Tips for Completing this Tool:
Basing Part of Grade on Student’s Improvement

1. Consider offering the student an incentive to improve his or her grade only if the team is certain that the student possesses the necessary ability and supports to make improvement.

2. When establishing the amount of improvement that will be required, seek a “balancing point” that will challenge the student and produce meaningful improvement, but which will be attainable. Setting the goal too high may frustrate the student.

3. Some teachers may be reluctant to use a grading adaptation based on improvement because they perceive the risk that the student will become “hooked” on the incentive and will sustain higher performance only when an incentive is offered. Such concerns may be allayed by establishing a plan for gradually increasing expectations or for fading out the adaptation when the student’s performance reaches a pre-established goal. Adaptations based on effort or improvement are more effective as short-term strategies.

4. The first column in this tool describes the “Performance Areas” in which students complete assignments or meet expectations. When considering a grading adaptation, focus first on the performance areas for which the student consistently receives low or failing grades.