Motivating Students to Achieve their Personal Best
Tonight’s Program

What is Motivation?
Student Panel
Parent Panel
Questions and comments
What is motivation?

Motivation refers to factors that activate, direct, and sustain goal-directed behaviour... Motives are the "whys" of behaviour - the needs or wants that drive behaviour and explain what we do. We don't actually observe a motive; rather, we infer that one exists based on the behaviour we observe. (Novid, 2013)
Motivated students show:

Greater effort
Greater persistence
Are goal directed
Respond positively to challenges
Enjoyment of learning

2004 National Research Council study
Complex and multidimensional

Relationships – parents, peers, teachers

Skills – talents, interests, successes

Personal – anxiety, moods, self-efficacy

Dynamic – can fluctuate over time, normal in teenagers and life cycle
A few studies

1. **Parenting style** – authoritarian v authoritative v permissive; authoritative most effective for motivation
   Authoritative style – based on communication, shared responsibility for learning & following up expectations

2. **Parents v teachers influence**
   Parents most influence at primary, while teachers can have more influence at secondary

3. **Peers** – important for belonging; positive impact for subjects in non-stereotyped subjects, having like-minded peers helps motivation

4. **Self-efficacy** – more important for girls > boys in terms of academic resilience
Tale of two students

Jack

Jill
Jack

Performs well
Enjoys school
Focuses on his own goals
Plans and organises
Comfortable in tests
Persists
Jill

Underachieves
Unhappy and bored
Nervous in tests
Procrastinates
Gives up easily
Talks of leaving
3 Key Elements of Motivation

Self-belief
- Creates success experiences
- Lacking confidence

Value of schooling
- Goals related to school
- What’s the point?

Learning focus
- Mastery and personal best
- Afraid of failing
Professor Andrew Martin: boosters (positive thoughts & behaviours) and sappers (negative thoughts & behaviours)
The good news!
What can parents do? 5 Keys

- Build Confidence
- Find a Connection
- Develop Skills
- Value Effort
- Staying Calm
Build Confidence

Competence builds confidence

Success: challenge ratio; need both

Feedback – frequent & constructive, focus on task approach

Highlight internal control v external factors
Find a Connection

At least one hook

Connecting present to future – strengths

What’s the point? Discuss and look for connections to interests.

Listen – but don’t panic!
Developing Skills

Planning and organisation

Time management

Chunking tasks – experience progress, satisfaction at each stage, vital skills

Problem solving – working with others
Value Effort

• Effort over results – a growth mindset
• Learning focus &
• Expect application and persistence – benefits for long term
• Personal best framework – be wary of negative comparisons to others
• Rewards? Power of unexpected rewards; learn self-rewards; need to be achievable
Staying calm

Reduce performance anxiety
• Mindfulness skills
• Good preparation

Address fear of failure
• Mistakes are part of learning / feedback cycle
• Performance ≠ self-worth