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**Health Watch**  
Group seeks to eliminate sodas in schools

By Lindsey Tanner  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — Soft drinks should be eliminated from schools to help tackle the nation's obesity epidemic and pediatricians should work with their local schools to ensure that children are offered healthful alternatives, the American Academy of Pediatrics says.

In a new policy statement, the academy says doctors should contact superintendents and school board members and "emphasize the notion that every school in every district shares a responsibility for the nutritional health of its students."

Some schools already limit contracts with vendors of soft drinks and fast foods, though the soft drink industry has fought efforts by some states to mandate such restrictions.

While some schools rely on funds from vending machines to pay for student activities, the new policy says elementary and high schools should avoid such contracts, and that those with existing contracts should impose restrictions to avoid promoting overconsumption by kids.

The policy appears in the January issue of Pediatrics, being published Monday.

"The purpose of the statement is to give parents and superintendents and school board members and teachers, too, an awareness of the fact that they're playing a role in the current obesity crisis, and that they have measures at their disposal" to address it, said Dr. Robert D. Murray, the policy's lead author.

About 15 percent of U.S. youngsters aged 6 to 19 are seriously overweight. That is nearly 9 million youths and triple the number in a similar assessment from 1980.

Soft drinks are a common source of excess calories that can contribute to weight gain, and soft drink consumers at all ages have a higher daily calorie intake than non-consumers, the academy's policy said. It cites data showing that 56 percent to 85 percent of school-age children consume at least one soft drink daily, most often sugared rather than diet sodas.

The National Soft Drink Association, which represents most soft drink makers nationwide, said the new policy is misguided and goes too far.

"Soft drinks can be a part of a balanced lifestyle and are a nice treat," said Jim Finkelstein, the association's executive director.

On the Net:  
Pediatrics  
www.pediatrics.org

# Nouveau soul food

## Chicken and waffles a new culinary staple making the rounds to Charlotte eateries

By Artellia Burch  
artellia.burch@thecharlottepost.com

**N**ew businesses and an influx of people from around the world have helped to make Charlotte a world class city.

Along with new faces showing up in this area so are new tastes. Cuisine like the famous Chicken and Waffles that was once a western staple has made its way to the Queen City.

Chicken and Waffles isn't a new dish. Rumor has it that the sweet and spicy mixture can be linked as far back to Thomas Jefferson.

According to legends Jefferson brought a waffle back to Virginia after serving an ambassadorship in France.

Actor-rapper Will Smith, the former star of "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" would make references on the show to Roscoe's chicken and waffles and it was featured in the movie "Jackie Brown."

Waffles and chicken has become trendy and profitable for East Coast restaurants that specialize in southern cuisine like Gladys (Knight) and Ron's Restaurant in Atlanta.

And the combination has also come to Charlotte's historic Coffee Cup.

"Chicken and waffles is a known favorite in the LA region and has made its way east," said Gardine Wilson, co-owner of the Coffee Cup. "Places like Gladys and Ron's have embraced the phenomenon."

Wilson says due to the overwhelming request of customers his restaurant had to be added chicken and waffles to the menu. "It's the soft texture and sweet taste of waffles and syrup combined with the spicy crunchy texture of good down home fried chicken that creates a beautiful melody in your mouth," he said.

Waffles and chicken is also available at Dave & Fran's and at the International House of Pancakes on North Tryon Street.

Coffee Cup co-owner Anthony McCarver shows off a plate of chicken and waffles.



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## Haitians' suit against video game moves to U.S. federal court

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — A lawsuit that claims a top-selling video game is dangerous to society and asks that it be removed from store shelves will be decided in federal court.

Haitian civil rights groups filed the lawsuit because the game, Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, instructs players to "kill

the Haitians" and awards points for each kill.

The New York-based Rockstar Games Inc. has agreed to remove the offensive line from future versions of the award-winning video that has sold 11 million copies.

But the Haitian organizations, led by the Haitian-American Coalition of Palm Beach County, have also asked

for more than \$15,000 in damages.

The suit was filed Dec. 23 in state circuit court in Palm Beach County. Attorneys for Rockstar Games opted to move the case to federal court, and that motion was granted Tuesday. No hearing dates were immediately set.

The lawsuit takes on heavyweights in the video game

industry, including Rockstar Games, its parent company Take-Two Interactive Software Inc., Sony Computer Entertainment, the Microsoft Corp., and retailers Target, Wal-Mart and Best Buy.

The manufacturer of the game, in which an ex-convict is hired to recover stolen drug money in the streets of Miami, has been harshly criticized for

its portrayal of Haitians.

Earlier this month, about 100 Haitian-Americans demonstrated outside a Wal-Mart Supercenter in nearby Boynton Beach chanting, "Stop Vice City."

Attorneys for the Haitian organizations and the video game manufacturer did not return phone calls.

