

To:
cc: (bcc: NHB NASReg/NHB/SINGOV)
Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Dr Aline Wong, 20 Apr 2000,

Singapore Government

MEDIA RELEASE

Media Division, Ministry of Information and the Arts, 140 Hill Street #02-02 MITA Building Singapore 179369. Tel: 837 9666

EMBARGO INSTRUCTIONS

The attached press release/speech is **EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY**.
Please check against delivery.
For assistance call 837 9666

SPRInter 4.0, Singapore's Press Releases on the Internet, is located at:
<http://www.gov.sg/sprinter/>

SPEECH BY DR ALINE WONG, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND MP FOR TAMPINES GRC (CHANGKAT), AT THE Ngee ANN SECONDARY SCHOOL 6TH SPEECH AND PRIZE PRESENTATION DAY 2000 ON THURSDAY, 20 APRIL 2000, 4.30 PM AT 1 TAMPINES ST 32

Good Afternoon

Members of the School Management Committee,

Mr Koh Chin Nguang, Principal, Ngee Ann Secondary School,

Distinguished guests, parents, teachers and pupils

I am pleased to be with you this afternoon on your annual Speech and Prize Presentation Day. This is an important occasion when recognition is given to students for their outstanding performance in both the academic studies and Co-curricular activities. Let me congratulate all the recipients, their parents and teachers for the successes celebrated today.

2 Ngee Ann Secondary School just started six years ago. It became a member of Cluster East 1A which was formed in January this year. Some of the parents

and invited guests here may not be familiar with the Cluster Schools concept, so allow me to take this opportunity to elaborate a little on it.

3 Today, 65 percent of our schools are already grouped into School Clusters. Cluster schools operate on the concept that, by providing a framework for a group of schools to come together, ideas, facilities, personnel and other educational resources can be effectively pooled and utilised to enable each of its member schools to develop towards achieving the vision of Thinking Schools Learning Nation. Mrs Yu Sing Tong, the Cluster Superintendent for East 1A informed me that the principals of the eight schools within this Cluster each oversees one or two Cluster teams for key curriculum areas and for Media, Pupil Welfare and Co-curricular Activities. The setting up of these teams provide each Cluster school with opportunities to network, pool resources and share professional expertise.

4 MOE provides extra funding to Cluster schools based on a capitation grant, **(at \$52 per pupil this year)**. With this extra grant, Cluster East 1A has been able to allocate generous funds for the implementation of projects, training and activities at the Cluster level, such as to set up an Art Centre and a Music Centre, hold a Cultural Festival 2000, implement a Counselling Project, and provide special laboratory equipment for training of pupils in CISCO networking.

5 The individual Cluster schools in East 1A have also enjoyed additional funding for their own activities. Through this, Ngee Ann Secondary School has received a manpower grant for support and administrative staff, as well as for students' learning and training programmes. These are but the tangible benefits.

6 The intangible benefits, which are perhaps more far reaching, lie in opening up new avenues for Cluster Schools to be exposed to a large variety of programmes which they can adopt or adapt from each other. There is also a heightened sense of camaraderie, professional sharing and collaboration.

7 Clustering is thus not just about benefitting. More importantly, it is about giving and receiving. Although a young school and new to the Cluster, Ngee Ann Secondary has already made its contribution. Besides having its principal act as advisor to two Cluster support teams and its key personnel help facilitate some of the support teams, Ngee Ann Secondary has convened two major cluster staff training events, namely the Ron Kaufman Talk on Quality Service and the Cluster TSLN Workshop.

8 The value-added of the Cluster concept is amply demonstrated by the above-

mentioned benefits brought to the group and to the individual schools. I am very sure that, when well exploited, the synergy among Cluster schools will bring benefits to the neighbourhood as well. I was told that for Cluster East 1A, plans are in the pipeline to conduct programmes for teachers to help the underachievers, pupils at risk, as well as for youth leaders. In addition, Tampines Junior College, which is an associate member of the Cluster, will be providing mentoring services to the weaker pupils in the Cluster. Well-done indeed.

9 For a young school like Ngee Ann Secondary, I am pleased to note its efforts in community projects to imbue in its students a sense of community service and active citizenship. The recent Ngee Ann-Changkat CC Partnership Project is a case in point. Through this formal link-up with the Changkat CC Youth Movement, Ngee Ann students will conceptualise, organise and conduct activities for primary school pupils in the community, while the CC will provide the administrative support and publicity for the programmes. Since February this year, some 40 Secondary 3 pupils have been involved in a Reading Programme for primary pupils in the community. Later this year, I understand that the uniformed groups will also be conducting a Leadership Camp for primary school pupils in the neighbourhood. May I commend the school for its efforts in working closely with the local community to provide meaningful avenues for its pupils to serve the neighbourhood.

10 For the 1999 'N' level examinations, the school did well and was highlighted by the Ministry of Education as one of the 12 schools with good performance. A year before that, in 1998, Ngee Ann Secondary had already made a mark for itself when the results of its first batch of Express stream students placed it amongst the top 50 schools in Singapore. In 1999, the school made another big leap and joined the ranks of the top 30. This is no mean feat. Congratulations indeed.

11 What is equally heartening is that your School is no less committed to the development of your pupils as well-rounded individuals. You have developed a very broad base of excellence in Co-Curricular activities such as in sports and games and uniformed groups. In particular, your Chinese Orchestra has won numerous awards and is reputedly one of the best Chinese orchestras in Singapore.

12 Today, we also witness the opening of two computer laboratories in Ngee Ann Secondary School. In this new century, our students must acquire the skills to access and act on information in a critical and creative manner. I understand that more plans are underway to further enhance the school's IT facilities so as to

provide the best support for the school's instructional programmes and project work done by students.

13 Your commitment to achieving the Desired Outcomes of Education and to nurturing the whole person is highly commendable. I am sure that in the years to come, the school will continue to build upon its strengths to become one of the premier schools in the East.

14 To the pupils who are receiving prizes today, I would like to say that the awards should spur you on to even greater success. I once again congratulate you on your fine achievements, and let me also encourage all your schoolmates to work hard so that they too will be future award recipients.

Thank you.

National Archives of Singapore