

## Erin Cox, A Hero Not A Villain

Monday, October 21, 2013 | Penny Young Nance, FOX News

Erin Cox is a 17-year-old Massachusetts high school senior and honor student. She's been in the news this week because she was stripped of her title as volleyball team captain and suspended for five games. For simply doing the right thing. One night, Erin received a text from a friend who was at a party and too



drunk to drive, so Erin, who was sober, drove to pick up her friend. Luckily, for her friend, Erin arrived minutes before the cops who arrested dozens for underage drinking. Unfortunately, for Erin, she and others were told they would be summoned to court.

Punished for helping out a friend in need. Even though Erin was sober, and was vouched for by a police officer who stated that she had not been drinking and was not in possession of alcohol, that wasn't enough for her high school. I hope that our young people do not hesitate for one second to do the right thing for fear of being punished on the basis of their school's bad policy. "The rules for student-athletes strongly discourage students from engaging in conduct that is unlawful or fails to promote the health and safety of the youth in our community," Dr. Kevin Hutchinson, superintendent of Erin's school district, said on the district's website. While Erin could have been in violation of the law by simply being at the party and near alcohol while underage, should not the basis of promoting safety to our youth, like Dr. Hutchinson stated, be more important? Erin prevented a potential car accident that could have injured her friend and others, or even a possible sexual assault that could have left her friend scarred for life. Erin set out to rescue a friend in need and do the right thing but was the one who ended up hurt.

I hope young people do not hesitate to do the right thing for fear of being punished on the basis of their school's bad policy. These "one size fits all" zero-tolerance policies that schools have come to embrace on everything

from a Pop Tart shaped like a gun, to aspirin in a kid's locker, to this, teaches zero lessons to students.

After what could have been a teachable moment for everyone involved, it appears to be the grown-ups in this case who need to go back to school and learn some common sense. Any mother of a budding teen knows colleges take this all very seriously, and they should. Any violation of school policy becomes a stain on an otherwise flawless record and can make or break your chance at acceptance. Any parent of a student athlete knows how seriously they take their sport and how it can affect their self-esteem.

As parents, we constantly pray that our children will make the right choices. Many parents have told their children to call them immediately if they are ever in a situation that starts going south. We promise to come pick them up immediately. However, sometimes kids do not call their parents and, instead, choose to call a friend. When that happens, I pray that they would call a friend like Erin.

I believe North Andover High School owes Erin Cox and her family an apology. Our schools should support students who make responsible choices, not punish them. School administrations are often bureaucratic places that do not understand nuance or the fact that not everything is the business of the state or even the county. Kids do not always make good choices. The CDC reports that alcohol is the most commonly used drug among youth in the United States, more than tobacco and illicit drugs, and is responsible for more than 4,700 deaths among underage youth annually.

When our young people fail, especially if it happens on school grounds or a bus, parents and sometimes the school, must address it. However, we must reward responsible behavior, even if it does not fit neatly in our rulebook.

**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards** adapted from [floridastandards.org](http://floridastandards.org). Standards specifically addressed in this edition are strategically aligned with state standards and annotated adjacent to the respective inquiry.

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1. In appropriate paragraph form, compare and contrast the pros and cons of the public education system actively employing a nonnegotiable zero-tolerance policy in regards to disciplining students. Provided the information articulated in the passage above, do you believe the school administration acted appropriately? If not, to ensure equality specifically as it pertains to a student athlete, what other measures might the school system have employed? Do you believe the decision to suspend Erin for her actions comply with their mission statement: *The mission of North Andover Public Schools is to cultivate a respectful community of engaged learners, insightful thinkers, and effective communicators.* Had Erin been a male coupled with a star athlete in a higher profile sport comparable to football, might this situation been addressed in an alternative manner? Thoroughly explain your reasoning and provide specific artifacts and evidence not limited solely to article above to support your response. Create and illustrate a Venn Diagram to effectively explore relationships and patterns and to make arguments about relationships between sets. **(LA.910.3.2.2; LA.910.1.6.2; MA.912.D.7.2; MA.912.A.10.1)**
2. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that alcohol is the most commonly used drug among youth in the United States, more than tobacco and illicit drugs, and is responsible for more than 4,700 deaths among underage youth annually. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens. In 2010, about 2,700 teens in the United States aged 16–19 were killed and almost 282,000 were treated and released from emergency departments for injuries suffered in motor-vehicle crashes. Assuming proactive alcohol prevention educational methods decrease previously reported statistical figures by an unprecedented 40%, after how many years will those fatalities equate to motor-vehicle crashes? Define a variable and identify as the solution to a system of linear equations via employing the substitution, graphing, and elimination methods. **(LA.910.3.1.3; MA.912.A.10.1; MA.912.A.2.13; MA.912.A.3.10; MA.912.A.3.8; MA.912.G.1.4; MA.912.A.3.12; MA.912.A.3.13)**
3. Erin Cox is a 17-year-old Massachusetts high school senior, honor student, and talented student-athlete at North Andover High School, a secondary public institution of learning located in the thriving major metropolis of North Andover, Massachusetts. The 2012-2013 enrollment for the entire school system is 4766 composed of 2454 male and 2312 female students. Approximately 29% of these students attend North Andover High School, which possesses a student enrollment of 1366 subdivided as follows: 345 Freshmen; 369 Sophomores; 342 Juniors; 309 Seniors. At a rather pivotal moment in North Andover's volleyball competition versus a local rivalry, Kathryn Tweedie and Sabrina Fralich were 15 feet from the desired target. Rachel Karpinski and Cathy Zhang were 24 feet from each other adjacent to the sidelines of the volleyball court. Employ the Perpendicular Bisector Theorem, its converse and concurrency of Perpendicular Bisectors of a Triangle to determine how far the target was located from each student-athlete. Illustrate the diagram and identify concurrent lines and the point of concurrency. **(MA.912.G.1.2; MA.912.G.4.1 - MA.912.G.4.6)**
4. Identify and thoroughly support your reasoning regarding which of the following that best describes the author's attitude the administrative disciplinary measures applied to Erin Cox: flippant disregard, mild frustration, passive resignation or an informed citizen. Explain the intended purpose of this article and identify any indicators or supporting evidence, which suggest the author may possess a bias for or against the suspension coupled with relieving Erin of her command position. What is the central idea and what conclusion might one obtain? Provide an inference student athlete may derive from this material. The point of view employed is best described as first person, second person, third person, or a combination of first and third person. How may this article be referenced for an independent student research project analyzing allegations of indifferent treatment regarding student athletes? **(RI.9-10.1 - 10.6)**
5. Using contextual clues only, determine the most complete and accurate definitions of following italicized terms: *bureaucratic, nuance, dissemination, illicit, flawless, embrace, sober, vouched, engaging, summoned, and budding* as obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to demonstrate further comprehension. **(LA.910.1.6.3; LA.910.1.6.1)**
6. **SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY WORD-OF-THE-WEEK** Create a concluding paragraph aligned with the passage above using the following italicized word: *Truculent* adj. inclined toward conflict; eager to fight **(LA.910.1.6.1; LA.910.1.6.5)**

*Länge leve Daughtry Times. Det är allt. | Due Monday, October 28, 2013*

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