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## Successful Student Behavioural Program Expanded

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton said an innovative program that reduces aggressive behaviour in students aged five to 12 will be expanded to an additional 100 schools throughout WA following a State Government funding increase.

The program, called Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) has been used in 37 State schools over the last eight years with enormous success.

"The PATHS program, which is aimed at students aged five to 12, works by increasing their interpersonal problem-solving skills while decreasing the risk factors for behavioural and social problems," said Dr Nahan.

"It has been highly successful in reducing aggressive behaviour in students and I'm very pleased to see the State Government has allocated nearly \$1m to expand the program out to a further 100 schools over the next four years."

Dr Nahan said various studies undertaken on the effectiveness of the PATHS program, which was co-authored by Professor Mark Greenberg from Pennsylvania State University in the United States, have shown a 32 per cent reduction in teachers' reports of students exhibiting aggressive behaviour.

"Not only did the number of teacher reports regarding aggressive student behaviour significantly reduce, but the program also led to a 20 per cent increase in the students' scores on cognitive skills tests," said Dr Nahan.

"The program also has a positive effect on a child's future by addressing behaviour problems early on, which helps prevent them from escalating in later years."

"I believe local parents will be reassured to know that the State Government has taken the issue of bad student behaviour seriously and is being proactive in addressing this problem by expanding the program to even more schools."

Other behaviour improvement strategies that have been announced by the State Government include:

- \$10m over four years if required by schools to have access to the services of a school chaplain
- \$8.8m over four years to appoint an additional 50 school psychologists - a 25 per cent increase on current numbers
- \$252,000 to train 25 school psychologists in mental health first aid in 2009 and another 15 in 2010-2012.

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