



**SPEECH BY MR JASON LEOW, CHAIRMAN, SPEAK GOOD ENGLISH MOVEMENT AT THE INSPIRING TEACHER OF ENGLISH AWARD CEREMONY, 6PM, THURSDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2022, AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY, SINGAPORE**

Our Guest-of Honour, Mr Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Education (MOE),

Ms Liew Wei Li, Director-General of Education, MOE,

Mr Dominic Nathan, Managing Editor for English, Malay and Tamil Media, and Associate Editor for The Straits Times at SPH Media Trust,

Our Principal Master Teachers and Master Teachers from the English Language Institute of Singapore, friends from the English Language and Literature Branch at CPDD2, MOE,

Winners, principals, nominees, ladies and gentlemen.

For the past two years, the pandemic got us to hunker down and take shelter in our homes. It drove us online and we became digital vultures, consuming voracious amounts of content.

If there was one positive that emerged from the pandemic, it was that it sparked the Speak Good English Movement's venture beyond TV, radio and Facebook into Instagram and new platforms. One of those platforms was TikTok, a channel many of us in the Movement was not a part of. Nonetheless we tried it, and our brave foray into TikTok rewarded us with more than two million views for one campaign.

Today, we are ready to forge a new milestone coming out of the lockdowns: well, it's time for occasions like this one, a physical event. So thank you and a warm welcome to everyone for coming out of our homes and offices to join us --- in person -- today.

The video we just watched has sent warm tingles down my spine. It exudes the commitment, warmth and friendship that can only be fostered -- in person -- and within a learning and teaching community. I see many familiar faces in the video, some present here too. What a privilege to be able to mark this year's 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the Inspiring Teacher of English Award with everyone here!

This year, we thank the National Library Board for hosting us once again at The Pod. Over the years, the Pod has become the home of this important award ceremony. I hope it will stay at this venue for more years to come.

Today, we are very pleased to be able to celebrate the achievements of nine award recipients. By the end of this evening, the ITEA alumni will comprise a total of 127 teachers, including this year's winners.

This award is a celebration of our teachers of English, and their ability to teach such a complex language and subject to curious and possibly already very worldly students.

But languages do more than just impart. They also connect people. Languages remain a vital means of connection, and a good awareness of the English language can empower clear and effective communication, empathy and cohesion. This can, in turn, nurture more opportunities for mutual understanding.

Speaking of connecting and mutual understanding, I would like to thank The Straits Times, our co-presenter of the award, and the Ministry of Education, for your many faithful years of guidance and support as we spotlight the critical and often unsung efforts of our teachers of English.

Dr Tay May Yin and the Master Teachers at ELIS, and our colleagues at MOE CPDD, have worked hard to identify the deserving and the best amongst our English teachers. Not just for this year, but also every year and especially in the last two years when they have had to operate under extreme but necessary safe management restrictions.

I also must thank our very hard-working secretariat at the National Heritage Board. They have helped the Movement navigate our way through the Covid-19 onslaught. The secretariat ensured that the adjudication processes and final ceremonies maintained the integrity and respectability of the ITEA even under pandemic conditions.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Brian, our 2021 ITEA award recipient, for graciously hosting today's award presentation.

We are very grateful to the fraternity and community of ITEA alumni for being our advocates for good English. May you, and everyone, always remain passionate about teaching and the English language. May you continue to inspire fellow teachers, parents, and everyone else around you.

Thank you for supporting the Speak Good English Movement community.

Enjoy the evening.