

FCC aims to bolster Internet in schools

By Edward Wyatt, New York Times

WASHINGTON – With a goal of fiber-optic lines reaching to every school and a Wi-Fi connection in every classroom, Tom Wheeler, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, is expected on Monday to propose a 62 percent increase in the amount of money the agency spends annually to wire schools and libraries with high-speed Internet connections.

Wheeler will propose that the annual cap on spending for school Internet needs be raised by \$1.5 billion, to \$3.9 billion, according to an F.C.C. official who spoke on condition of anonymity but was authorized to release details of the proposal. The initiative is part of a continuing overhaul of the Universal Service Fund and its educational component, known as E-Rate.

The new spending would lead to an increase of roughly 16 percent in the monthly fee on consumers' phone bills. The fee is used to finance the Universal Service Fund, an \$8.7 billion effort that provides phone and broadband connections for low-income populations, rural areas, and schools and libraries.

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