

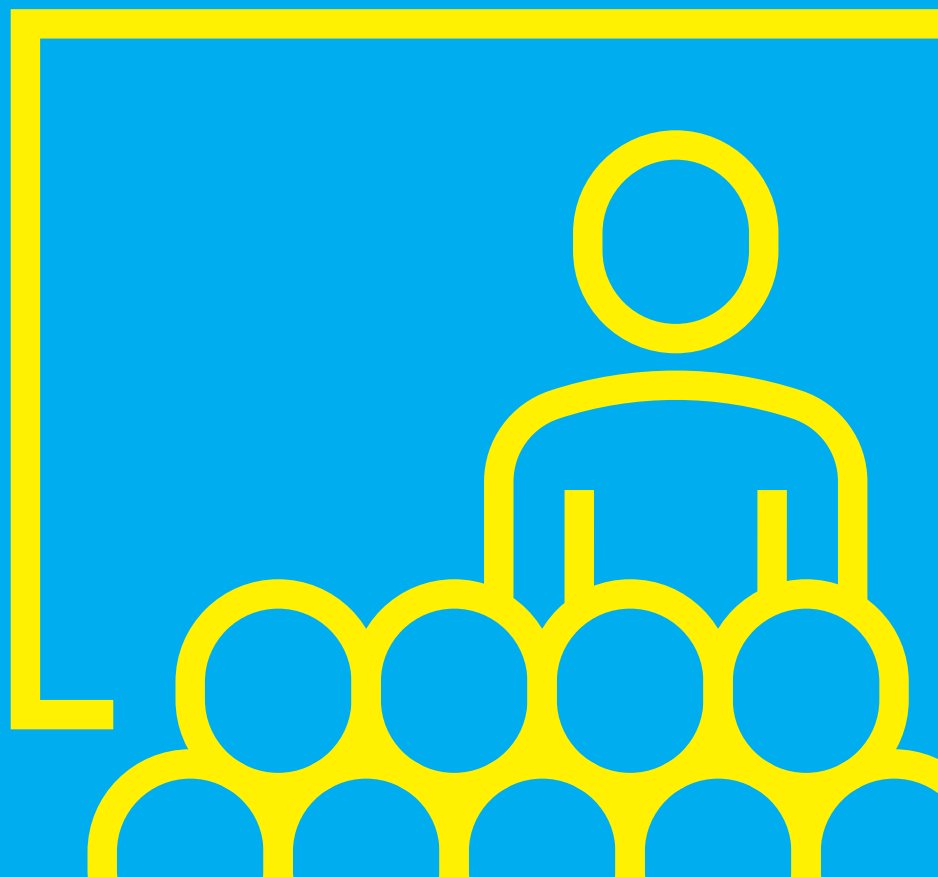
# The School-Wide Progressive Discipline Model

(SWPDM)

Developed  
and written by

**JP Frame**

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Hello colleague,

Thank you for your interest in learning about The School-Wide Progressive Discipline Model (SWPDM). SWPDM is a process devised, developed and implemented in the classroom by teachers, for teachers.

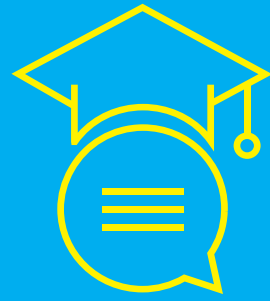
This downloaded section will explain why progressive discipline is an important tool for standardizing the office referral process. Specifically, SWPDM allows teachers to address low-level behaviors that, if continued over time, can become detrimental to the learning environment. In addition, the SWPDM works toward strengthening relationships between families and staff. The framework “pumps the breaks” on office referrals while maintaining accountability for student behaviors and serves as the missing link when implementing a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support program in any secondary school setting. The School-Wide Progressive Discipline Model is a simple process that can bring dramatic, positive, and equitable changes to the secondary educational environment.

Thank you for taking a moment to download the free excerpt to learn more about the School-Wide Progressive Discipline Model. You’ve made it this far and I hope you find the information compelling enough to consider purchasing a copy for your classroom or school. Throughout the book I provide a variety of tips and strategies for integrating the process into your existing school-wide practices to help you get started.

Thank you for reading, I hope you find this guide useful in your journey toward addressing low-level student behaviors in a meaningful manner.

