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Rep. Geoff Diehl to host "Race to Nowhere" screening

Rep. Diehl, filmmaker to speak at Oct. 20 event

By Jessica Melanson
The Patriot Ledger
Posted Oct 08, 2011 @ 07:59 AM

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WHITMAN — State Rep. Geoff Diehl, R-Whitman, in conjunction with Whitman-Hanson Regional School District, will present a screening of "Race to Nowhere" at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 20, at the Members Lounge of Whitman-Hanson Performing Arts Center, 600 Franklin St.

A discussion with filmmaker Vicki Abeles, a California mother of three, will follow.

"Race to Nowhere" explores the pressure to achieve and the resulting stress for many students. Since its 2009 release, the film has been screened in

schools and community centers nationwide.

"This film sort of talks about the parent's role in how to help their kids in the education process," Diehl said. "You do see a wide range of parents that are over-involved and under-involved. ... I think this film is trying to help parents find the happy medium."

The screening is one of a two-part "Education Innovation Forum" put on by Diehl and Whitman-Hanson schools.

The forum is meant to spread awareness and stimulate discussion in the wake of the national Common Core Standards Initiative that 44 states, including Massachusetts, plan to implement by 2015, Diehl said.

Massachusetts is a leader in education and a model for Common Core, he said, but the current emphasis in Massachusetts classrooms is misguided.

"We need to allow kids to become critical thinkers," he said. "Kids are focused on memorization more than critical thinking."

Common Core would standardize learning so that students in different states would have the same educational opportunities. Assessment would become more rigorous and real-world relevant, according to a Common Core **"Classroom Implications" paper**.

Part two of the "Education Innovation Forum" will feature Harvard's Tony Wagner discussing his book "The Global Achievement Gap" at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 15 at Hanson Middle School, 111 Middle St.

For more information about the screening, go to rtnwhitmanma.eventbrite.com.

Jessica Melanson may be reached at jmelanson@ledger.com.

READ MORE about "Race to Nowhere."

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