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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by Mr Wong Kan Seng, 9 Jan 2000, 9.30pm

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR WONG KAN SENG,
MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN
OF THE PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION AT THE EDUSAVE
SCHOLARSHIP AND EDUSAVE MERIT BURSARY CUM CDC &
CCC POLYTECHNIC/UNIVERSITY BURSARY AWARDS
PRESENTATION CEREMONY ON SUNDAY, 9 JANUARY 2000
AT 9.30AM AT THE BISHAN COMMUNITY CLUB MULTI-
PURPOSE HALL**

National Archives of Singapore

Good morning
Grassroots leaders
Parents
Students
Ladies and Gentlemen

First and foremost, Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri to all our Muslim friends. I am happy to be here to officiate the Edusave Scholarship and Bursary Awards Presentation.

2 Today, a total of 705 students from Bishan East will be receiving their Edusave awards amounting to \$200,000. My congratulations to all of

you. You have all made your parents and teachers proud. As the awards you are receiving today is a recognition of your good academic results, I hope that you will continue to work hard and strive for even greater academic excellence.

3 Education will always be a key priority of our Government. Without natural resources, we have only our people to fall back on. How well Singapore is able to continue to grow and prosper will depend on how well the Government and the private sector are able to capitalise on the changes taking pace in the world economy. To be among the best in the world, our people must have the requisite skills to adapt and compete.

4 As the saying goes, if we give a man a fish, we feed him for a day. However, if we teach him to fish, we feed him for a lifetime. Hence, the Government continues to invest heavily in education so that our children will have the best education, be equipped with knowledge and skills and the attitude for life long learning. Besides investing in the Edusave and other awards, our Government has, over the years, also upgraded the schools' infrastructure and the quality of teaching. The traditional blackboards, which many of us here remember, have given way to whiteboards and overhead projectors. Computers, which were once a rarity, are now part of the classroom environment.

5 However, one's education should not end when one completes the formal school education. The world is changing very very fast. Much of what many of us learned years ago have become outdated or irrelevant today. This goes for you, students, as well. What you learn today will not be able to serve you throughout your working life. The most important thing that will see us through the changes in knowledge and technology is having the right mindset - what I would define as the desire, the willingness and the motivation to continue learning and re-learning. And you should start to cultivate this mindset even now when you are still studying in school.

6 As students, your main duty is, of course, to study and study well. However, while the pursuit of academic excellence is important, we must also not forget our social values, such as respect for others, helping others in need, kindness and compassion. Just as we expect our friends, family members or colleagues to care for and respect us, we must also accord them the same respect and consideration. Similarly, we must be filial to

our parents and show compassion to others, especially to those who are less fortunate than we. I think you can reinforce these values by involving yourselves in community service even though you are still in school. Volunteer yourselves in the Residents' Committees (RCs). Help out in whatever way you can in your RC and prepare for more active service when you start working.

7 Finally I would like to thank the Chairmen and members of the Community Development Council (CDC), Citizens' Consultative Committee (CCC), Community Club Management Committee and the RCs for their hard work in organising this award presentation ceremony.

I wish all of you a Happy New Year.

National Archives of Singapore