Oakland school could get metal detectors

Oakland Unified School District Superintendent Richard Mesa says he may consider metal detectors as a security option at Castlemont High School, where a shooting took place Thursday.

"We cannot and will not tolerate weapons on our campuses, and we are taking definitive steps to enforce that decision," said Mesa after the shooting. A student reportedly was involved in Thursday's lunch-hour shooting in which a man was hurt.

"We will explore all available solu-
tions to ensuring the safety of our stu-
dents, including the student-supported possibility of using metal detectors," said Mesa.

Other steps under consideration to increase security at Castlemont include assigning police officers there, limiting access to the campus, and hiring parents to patrol during school.

Coal turned into diamonds, then dust

LIVERMORE: Two Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory physicists say they have found a way to turn coal into diamonds, but only for a split-second before the precious jewel explodes into dust.

For years industrial diamonds have been made through a process that applies explosive-generated pressure on carbon-powder mixtures, but the new finding allows researchers to both create and observe the transformation.

Dave Erskine and Bill Nellis described their research at a recent International Conference on High Pressure Science and Technology.

During their experiments, a high-powered gas gun fired a quarter-sized copper disc at a lump of coal, or graphite, lattice, in a chamber. When pressure caused by the firing increased to more than 200,000 times that found in the Earth's atmosphere, the molecular structure of the graphite changed into diamonds.

Lab spokesman Ron Weinberg said the diamonds only lasted for billions of a second before shattering into dust from internal pressure created by the process.

The traditional method of industrial diamond production does not permit an observation of the real-time transformation process. Without studying the process, it was not accurately known under what conditions graphite could be turned into diamonds.