others. At the same time, he learns to juggle his responsibilities and commitments. These are useful qualities that would help mould our young into well-rounded individuals and good citizens when they become adults.

4 With support from parents and the community, our schools aim to provide holistic education to every child so that he can develop to his full potential not just academically, but as a whole person.

5 It is heartening to see that the arts scene in our schools is expanding. In the formal curriculum, pupils have at least eight years of

compulsory music and art education. Co-curricular arts activities in schools also play a vital role in inculcating aesthetic appreciation in pupils. The Singapore Youth Festival which has been held annually since 1966, boasts not only of high participation level but of high performance standards. It is an opportunity for our youths to showcase their talents.

6 The promotion of sports excellence and encouragement of mass participation in sports are also progressing well in our schools. There is a whole range of sporting events and competitions planned by our Schools Sports Councils each year. The Councils are also working very closely with the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) and the National Sports Associations to implement youth development programmes in sports. In addition, the Councils are also administering the SSC's Sports Excellence Assistance Programme for Schools (SEAPS) Scheme. This scheme has helped to provide financial assistance to promising athletes in our schools and the ITEs and Polytechnics.

7 In October 1997, the Community Involvement Programme was launched in all schools. The aim of the programme was to create an environment which fosters volunteerism and community involvement amongst our youth. We hope that our students will learn to be active participants in community and national life when they grow up.

8 It is heartening to note that schools are developing our students in these non-academic domains through the various programmes and initiatives. But there is still scope for us to do more.

9 I am therefore pleased to announce that a new category of Edusave awards to be called the Edusave Awards for Community Service, Arts and Sports (ECAS) will be introduced in 2001. This award will complement the

existing Scholarships, Merit Bursaries and Good Progress Awards under the Edusave scheme, which are awards for academic achievement. In line with the re-orientation of the entire education system towards an ability-driven paradigm, it is timely to expand the scope of the Edusave Scheme to introduce a new category of awards that recognise pupils' excellence and achievements in non-academic areas. We hope to send a clear signal to students and parents that participation and contribution in non-academic activities is an important part of school life.

10 Pupils in all schools can be eligible for the awards. In line with the current practice for the Edusave Scholarships, Merit Bursaries and Good Progress Awards, the new awards will be given based on pupils' performance within their own schools in those activities which qualify for the awards. The award quantum for primary pupils is \$120, for secondary pupils, \$150; and for JC/CI and ITE pupils, \$150 also. Pupils must satisfy certain criteria in order to be eligible. Details on the criteria and methods of allocation of these new awards will be made known to schools and parents later this year.

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11 I would like to end by reminding all recipients that your success would not have been possible without the guidance and support from your teachers and parents. You should always be mindful of this and actively contribute back to the community in future when you have the opportunity. I congratulate you once again and wish you the very best in the year ahead.