

READING BILLS: Cell phone statements - 1D

OPENING EYES: Sports forum looks at diversity - 1C



THE END OF 'SEX' Fans lament the approaching wrap of HBO's hot singles series - 1F



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Sunday • Jan. 11, 2004

SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

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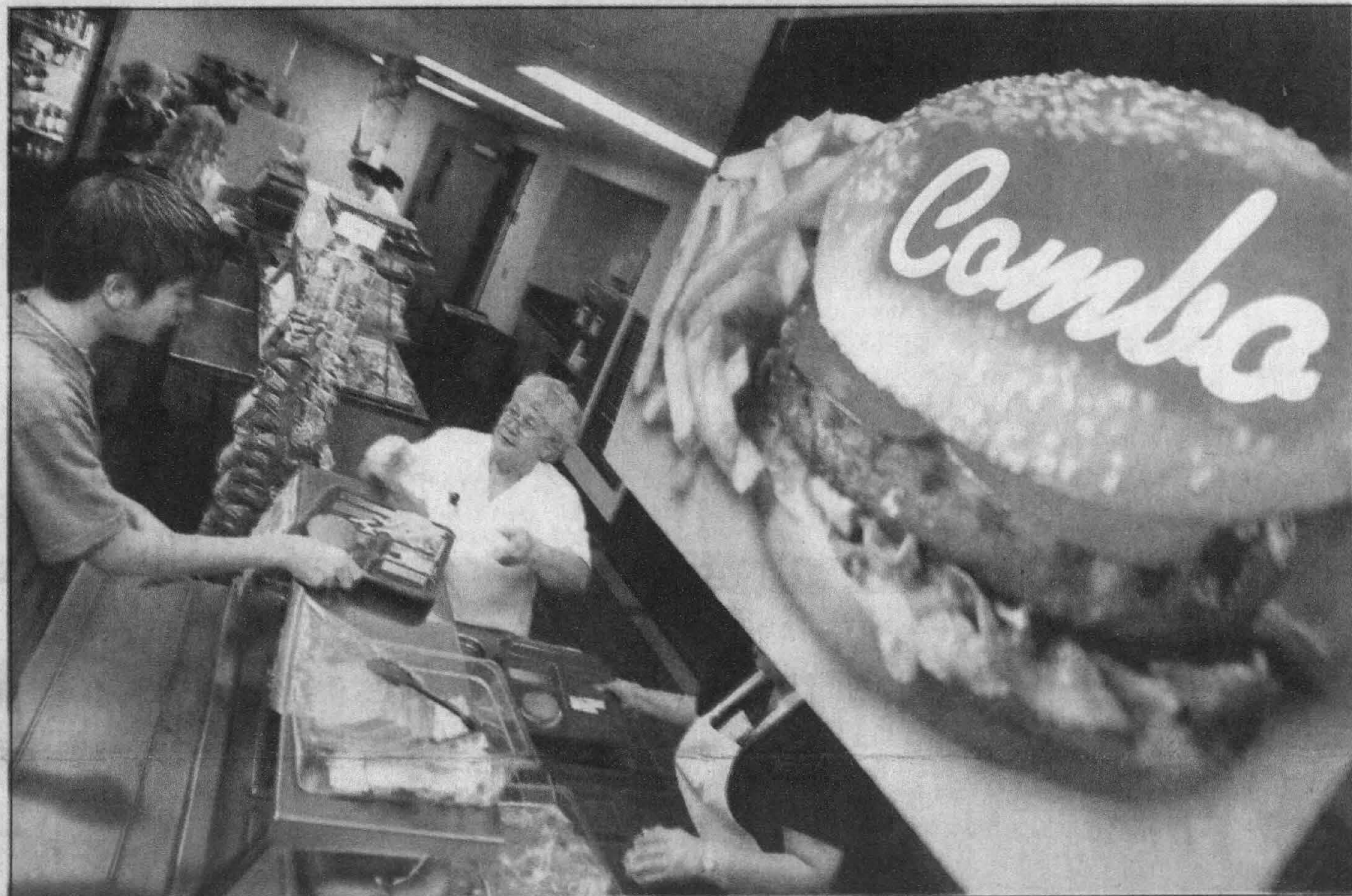
## SPECIAL REPORT: TEEN HEALTH

FIRST OF A TWO-PART SERIES

- BURGER AND FRIES
- SUPER BURRITO
- NACHOS
- TWINKIES
- TACOS
- DORITOS
- CHOCOLATE CAKE
- WHOPPER
- CHICKEN NUGGETS
- POP TART
- CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE
- POTATO OLÉS
- BIG MAC
- STUFFED-CRUST PIZZA
- SODA
- SIX-PACK-AND-A-POUND

# Junk food generation

Schools find themselves on the front lines in the battle to raise students' fitness



CHRISTOPHER GANNON / ARGUS LEADER

Sophomore Jason Amundson picks up a hamburger and fries from cafeteria worker Carolyn Belisle at Roosevelt High School. Cafeterias offer balanced meal combinations, but two-thirds of Sioux Falls high school students pick alternatives - a la carte, fast food, sack lunches, even nothing.

## Survey shows poor eating, exercise habits

BY JENNIFER SANDERSON  
jsanders@argusleader.com

Sophomore Ashley Isaacson wants Krispy Kreme doughnuts stocked in the school store.

In the Roosevelt High School cafeteria on a December noon, an entire table of freshmen aren't eating. They're talking to pass the 25 minutes before the next lunch shift replaces them.

Travis Schmidt started his senior year in Sioux Falls with only one physical education class on his high school transcript - that during summer school.

