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Around The State

Settlement Reached With N.C. Student On Bus Crash

FAYETTEVILLE — A lawyer for one Massey Hill Classical High School student who was injured during a charter bus crash in 2001 said his client has reached a settlement with the three defendants.

Sixteen other lawsuits against the Cumberland County Board of Education, bus driver Darol Britt and the company that hired Britt, AMA Tours Unlimited, are awaiting trial in Cumberland County Superior Court.

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Lawyers for the plaintiffs and the defendants began mediation July 16, as required by Superior Court.

Don Beskind, a Raleigh lawyer who is representing Jillian Hernandez-Adams, said an agreement was reached July 23. He would not disclose the amount of the settlement.

Hernandez-Adams was one of 12 students who were critically injured

April 6, 2001, when the bus they were riding in crashed in Georgia. The students were on their way to a band competition in Florida.

AMA Tours, which provided two buses for the trip, hired Darol Britt of Royal Heritage Tours as a subcontractor to provide and drive one bus.

About 6:40 a.m., the bus he was driving crashed on Interstate 95 near the Georgia-Florida border. Britt has said that he swerved to avoid hitting a car.

He did not have insurance, and the bus had defective brakes.

Hernandez-Adams, who was 15 at the time of the accident, suffered head injuries and a shattered knee cap. She spent almost two weeks at Shands-Jacksonville Medical Center in Jacksonville, Fla., and has had several operations.

David Bock of Fayetteville, who represents the Cumberland County Board of Education and the chaperones on the trip, said lawyers are continuing to try to reach agreements in the 16 other

cases.

Bock also would not disclose any settlement figures.

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