

## BRONX NEWS

## Lashing back

## Slashed teen's mom sues

BY JOEY SCARBOROUGH  
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THE mother of a Bronx student who was viciously slashed across the face by a 15-year-old assailant in the hallway of Herbert H. Lehman High School is seeking \$5.5 million in damages against the city, the Daily News has learned.

Stephauan Powell, 16, and his mother Latoya Santiago, 39, will file a lawsuit in the Bronx Monday requesting damages for negligence on the part of the Department of Education, which they contend failed to adequately protect the teen.

"He (the attacker) came with the intent to do great damage, and there was no one there to protect my child," said Santiago, herself a graduate of Lehman High. "It's going to happen to someone else's child if they don't change the safety system."

The suit seeks \$5 million in damages on behalf of Powell and an additional \$500,000 in damages for Santiago, who claims she has suffered emotional trauma and financial strain.

Powell received 20 stitches in the March 17 attack, which Santiago claims was triggered when a friendship between her son and another teen went sour.

The attacker, identified only as "Corey H." by the city Law Department, lunged at Powell with a straight razor, which he was able to smuggle into Lehman despite metal detectors installed at the

school's entrances.

"Are any kids in this school safe?" asked Santiago. "This school has a metal detector. How could the kid get into school with this? It could have been a gun?"

Powell's attacker was cut on his hand during the scuffle, but the family's lawyer maintains the student was unarmed during the attack and did not provoke anyone.

Powell was charged with disorderly conduct, despite video evidence to the contrary showing the student blind-sided while walking in the hallway, the family claims. "Clearly Stephauan is the victim here," said the family's lawyer, Sanford Rubenstein, who has represented police brutality victims Abner Louima and the family of Sean Bell. "The charges must be dismissed."

The assailant was charged with first degree attempted assault in Bronx County Family Court on March 21.

"Students go to school to learn, not to be brutally slashed across the face," said Rubenstein, who will announce the lawsuit at a press conference Monday. "Justice for Stephauan Powell is important for all students."

A Department of Education spokeswoman declined to comment.  
jscarborough@nydailynews.com



Latoya Santiago meets with attorney Sanford Rubenstein (inset) to discuss son Stephauan Powell's lawsuit (r.).

PHOTOS BY AARON SHOWALTER