"I don't do that good with my diet," said doughnut lover Isaacson. "Lots of mac and cheese, all carbohydrates." She remembers the food pyramid from eighth-grade health class and "something about 2,000 calories a day, but I figure I'm

going to burn it off anyway." Her once-a-week Pilates workout falls far short of the recommended daily exercise, but she's counting on good genes and a high metabolism to keep her fit and slim. Other students aren't as fortunate.

As many as one-fourth of American high schoolers are overweight or at risk of becoming so, according to studies from the National Institutes for Health and other federal agencies.

In South Dakota, one in five high school students responding to a state health department survey put themselves in those same categories.

Parents and doctors know the trend: unhealthy meals, less exercise, bigger teenagers and more lifelong health problems. Health experts say

See **FITNESS**, page 4A

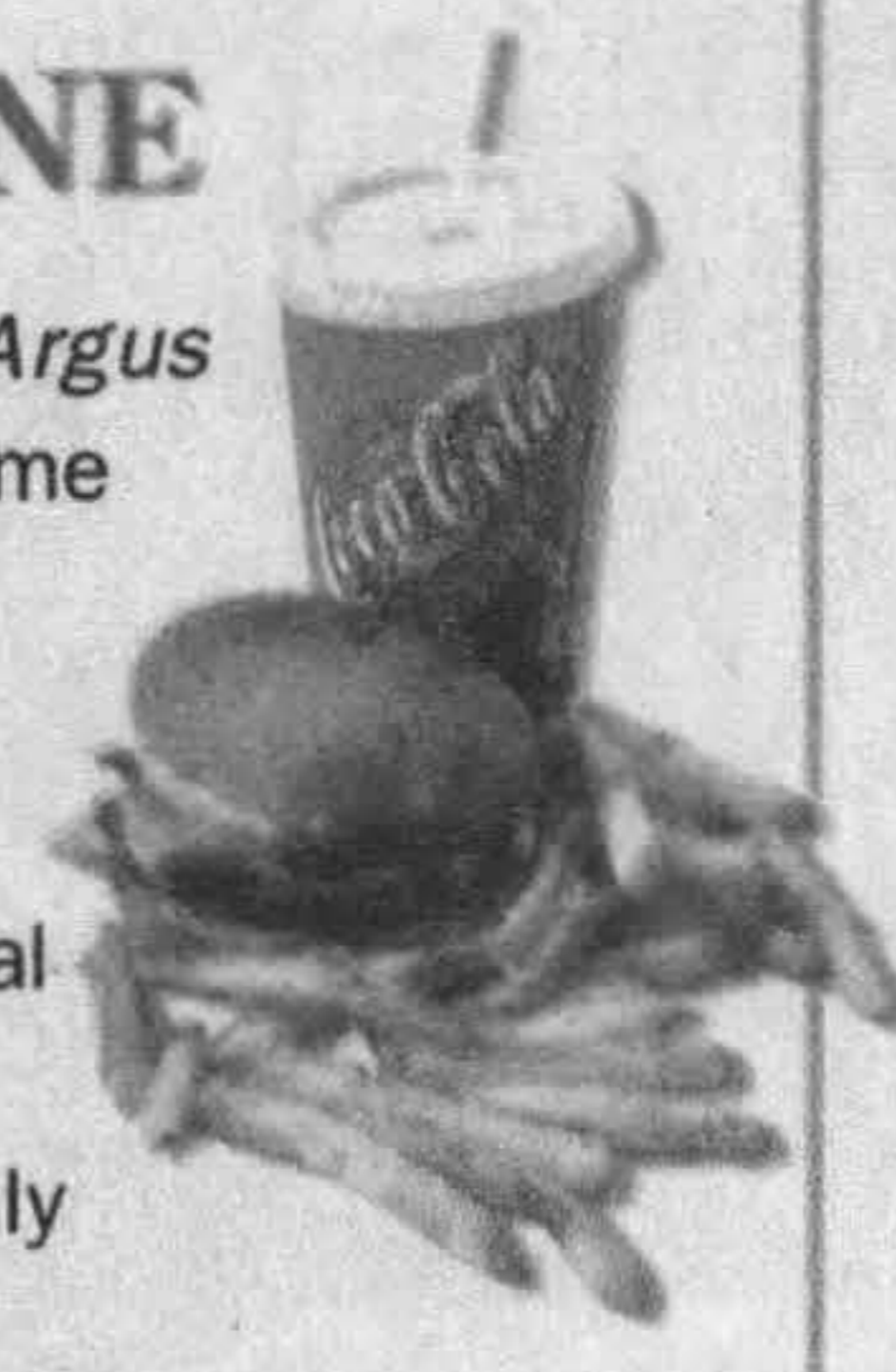
## ONLINE

Visit the Argus Leader's home page at [www.argusleader.com](http://www.argusleader.com) for additional features available only online.

**Q&A:** Send in your health and fitness questions. We'll research them with local experts.

**MEAL CALCULATOR:** High school students break down their daily menus to see calories, carbohydrates, cholesterol and other data. Learn how you can do the same.

**RISK SURVEY:** Find South Dakota's results in the 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey and read the entire health department questionnaire.



## Lunch programs only part of solution

BY JENNIFER SANDERSON  
jsanders@argusleader.com

School cafeterias serve up soy burgers, fresh veggies and 1 percent milk in meals patterned and portioned according to dietary guidelines. Nutrient and calorie combinations match dietitians' recommendations.

But in Sioux Falls high schools, only about one-third of students are eating the midday meals.

Some choose items a la carte, others brown-bag it, and seniors who have earned the privilege to take off-campus trips often hit fast-food chains or convenience stores.