Sincerely,  
JP Frame

# Introduction:



Despite efforts, many schools across the country do not have truly consistent discipline models. As a result, teachers, counselors/interventionists (C/I), and students are often confused about what steps to take when low-level or consistent classroom disruptions occur. This in turn can lead to frustration for the students as they are unable to predict the consequences of their actions. This unpredictability can result in disruptive behavior and insubordination by some students because they may feel they have been treated unfairly. The frustration and resentment can also seep into departments that are not intended to address disciplinary action. For instance, when traditional disciplinary actions fail, it can lead to desperate attempts to alleviate the situation through actions such as a referral to the (C/I). While there is a role for the C/I to play in such situations, it can often be at a point which an early visit to the C/I office is an opportunity missed. It might be more beneficial for a C/I referral early in the disciplinary process to address concerns of students and teachers before there is a breakdown in the relationship between the two. The C/I would not act as a disciplinarian, but rather would serve as an intermediary to dig deeper into the situation if that was the appropriate course of action.

If this intervention opportunity is missed the interaction between students and teachers might continue to spiral downward and result in resentment by the students and frustration for the teachers. Within these downward spirals students who are consistently a disruption in class, but do not exhibit behaviors that would warrant a disciplinary referral, may be subjected to inconsistent application of in-classroom discipline by their teacher. The spiral can continue, and the students may become even more resentful and negative further frustrating their teachers. Negative relationships can become a major hurdle in the learning process for children and their peers as consistently disruptive behavior negatively impacts instructional time and affects the learning environment for all students. A C/I may be able to initiate action early on to address moderate behavior concerns in the classroom; however, if left unaddressed these missed intervention opportunities could move into a crisis phase at which time the C/I might be, inappropriately, expected to fulfill a role as disciplinarian. In turn, the role of the C/I as a student advocate is displaced, and their efforts can become ineffective.

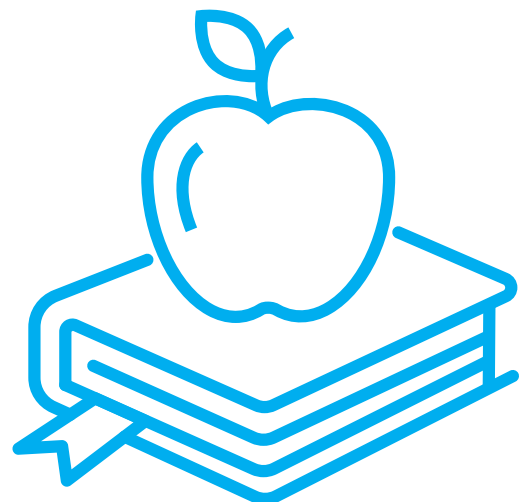
Nationally, the trend is to develop academic standards for students to accomplish and demonstrate mastery through standardized testing, but the missing piece in education reform is the fact that parents, students, and educators are frustrated by the disruption of the learning environment by low-level behaviors. While it is clear, according to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model, C/Is should not spend their time performing disciplinary actions, it would be appropriate for C/Is to provide counseling services to students who have disciplinary challenges. As well, providing a standard for C/I referrals may assist the school administration with identifying and resolving student issues, needs and problems (ASCA, 2005).

At schools across the country, there are standard actions to be put into place for students who are violent, bring illegal substances to school, or act in other forms of extreme behaviors. However, mild behaviors offer a gray area when it comes to addressing these issues. Moderate behavior issues are inhibitors to learning and should be addressed in some manner to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to meet the academic standards mandated. Therefore, it would seem logical to identify standards applicable to disciplinary action for students and administered by educators as well as practices regarding when to refer students to C/I's. Within these standards for behavioral management, there should be an option for early and important steps in which counseling services and interventions may be applied to help alleviate the tension between students, teachers and administration before the situation devolves into an increasingly punitive disciplinary action.

Students are the primary stakeholders here and a lack of clear and consistent expectations and consequences without appropriate interventions may cause students to begin to feel that there are "too many rules" at school and decide that if they are unable to work within the system then it makes no sense to try. Thus, schools run the risk of having rules become a nuisance to students instead of a stabilizing influence. Students may perceive actions and consequences as disjointed and unmanageable. Because the students may perceive themselves as being treated unfairly by the staff at their school, it is possible that education could become an entity that should be resisted instead of engaged out of their frustration.

