

world, for an aesthetic life, for a life of ideas, for an understanding of what is going on around you, and for an understanding of yourself. And it gives you the knowledge and the opportunity to be a productive citizen, to contribute to your own freedom and the freedom of others via political and social engagement.

If education in general is a freedom issue, public education, on the whole, is an even more powerful freedom issue, with two important components:

- **Public education is publicly accessible.** It gives educational access to more people, and so increases their freedoms. It also allows individuals to understand the full range of people, and therefore opens up human relationships and the possibility of empathizing with and understanding more people.
- **Public education is publicly accountable education.** It prevents the narrowing of what is taught when private interests determine what is taught.

Moreover, systemic causation further makes education a freedom issue, because many of our major educational issues are due to poverty.

Poverty all too often means that parents who have to hold down multiple jobs cannot properly raise their children—not reading to them, not raising them to respect education, not being able to get them out of unhealthy environments. Poverty means children going to school hungry in the morning and not able to concentrate on classes. And poverty and lack of education replicate themselves. In a large range of cases, the failure of students to learn has mainly to do with a national economic failure and not with inadequate teachers or schools.

Poverty

Poverty is a freedom issue. It is obvious. People who are poor have a lot less freedom than people who are rich.

As we have seen, people who are poor have less access to health care and education than people who are rich.