"There's no rule that says kids have to eat at school," said Joni Davis, supervisor of the Sioux Falls School District's Child Nutrition Services. "With our flexible scheduling, some students might be done at 1:30 p.m., and they won't eat here, either. They'll go home or grab something on their way to work."

Pending federal legislation hopes to make the balanced school menu a more attractive option for students and families by expanding the number of students who qualify for free lunches. But it's still up to high-schoolers to make smart choices, and there's no guarantee a free lunch would beat out

See **SCHOOL LUNCH**, page 5A

## Bill seeks accident, cell phone statistics

Proof of link might lead to partial ban

BY TERRY WOSTER  
and BRENDA WADE SCHMIDT  
Argus Leader

A state senator is convinced that South Dakotans using cell phones as they drive are highway menaces, but he doubts he can convince the rest of the Legislature of that without accident statistics.

Clarence Kooistra, a Republican from Garretson, wants that information gathered and reported publicly, showing how often a cell phone caused a traffic accident. He's writing a bill to require traffic officials to handle the task.

"I do believe it's a safety issue," Kooistra said. "There's more of it going on rather than less, and it seems like it's to the point we have to do something. Everyone has a story about a close call."

If not a story about a close call, then perhaps everyone has an opinion. Paul Hull, a construction worker who uses a cell phone, said if cell phones are regulated, the law should require hands-free devices.

Kim Bartling, a theater professor at the University of Sioux Falls, said she doesn't think it is necessarily safe to use a cell phone and drive, but she does it herself.

"If I didn't have a cell phone in my car, I wouldn't get half my work done," she said. "With families as busy as they are, I want my children to be able to find me."

But she doesn't want her son to use his phone in the car.

"My son gets lectured all the time, 'Don't talk on your cell phone when you're driving.' It probably should be regulated so I would have to do it, too."

Kooistra will introduce his bill when the 2004 Legislature convenes Tuesday in Pierre for a 35-day session. He admits it's less than he'd like to do. A year ago, Kooistra sponsored a bill to make it a

★★★★  
20 04



SOUTH DAKOTA  
LEGISLATURE

### This week

The Legislature convenes Tuesday. Here is a list of stories previewing the session:

- **Sunday:** Food tax
- **Tuesday:** Education
- **Wednesday:** Research
- **Thursday:** Social programs
- **Friday:** Special election
- **Saturday:** Terrorism
- **Today:** Cell phones in cars, State Fair

### Inside

Lawmakers say give fair the time to prove itself.

SEE PAGE 10A

See **CELL PHONES**, page 10A

## O'Neill: Bush mapped Iraq war in '01

BY SCOTT LINDLAW  
Associated Press

CRAWFORD, Texas - Former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill contends the United States began laying the groundwork for an invasion of Iraq just days after President Bush took office in January 2001 - more than two years before the start of the U.S.-led war that ousted Saddam Hussein.

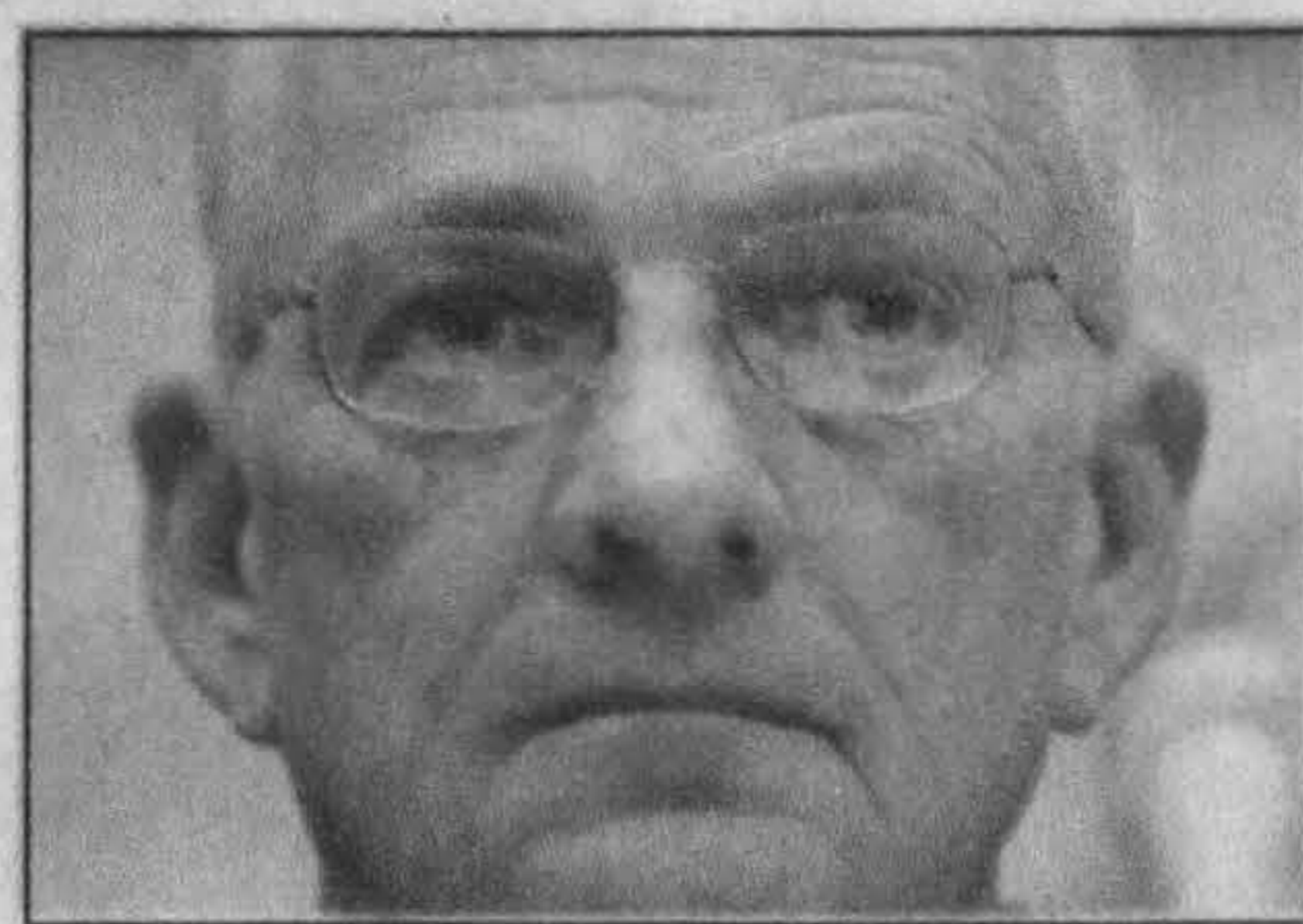
"From the very beginning, there was a conviction that Saddam Hus-