At the same time, parents, educators, and C/Is are the secondary stakeholders and can become exasperated without standards for discipline. For teachers, the mood can be frustrating and overwhelming as they feel there is nothing that can be done to

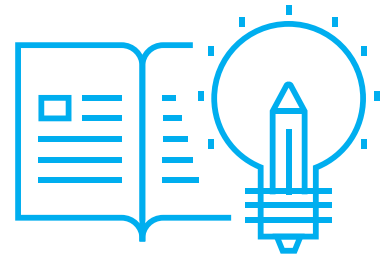
address the disruptions that take place in the class. For parents, frustration can mount on two fronts. For the parent whose student is regularly targeted for consequential action they may begin to feel as if their student is being “picked on” by staff members and become alienated from the campus causing a breakdown in the relationship between the parents and school. As well, it can be frustrating for a parent to learn that their child is in the process of being suspended without ever having been informed by the school that there was any ongoing issue that was leading up to this result. On the other hand, parents whose students are effectively managing their own behavior at school can become frustrated at the notion that their student is unable to meet their full potential because of lost instructional time resulting from the consistently disruptive behavior of others. Finally, C/I’s whose role is to assist students in developing pro-social skills may become frustrated and overwhelmed at the sheer volume of students requiring services because of unclear standards of behavior and inconsistent application of disciplinary measures.



# Frustration and the Value of Intentionally Teaching Expectations:

*A lack of consistency by the teacher can lead to frustration for, both, the teacher and the student and can manifest itself due to a variety of factors. Let's think of teaching from a coach's perspective. If we think of teaching as a sport we can think of the day to day rigor of the classroom as practice, the playoffs are the final exam, and the championship is the final grade. There is a saying among the coaching ranks that "perfect practice makes perfect play". Perfect practice is the result of the establishment of a disciplined team. When we use the word discipline in this context it is important to consider the root of the word. Skiba and Peterson (2000) observed, "It is interesting to note that the word discipline comes from the same Latin root as the word disciple: discipere, to teach or comprehend," (p. 342). When considering the word discipline in this context it is not how many laps the coach punishes players with for poor play but how well they teach their players the fundamentals of the game which allows them to comprehend the importance of what it is they are expected to do in order to win. Being disciplined is something to be desired not avoided in the realm of sports.*

*Any worthy coach would expect his/her team to approach the grind of practice with a level of intensity and performance that would ensure production at a high level on the playing field. To ensure that these characteristics are exhibited on the practice field a coach needs to first gain the trust of their players by arriving to practice with an organized plan of what will take place on that day. Good coaches will plan their practices to the exact minute and have smooth transitions from one drill to the next, never spending too much time on a skill to avoid making the practice tedious for their players. While demonstrating that they as a coach are going to come to practice each day with a well thought out plan to gain the trust of their players coaches will, at the same time, begin to teach the practice structure and the discipline they want their players to exhibit. For example, at the middle and high school level a lot of players have a sense of the game, its rules, and how to win. What they may not have are the fundamentals, strategy, and skillset to win. These components of a winning team come through practice and to practice effectively the way a coach envisions the team doing he/she must first teach them how to practice before he/she can teach them how to play according to his/her philosophy.*



No two coaches are the same. Some coaches are offensively minded, and some are more defense oriented but both coaches seek the same goal of winning the championship. The point is there is more than one approach to achieving the same outcome. As with teaching there is more than one method to achieve academic or behavioral outcomes; however, any winning coach will tell you that their approach to practice is what enables their players to perform during game time regardless of whether they are defensively or offensively oriented in their philosophy. A team's quality performance comes from coaches teaching their players how to practice effectively within their philosophy. The same can be said of intentionally teaching classroom rules and expectations. Once students are certain of what to expect and it is executed daily with consistency they will come to understand how the class functions and what is expected of them each day. The consistency ensures students understand what they can and cannot do and thus may be less likely to act in a way outside of what is expected. As a result, more time can be spent on the "fundamentals" of the curriculum, "strategies" for understanding, and "skillsets" that will allow them to find the success they seek.

If students are taught procedures of the class early on (practice), the behavioral expectations (fundamentals), and how to respond when re-directed (strategies) they then have the tools for behavioral success (playoffs) and therefore avoid consequences (championship). However, any coach will tell you that the fundamentals, strategies, and skillsets of their given sport will need to be revisited throughout the season but by having thoroughly demonstrated each aspect of their practice routine early on they only need to tweak their practice schedules to refresh their players' knowledge on how to be successful.

