

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Our preliminary investigations suggested that, to a large extent, the need for remediation among entering CUNY students had its origins in New York City's public schools. Our initial decision to track student performance from the early grades through high school and into college flowed from the New York State Education Department's vision of a "K-16 continuum" of public education (*Report to the State Board of Regents*, March 1999; *K-16 Articulation and Collaboration*, January 1999; and *Excellence and Opportunity for All New Yorkers: The Statewide Plan for Higher Education 1996-2004*, November 1996). The SED describes the ideal relationships among the elementary, secondary and post-secondary sectors, as follows:

- the elementary grades lay the educational foundation;
- the secondary grades build skill sets for the work force or college;
- post-secondary schools groom students for jobs and professions; and,
- post-secondary teacher preparation programs send qualified professionals right back into the education system.⁸

According to the SED, elementary, secondary and higher education are inextricably linked – and so are their problems and solutions. The SED has signaled its intention to focus future policy efforts strategically along the K-16 continuum.⁹

New York is not alone in taking a broad, integrated view. Our national review of state education policies reveals that other states with substantial remedial challenges, such as California, Florida, Massachusetts and Texas, all view integrated programs as key to education reform. (California

⁸ In its *Report to the State Board of Regents* (March 1999), the SED says the "City schools provide most of the CUNY undergraduates [and] CUNY provides most of the City's teachers." We can confirm this statement. The BOE reports that 26.9% of all its current teachers, aides, resource room specialists and other pedagogical staff, 23.3% of its 1998-99 new hires and 34.5% of its new hires over the previous seven years hold some sort of degree or certificate from CUNY senior or community colleges (*Totals and Percentages of Teachers Currently Active, Based Upon the CUNY Graduates v. Non-Graduates and Totals and Percentages of Pedagogues Hired Brand New for the "88 thru 98" School Years, Based Upon the CUNY Graduates v. Non-Graduates*, BOE, November 23, 1998). In addition, a press report says that 80% of BOE teachers hold degrees or certificates from CUNY (*The Daily News*, May 28, 1998). Even if the actual figure is higher than the BOE's and lower than the press', CUNY is likely the single largest provider of pedagogues to the BOE.

⁹ The initiative has already started. On March 18, 1999, the SED assembled two dozen college presidents from CUNY, the State University of New York (SUNY) and the independent sector at a *Summit on Higher Education*. The agenda included "the over-riding need to deal with all of education as a K through 16 continuum" as well as accountability for results, the complex relationship among college cost, affordability and access, and technology and distance learning (Jerry Cross, Deputy Commissioner, Higher Education, SED, April 7, 1999).

Department of Education, September 4, 1998; California Education Code sections 60603 and 60605; California Assembly Bill AB 649; California Higher Education Policy Center, Spring, 1997; California State University, January 1996; Florida Department of Education August 17 and 31, 1998; Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, December 27, 1997; Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, January and June 1998 and 1996; Massachusetts Department of Education, 1995; Texas Education Agency September 4, 1998, and 1995; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, August 17, 1998 and July and October, 1996). These states mandate curriculum standards that build from kindergarten upward and link requirements for high school graduation to college admission. To ensure adherence to new standards, some states are taking steps to limit social promotion. The states also mandate a continuum of standardized testing, even administering college assessment tests to high school students for early detection of remedial problems. Furthermore, these states advocate best practices for classroom instruction and take steps to ensure that teachers can deliver them. As these policies were implemented only about three years ago, they are too new to generate data indicating impact on student performance.