sein was a bad person and that he needed to go," O'Neill told CBS's "60 Minutes" in an interview to be aired tonight.

The official U.S. government stance on Iraq, dating to the Clinton administration, was that the United States sought to oust Saddam.

But O'Neill, who was fired by Bush in December 2002, said he had qualms about what he asserted was

See **O'NEILL**, page 9A



KENNETH LAMBERT / AP FILE PHOTO  
Former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill

## Who watches the watchdogs?

BY LARRY MARGASAK  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Pentagon auditors spent 1,139 hours altering their own files in order to pass an internal review, say investigators who found that the accounting sleuths engaged in just the kind of wasteful activity they are supposed to expose.

When the auditors in the New York City office learned

well in advance which files a review team would check, they spent the equivalent of more than 47 days doctoring the papers and updating records from several audits, the Defense Department's inspector general concluded. Administrative staff, audit supervisors and other employees also participated in the scheme.

The fabrication at the

Defense Contract Audit Agency "certainly violates the spirit and intent" of government auditing standards and rules on ethical conduct, according to the inspector general's report obtained by The Associated Press.

The fabrication was found in 2001, but the report was not disclosed until Tuesday.

See **AUDIT**, page 9A

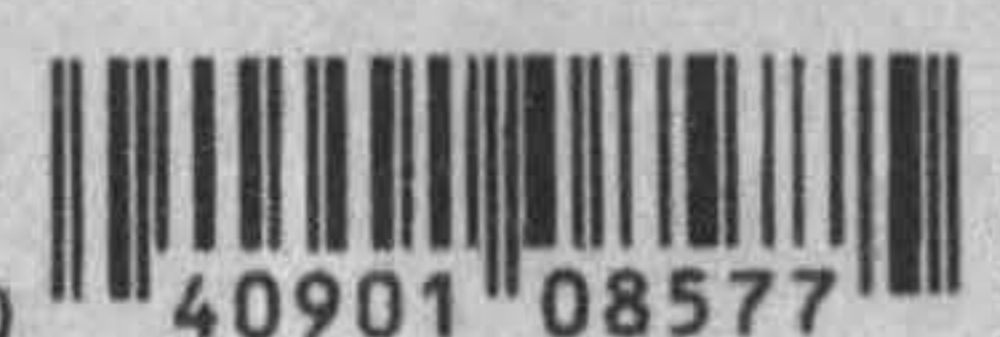
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*'Unfortunately, I think schools have to do this. Kids spend hardly any time at home. You've got to look at where you stand to have the greatest impact.'*

Richard Friess, Sioux Falls doctor

## Fitness: Obesity is regional problem

Continued from 1A

the nation's youths risk serious self-inflicted consequences and must adapt their eating and exercise habits.

### Responsibility falling on the schools

While teens and their parents ultimately are responsible for their decisions, some believe the public school system is the place to start making changes.

"Unfortunately, I think schools have to do this," said Richard Friess, a doctor who has practiced in Sioux Falls for more than three decades. "Kids spend hardly any time at home. You've got to look at where you stand to have the greatest impact."

In South Dakota, the problem is growing. More teens are overweight than ever, and they're getting less exercise than did their counterparts 10 years ago. Among other concerns raised by the state's health survey and other sources:

■ South Dakota is one of only five states not requiring high school students to take physical education or health credits for graduation, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. About 22 percent of South Dakota teens take PE once or more during the school week, the fewest since 1991. In contrast, nearly 52 percent of 9th- through 12th-graders nationwide take PE at school.

■ Compared to past years, the state's high schoolers are drinking less milk and eating fewer fruits and vegetables. Though they fare better than national averages, they're still falling far short of food pyramid standards. For example, fewer than 25 percent of South Dakota teens drink three glasses of milk per day.

■ Other research confirms the Upper Midwest as "one of the most obese places in the nation," in part, Friess said, because people typically spend four to five months indoors and inactive. Former director of Sioux Valley Hospital's Partners in Prevention, he's helped screen Sioux Falls high school students during fall registration for the past three years. He calls the most recent results "shocking."

Of the 240 Roosevelt and Lincoln students given blood checks, 42 percent of males and 50 percent of females showed abnormal total cholesterol. Avera McKennan checked 500 students at Washington and found an average of 168.8, with anything less than 170 considered desirable. Blood pressure ratings also were higher than recommended in many students.