There will be many times throughout the course of the season where errors occur that negatively impact the desired outcome of the game. Essentially, players will make mistakes even when they are doing their best to execute the game plan that has been practiced. When this happens, ineffective coaches berate their players in a fit of anger for not having performed to the level expected; thus, potentially creating a barrier between the coach and the player moving forward. Players may be less likely to ask questions about how to perform better and in some instances a player may even decide that they don't want to participate

*in that sport in the future because of the intimidation and embarrassment they experienced. Effective coaches, on the other hand, will recognize that no player or team can be perfect even if it is stated that this is the goal. When a player makes an error, the coach recognizes that the player is doing their best and points out how they know this by focusing on what they did do correctly leading up to the mistake; or, by talking with the player about what their mental approach was to that situation. After reaffirming the player's desire to do things correctly the coach can now review the proper technique or decision the player needed to execute in that situation. If more than one player is making the same error, then it is up to the coach to recognize that the skill or play needs to be reviewed during practice; and, because the coach has earned the trust of his/her team by being prepared and having already taught the structure and discipline of the practice routine it shouldn't take long for the coach to get his/her players to perform at the level they desire. So, the question we need to ask ourselves is which coach would you rather play for; or, which teacher would you rather learn from?*

*The same could hold true for the classroom where if a teacher ensures that they are thorough in their direct instruction of expectations early on they only need to briefly revisit these processes sporadically as needed. Students want to do well in the classroom, but they need to be taught how to perform to standard. The reality can be that any classroom setting may have a wide range of "behavioral talent". An honors class, for example could be considered the Varsity Team while regular classes would be the JV and C-Team. Clearly the Varsity Team is going to have the most talented and gifted players/students available; but if a coach neglects the development of the JV and C-Team they are not going to have much of a Varsity Team to work with. At the lower tiers of competition more direct instruction is required as you may have a player who is trying out the sport for the first time and is unsure of their ability level alongside a player who is pretty good but is missing an important skill that prevents them from performing at the varsity level. Ultimately, there is a greater propensity for the lower tier teams to make errors and if a coach constantly berates them for this they will decide that another activity suits them better and stop playing all together weakening the Varsity Team as there are fewer and fewer players to fill the ranks. We all know not every class of students can be a "Varsity Team" but if we work to ensure our students are supported and provided the intentional instruction needed to practice their craft effectively they will have a greater opportunity to achieve success in the classroom and maybe even one day make the "Varsity Team".*



# Purpose:



The purpose of implementing the School Wide Progressive Discipline Model (SWPDM) is to provide a standardized approach to office referrals in coordination with a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior program (MTSS-B).

SWPDM is not intended to replace effective classroom management strategies; but, is intended to provide a framework for teachers to use when effective management practices are unsuccessful and low-level behaviors become detrimental to the learning environment through lost instructional time impacting the entire class.

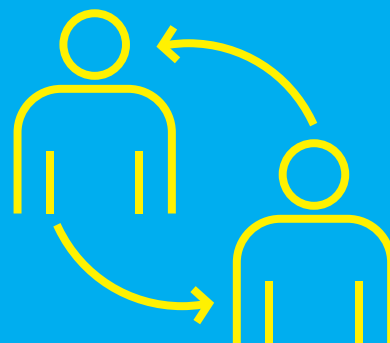
It can often be the case that teachers are unsure of the appropriate time to refer a student for disciplinary action for low-level behaviors. Administrators may question why a student is being sent to the office for something as minor as tapping a pencil in class; however, it may be the referral is the result of a culmination of minor infractions and it just so happens that the pencil tapping is the most recent form of disruption the student has exhibited. In other cases, it is important to consider the different tolerance levels teachers have for specific behaviors. In one classroom a teacher may be comfortable with students moving about the room to different groups while they are learning. Next door another teacher may find it more desirable to have students remain in their assigned seats. As professionals, teachers should have the prerogative to determine how their classroom will be organized and instruction delivered; but, there is a need to standardize the method by which the determination is made that a student will be issued a disciplinary referral to the office. Remember, students are navigating a variety of environments throughout the day in which there are subtle changes to expectations. The result can be an inconsistent application of discipline across different classroom settings making it difficult for students to determine what they will, and will not, receive conse-

quences for. This inconsistency can make students feel they are being treated unfairly and, in turn, lead to them seeing the rules of the school as something to be resisted. This resistance might manifest itself in escalated behavior by the student.

As well, disruptive or defiant behaviors may seem relatively minor, but they do have a significant impact on the learning environment. Consider the possibility of a high school teacher needing to address low-level misbehavior for a total of 10 minutes a day in a classroom. Over the course of a 5-day week that 50-minute class would lose an entire day of instructional time. Multiply that by the 36 weeks of the school year and we are talking more than a full month of school lost for that class; and, that is just a single period of the day! Every student is impacted by behavior that takes away from the learning environment so low-level disruptive behavior needs to be addressed; however, simply sending the student to the office exacerbates the problem as students who have been sent out may fall further behind, build resentment, and avoid learning all together by being out of the class.

The SWPDM “pumps the breaks” on office referrals for minor behavior infractions and the framework ensures that if a teacher does issue a disciplinary referral for minor behavior appropriate steps have been taken and documented beforehand. Essentially, at some point teachers and students need to be able to conduct instruction and learning without disruption and it becomes the charge of administrators and the counseling/interventionists to work toward supporting students who are having difficulty self-monitoring. The SWPDM framework provides teachers with a concrete set of steps to follow prior to issuing a disciplinary referral and serves as a means of identifying students who may benefit from Tier 2 interventions as outlined in the MTSS-B model.

# Process:



The following manual will outline the School Wide Progressive Discipline Model (SWPDM) which consists of a series of five steps that constitute progressively consequential disciplinary measures to address low level misconduct in the classroom. **(Refer to appendix C on page 37 to see a copy of the School Wide Progressive Discipline Model)** In addition, the manual will also provide strategies for successful classroom implementation based on a five-year study of the SWPDM's implementation and impact at Kent-Meridian High School.

## School Wide Progressive Discipline Model Summary

**Step 1** = 1:1 Conference

**Step 2** = Form letter home to parents  
(Sample Letter provided in Appendix D on page 38)

**Step 3** = Phone call to parents and after school detention assigned

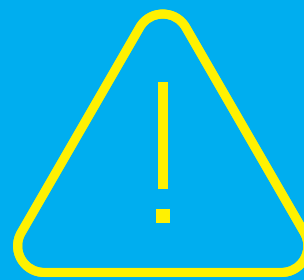
**Step 4** = Phone call to parents and 2 after school detentions assigned

**Step 5** = Referral to office; Behavior Intervention Team; Parent Conference

**Beyond Step 5** = referral to office and progressive discipline at Administrative level

It is important to note that the most effective means of implementing the SWPDM process in any class starts with the intentional teaching of classroom expectations, procedures, and the SWDPM process at the beginning of the year with a semester review and supplemental lessons on expectations as needed. **(A lesson outline for introducing the SWPDM process to students is provided in Appendix A on page 34)**

# The Verbal Warning Prior to Issuing a Step:



Each of the steps in the SWPDM process is preceded by a “verbal warning”.

This “verbal warning” is intended to provide students an opportunity to correct inappropriate behaviors prior to receiving any consequence. It is recommended that when a “verbal warning” is issued that the staff member do so in a calm and quiet manner. Ideally, the teacher would approach the student and quietly identify the behavior that needs to be redirected and quietly state, “This is your verbal warning,” and then walk away.

**Please note, “verbal warnings” can be issued to individuals, small groups, or an entire class at a given time. “Verbal warnings” can also encompass more than one behavior in certain circumstances.**

## Individual Verbal Warning:

If a student is disrupting the learning environment with “off topic conversations” in class it would be reasonable for a staff member to ask them to refocus their attention on the task at hand. If the student is unresponsive to the staff member request they would then issue a “verbal warning”. The “verbal warning” is a cue to the student that if the behavior persists they will be issued a consequence per the SWPDM form. The student now has a choice regarding how to proceed. If they choose to comply the issue is considered settled. If they choose not to comply it can be expected that the teacher will issue the appropriate consequence depending what step the student is on.

**Example:** A student has been reminded several times that they need to stop talking to their neighbor during the class period. The teacher in the class has determined that enough reminders have been provided for the day. The teacher would calmly walk up to the student and politely say, “Joseph, I need you to please stop talking and disrupting the class. If I have to speak to you about this again I will need to move you a step on the SWPDM form. This is your verbal warning.” The teacher would then walk away to avoid any escalation in the discussion. The student now has the opportunity to self-correct their behavior with full knowledge of what to expect discipline wise if the behavior persists.