### Incorporating health, fitness into the curriculum

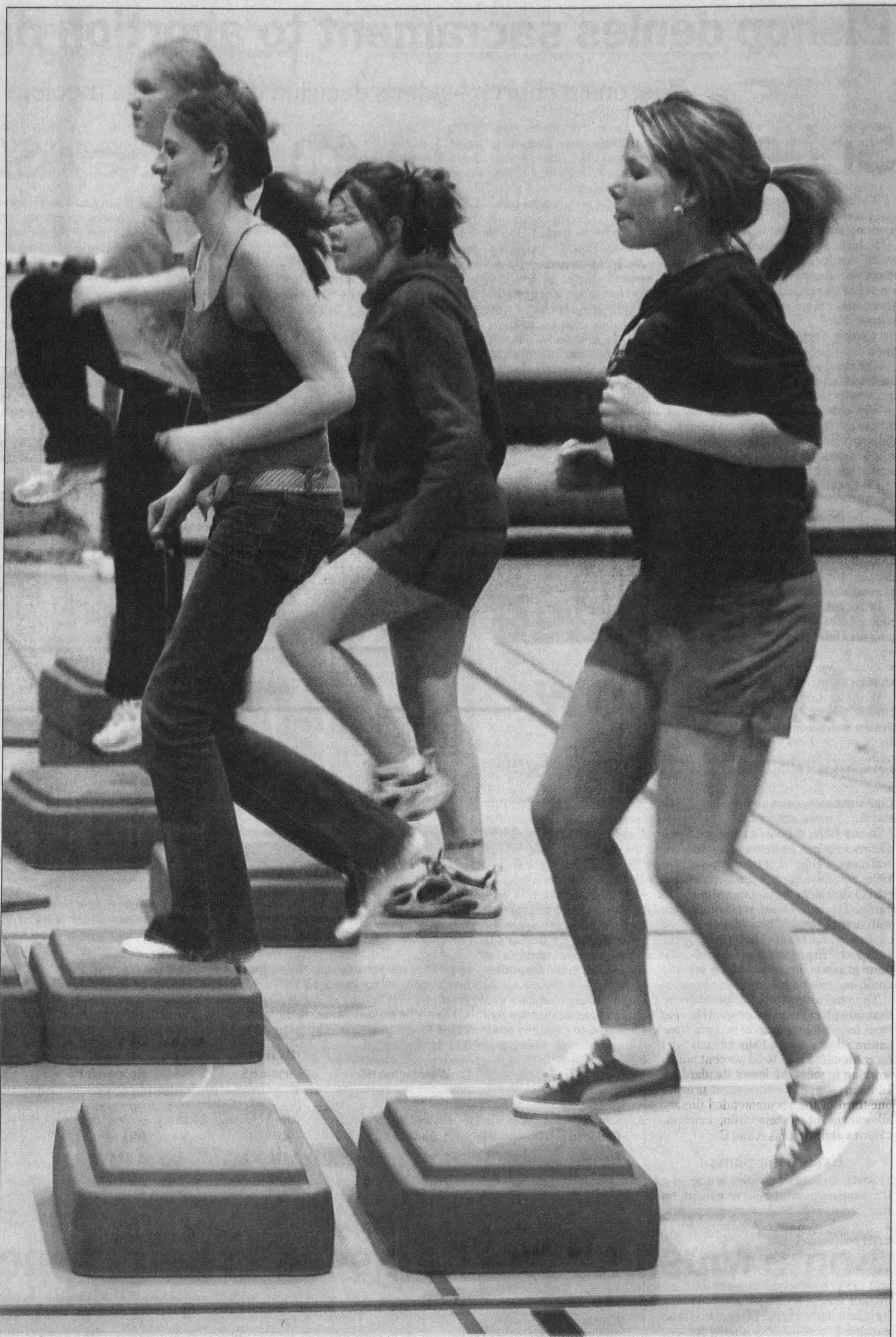
The federal government already is targeting schools in a push to reverse the obesity trend. The U.S. Senate has approved federal grants to schools and doctors for wellness training. Another proposal, the Obesity Prevention Act, would give money to educators who develop nutrition and activity curriculums. And both houses of Congress are considering making free, balanced school lunches available to more students.

State curriculum requirements are unlikely to change in the near future. Right now, the South Dakota Board of Education has no plans to require PE, according to president Glenna Foubert. But she said the topic will be discussed this year.

Minnesota requires 3 credits of physical education and health. In Iowa and Nebraska, local districts are able to set some of their own credit requirements allowing the addition of P.E. and health.

State education officials believe South Dakota's baseline graduation requirement of 20 academic credits is sufficient. The education department does offer grade-specific physical education standards that local schools can choose to adopt.

Yet evidence that more health instruction is needed is spelled out on the health department's own Web site, where residents can find South Dakota's results in the student survey, which is administered across the country by the Centers for Disease Control.



CHRISTOPHER GANNON / ARGUS LEADER

Junior Jenna Gerleman (right) performs an aerobic workout with classmates in a physical education class at Lincoln High School. The district has shifted the focus of physical education from skills to individual health plans.

### SIoux FALLS SCREENINGS

Students at Sioux Falls' three public high schools took part in voluntary health screenings at the beginning of the 2003-2004 term. Sioux Valley Hospital's Partners in Prevention screened students at Roosevelt and Lincoln, while Avera McKennan Hospital representatives screened students at Washington. Administrators at each school chose which risks to assess, so information is not uniform for all schools.

Roosevelt, in its third year of the screenings, had the greatest number of participants and most complete data:

#### ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL

	Males	Females
Overweight (1,502 screened)	14%	9%
High blood pressure (1,588 screened)	19%	10%
Cholesterol above 200 (200 screened)	11%	15%

► At Lincoln, 5 percent of males and 4 percent of females had high blood pressure, with a total of 800 students screened. Only one of the 40 students screened for cholesterol registered as at-risk.