## Verbal Warning Small Group:

Additionally, if students are working in small groups and one group is off task the teacher may issue a verbal warning to that group reteaching what the expectations are during the activity. If individual students, or the entire group, continue to engage in off-task behaviors each off-task student would be assigned a step on their individual SWPDM form.

**Example:** *Students in a social studies class are expected to work in small groups of 3-4 students creating a timeline of events that lead to the Nazi invasion of Poland. One group of students is spending most of their time talking and joking about a popular meme that was posted on social media. The teacher has observed the behavior and redirected the students more than once that they need to have the timeline done by the end of class. The students return to their off-task behavior after a couple of minutes and intervention needs to take place again. The teacher calmly walks over to the group and quietly states, "Ladies and gentlemen I have told you several times now you need to be working on your timeline. I need you to please get started on the assignment or I will need to move each of you a Step. I will be monitoring your progress and I will be back in about 10 minutes to see what you are accomplishing. This is your verbal warning."*

### Possible Outcome 1:

Students get to work as a group and begin to make progress toward completing their task and the issue is settled.

### Possible Outcome 2:

Some students make the appropriate choice and get to work while others in the group continue to be off task. The teacher is observant of the behaviors and assigns a Step to the students who remain off task.

### Possible Outcome 3:

All students remain off task and it is necessary to assign a Step to each student.

### For Outcomes 2&3:

When assigning a Step for more than one student for the same behavior it is possible some students will only be receiving Step 1 which is a 1:1 conference (1:1 conferences will be discussed in greater detail later in the manual) while another student may be moving to Step 4 (Step 4 consequences will be discussed later in the manual). It is important to only assign the consequences that each individual student has earned to date. In this instance Student A has had fewer low level behaviors over time than Student B; therefore, it would be appropriate to assign Student A the lesser consequence as they have been less disruptive over the course of the semester. On the other hand, Student B has been having a more difficult time during the semester and the previous consequential actions have proven ineffective;

therefore, it would not be prudent to continue assigning consequences that did not impact Student B's behavior in the past. Student B may become upset that Student A is receiving a lesser consequence, but the teacher can easily demonstrate the differences overall of the two students' behavior over time through the maintenance of accurate behavioral records kept by the teacher as a part of the SWPDM process to explain why it is appropriate to issue contrasting consequences for the same behavior. Having intentionally taught the SWPDM process to the class will make it easier to explain this outcome to Student B.

### Verbal Warning Whole Class:

A teacher may wish to give a "verbal warning" to an entire class that cell phones should be put away at the start of the period.

**Example:** *Students enter the classroom and are expected to begin their entry task as they were intentionally taught at the beginning of the year. The teacher may walk in from monitoring the hallway, review the entry task, and inform students that cell phones should be stored away at this time. The teacher would then state, "This is your verbal warning," and gesture to the class indicating that this is a whole class warning. At this point a student found to have their cell phone out during the period can reasonably expect to receive a consequence. As with the small group warning outlined above multiple students may receive a Step and receive a variety of consequences based upon what Step they are on individually within the continuum.*

### General Verbal Warning:

A teacher may decide to give a "general verbal warning" to a student(s) in situations where the student is being creative in their efforts to disrupt the class.

**Example:** Mary has started the class in a very talkative mood and has needed to be reminded several times to please stop talking with her neighbor and a verbal warning has been assigned. Mary is not happy about being given her warning and is now pouting and tapping her pencil on the desk loudly. The teacher has asked a couple of times now for Mary to please stop tapping her pencil, but she continues. The teacher now issues a verbal warning for the pencil tapping. Now Mary has decided she is just going to braid her hair and not do the assignment and has been reminded several times that it is important for her to be on task during class.

At this time, it would be appropriate for the teacher to issue a general warning to Mary. The teacher would walk over to Mary's desk and quietly say, "Mary I am going to ask you to please stop disrupting the class and please get to work on your assignment. If I have to speak with you again about your choices I will need you to move a Step on the SWPDM form, this is your verbal warning," and walk away to avoid any power struggle that might occur. In this situation the teacher has identified unwanted behavior in general terms and desired behavior specifically.