► Washington screened 500 students' cholesterol levels and found an average of 168.8, with anything less than 170 considered the desirable range for the age group. Eight students were referred to the school nurse for blood-pressure rechecks. The average body mass index, calculated using height and weight, was 21.89 — well within the acceptable range for young men and women.

Bonnie Brown conveys as much health education in her Lincoln High School fitness classes as possible, taking family histories and exploring topics such as diabetes, cancer and osteoporosis. But she doesn't think it's safe to assume high schools can do enough to change student lifestyles without help.

"I'd like to see health issues incorporated into activities courses, so student don't just sit and read and take tests on paper. But having a class is better than nothing," Brown said. "What has the bigger impact? Telling kids not to do drugs, or studying the nervous system and how alcohol affects it? You can't pull things apart and expect kids to see the big picture. We're getting it in little pieces."

Schools want to provide health and exercise options for students, but educators say cost always is an issue.

Smaller schools worry about asking too much of teachers as well as students.

"Certainly, money is a consideration. But we were more fortunate. Our athletic director and business teacher was willing to give up one of his prep periods," said Dave Hutchison, principal at Irene High School.

For the first time last year, his school offered PE as an elective. The class filled up at 18, the maximum the weight room could handle at one time.

Other schools are focusing on narrowing student dietary choices. During the holiday break, administrators at Riggs High School in Pierre removed all vending machines selling soda and junk food. Before the school board's vote, students and school clubs argued a privilege was being taken away. Superintendent John Pederson said the board decided that

"setting an example and offering more healthful alternatives outweighed any potential loss in revenue."

### Changing the focus of physical education

The Sioux Falls School District offers students more options than many state schools, beginning with a requirement that students complete one credit of PE to graduate. Administrators such as Roosevelt Principal Jim Denevan also are pushing to add a half-credit of health education to the district's graduation requirements.

Sioux Falls teachers recently took the PE curriculum through a scheduled revision that focuses on individual success, not competition among classmates.

"We want to use sports as a means to an end, not the end product," said Brown, also chairwoman of the revision committee. "Even 10 years ago, the curriculum was more skills-related. Now, we're looking at a health-related plan. The end product is a student who knows several lifetime activities and fitness information and can use both as a stress release."

The district no longer uses the Presidential Fitness Test, which sets minimum numbers of push-ups, sit-ups and other exercises for boys and girls, as well as requiring a mile walk/run and a shorter sprint.

"If you couldn't do a single chin-up, you were done," said Kaaren Huber, a Lincoln instructor who's pleased to see more young women building bone density in strength-training courses. "Chances are, you came away from the skills test hating PE."

Instead, the district uses the Cooper Institute's Fitnessgram, a computerized assessment for children and youth. The Fitnessgram gives individualized results, much as the new curriculum focuses on individual goals.

"I think the competition is one of the things that turns kids off activity in a school setting. Some of the students will feel inferior," said Mark Meile, the district's athletics and physical education coordinator. "This way, they're competing with themselves."

Pulse monitors and pedometers allow teachers and students to target, then track, progress. So do pulley-driven machines with

See FITNESS, page 5A



Ashley Isaacson



Bonnie Brown



Jim Denevan







Students head to the vending machines near the gym at Washington High School after classes. Most vending machines are off-limits during the school day. Washington Principal Bill Hoff said the policy prevents noise and litter distractions and promotes balanced nutrition.

# Teens: 30% think they're overweight; about 8% are

Continued from 1A

physical education teacher Kaaren Huber. Her students at Lincoln regularly ask for round-table days.

"They want more information on diabetes, cancer and other topics," she said. "They say, 'It's in my family, and I'm scared I'll get it. Am I a carrier or will I have to deal with this?'" These are 15-, 16-, 17-year-olds, and they're looking at the risks."

They're also optimistic. Last spring, all Lincoln physical education students took an attitude survey to help teachers gauge the course's effectiveness.

Because the Sioux Falls School District requires one credit of PE for graduation, the 220 or so students likely had no choice but to enroll. Yet they considered themselves athletic, mostly happy with their physical appearance and more apt to participate than to watch sports on TV.

An overwhelming number agreed with statements such as: "Regular physical activity and exercise make me feel better," "Learning about personal fitness will be valuable to me later in life," and "Physical education should be a required class."

The federal government concurs, at least in principle. The new Presidential Active Lifestyle Award recognizes youths for taking part in any type of regular physical activity for 60 minutes a day.

The new guideline doubles the daily amount previously recommended. Perhaps that's in part because those in grades 9-12 show sharp decreases in vigorous physical activity. By 11th grade, most young women aren't getting enough activity, and 80 percent aren't getting enough calcium.

"I guess it kind of goes by the day and how I'm feeling. I think I do better some days than others," said junior Kelsey Aamlid, who takes a Roosevelt strength training course and plays on the school's volleyball team. Two nights a week, she takes dance.

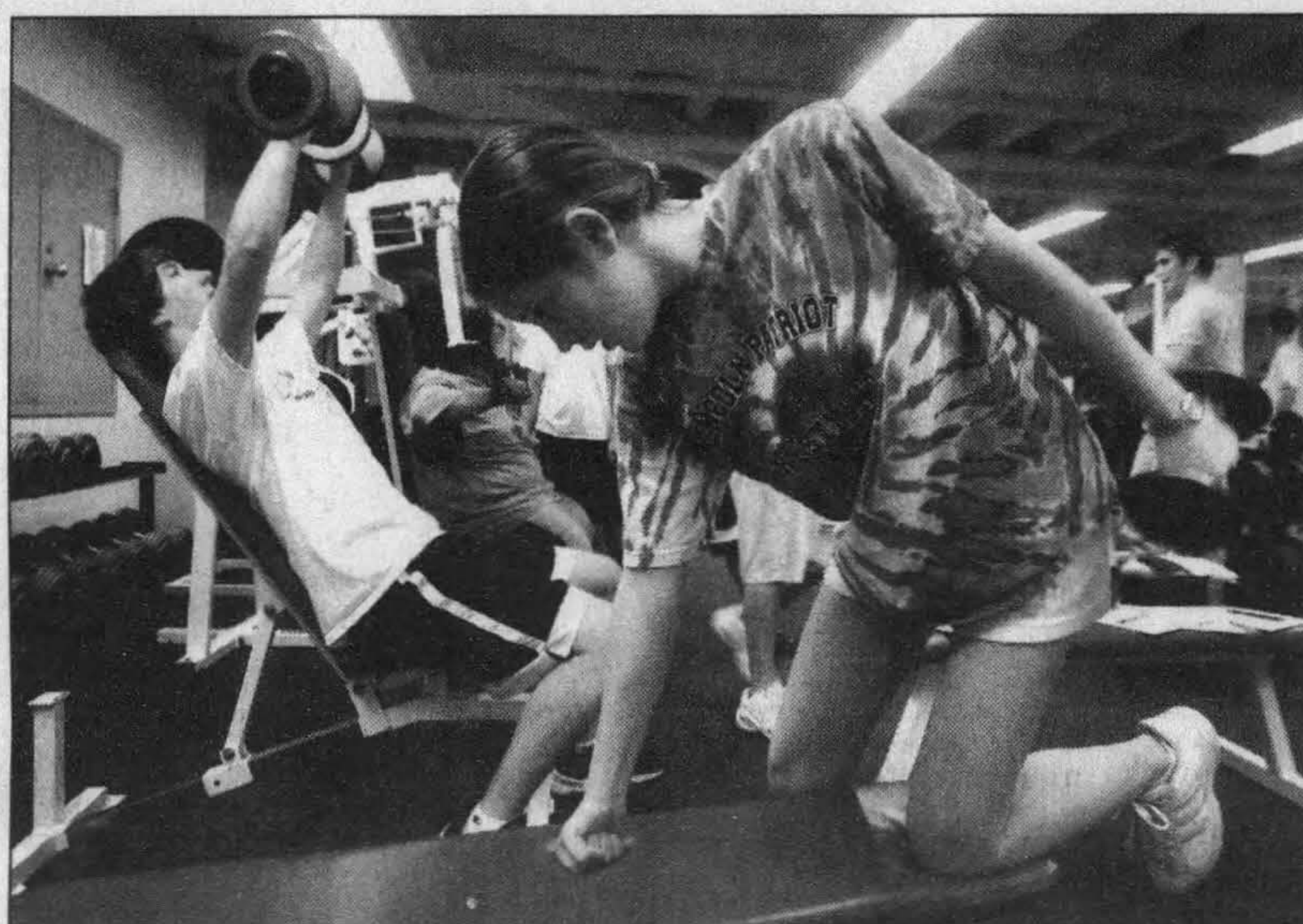
"It's a lot easier to keep with it if you're in a sport and have a trainer or coach," Aamlid said. "I had no idea how long I should be running or doing cardio or anything until I did an acceleration program."

But those programs, designed primarily to build athletes' skills and endurance, aren't the norm. Dr. Richard Friess, former director of Sioux Valley Hospital's Partners in Prevention, has screened high school students for the past three years as part of fall registrations, often finding unnerving levels of cholesterol and blood pressure readings among teenagers.

"The percentage that goes to the Y or the fitness centers isn't very large," said Friess, who oversees Sioux Valley Clinic's executive health services. "How can we get to them? We can't take them out of school. Their lifestyles are so hectic, and the number of kids working is huge. They go from one thing right to another."

Sophomore Jill Mahoney said she "doesn't do sports," then corrects herself: "I'm a swimmer."

She works at a restaurant after school, and because her stepfather works nights, her mother cooks for the whole family on Saturdays and



Lincoln High School students Nicole Becking (front) and Anthony Shawd exercise with free weights during physical education class.

## To learn more

**BODY AND MIND:** www.bam.gov. This site is designed for adolescents. It has tips for increasing activity and reaching lifelong fitness.

**EAT RIGHT:** www.nutrition.gov. This site has guidelines on diet, healthy eating and food safety.

**IN THE KNOW:** www.healthfinder.gov. A browser can link to selected sites from 1,700 health agencies and organizations, then review online checkups and read daily health news in English and Spanish.

Source: HealthierUS Initiative

Sundays. "We fend for ourselves most of the time," Mahoney said.

## Fighting for balance

Teenagers nationwide struggle to find balance in a fast-food, miracle-pill culture that tells them they can neglect their bodies, yet effortlessly get thin and stay healthy. No fine print discloses the links between poor diets and inactivity and high blood pressure, diabetes and dangerous cholesterol levels.

The fitness message can be slow to take hold in teenagers, many of whom feel the invincibility of youth.

"Nowhere is that more obvious than in the adolescent years," said Colleen Johnson, school nurse for Washington High and Longfellow Elementary schools. "They think, 'I'll do it later, maybe when I'm in my twenties.' I wish I knew how to get the message across that if they don't do it now, they aren't likely to start those habits later on in life."

At least one major U.S. research project backs up her opinions. The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, carried out in 1998 and updated in 2002, reported that health "is something adolescents tend to take for granted."

Complications caused by their own actions aside, adolescents are a typically healthy group. They've survived the vulnerability of early childhood and are decades away from the degenerative diseases of old age.

Their status relative to other groups means it's not unusual for the health industry to overlook them. Dr. Jerry Walton, who practiced family medicine in South Dakota for nearly 30 years, said adolescents receive little preventive care.

"Unless they're involved in athletics and have a heart check with their annual physical, we don't know about developing problems," said Walton,

now medical director of the Sioux Valley Health Plan.

Prompted by high numbers of overweight juveniles covered by their parents' insurance policies, Walton began work on a childhood obesity program. Partners grew to include the state health department, Sioux Empire United Way, Sioux Falls School District, both local hospital systems and independent practitioners.

Without intervention from the medical community, high schoolers must take greater responsibility for their own well-being. It's not only physical health that's at stake. In Sioux Falls, annual school safety surveys consistently reveal that overweight teenagers suffer the most harassment of any student subgroup - including those defined by race, gender and religion.

The 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, administered by the state health department and taken by more than 13,000 students nationwide, found many young women unhappy with their bodies. Some take drastic weight-control measures, fasting or forcing themselves to vomit after meals. In South Dakota, more than 30 percent of high schoolers see themselves as overweight, though less than 8 percent fit the clinical term. The survey also shows that those who think themselves "average" are dieting, too: 46 percent of South Dakota high schoolers say they're trying to lose weight.

## School policies

For some adolescents, cutting junk food options might be the easiest starting point. Vending machines and school stores stock snacks and soda, but an increasing number also offer juice, water, and fresh fruits and veggies packaged to go.

Most vending machines are off-limits to Sioux Falls teenagers during the school day. Only water is allowed in

## Suggestions for meal makeovers

The Argus Leader asked a group of Roosevelt High School students to write down what they ate on a particular day in December. Below are the entries from five students, as well as healthier alternatives provided by Sandy Wehrkamp, Lincoln High School family and consumer sciences teacher.

### STUDENT NO. 1

#### What student ate

- ▶ Burger King Whopper, fries and soda
- ▶ Popsicle

#### Recommended changes

- ▶ Substitute grilled chicken sandwich (no mayonnaise) and extra tomato
- ▶ Take an apple or orange instead of fries or get a salad with low-fat dressing
- ▶ Milk instead of soda

### STUDENT NO. 2

#### What student ate

- ▶ Burger King Double Whopper, fries, soda
- ▶ 5-piece chicken tenders with sauce
- ▶ Pretzels

#### Recommended changes

- ▶ Substitute grilled chicken sandwich for double Whopper
- ▶ Have a salad instead of fries
- ▶ Milk instead of soda
- ▶ Carry an apple with you
- ▶ Skip chicken nuggets and get chicken salad instead

### STUDENT NO. 3

#### What student ate

- ▶ Four bowls of chili
- ▶ Three double cheeseburgers
- ▶ Two strips of bacon, scrambled eggs and biscuits with gravy and sausage

#### Recommended changes

- ▶ Limit portions of chili and cheeseburgers
- ▶ If you have a cheeseburger, get rid of mayonnaise
- ▶ Substitute a bagel for the biscuits and gravy
- ▶ Add milk, and fruits and vegetables

### STUDENT NO. 4

#### What student ate

- ▶ Orange sherbet
- ▶ Taco John's 6-pack-and-a-pound (six tacos and a pound of Potato Olés)
- ▶ Taco John's super burrito (beef, cheese, sour cream)
- ▶ Half a frozen cheese pizza

#### Recommended changes

- ▶ Take your lunch to work instead of buying it there.
- ▶ Portions are way too large and very high in fat
- ▶ Limit the number of tacos or make a sandwich with whole-wheat bread, turkey, beef, ham, cheese, lettuce and tomato
- ▶ Skip Potato Olés
- ▶ Limit sour cream
- ▶ Add fruits and vegetables to your diet

### STUDENT NO. 5

#### What student ate

- ▶ Pop Tart
- ▶ Spaghetti with marinara sauce and beef
- ▶ Lettuce salad
- ▶ Roast beef
- ▶ Popcorn
- ▶ Soda
- ▶ Orange juice
- ▶ Toast
- ▶ Pizza

#### Recommended changes

- ▶ Substitute bagel and jelly or low fat cream cheese
- ▶ Choose low fat meats such as Canadian bacon on the pizza

classrooms, with other vending locked out on timers. Washington Principal Bill Hoff said the policy is nutritionally sound and relieves teachers from noise and litter distractions.

Individual schools determine which vending machines will be allowed. At Lincoln, a machine offering fresh fruit was removed after slack sales. Fruit sells better through the school store. The school has soda, juice and water machines but no candy vending. Locker rooms house only water and juice machines.

The district doesn't sign contracts with vendors, according to Joni Davis, supervisor of Child Nutrition Services.

"We do have juice in the cafeteria, but we buy that outright and then sell it for a small markup," she said. "We don't operate machines. Some schools will sign with a company to get so much money for a set volume of pop sales. ... The bottlers here have been

supportive of getting juice products into the schools, and no one's pressured us."

Individual schools do partner with vendors but often get little in return. During the 2002-03 term, machines brought Lincoln about \$800. Washington and Roosevelt have exclusive contracts with Pepsi and receive slightly more.

Lincoln Principal Val Fox doesn't consider her school's portion an incentive to make soda or other vending more accessible. The machines offer a choice, as do the school cafeteria and store.

Her head PE instructor calls moderation the key, whatever the topic.

"The workforce needs healthy people," Bonnie Brown said. "If we don't get some balance, if schools don't recognize how important wellness is, we're going to see it affect other areas."

Reach Jennifer Sanderson at 575-3629.