

Event brings together community leaders and representatives from all levels of government to discuss how to best serve the Wyandanch community

Wyandanch, NY— Thursday, Rep. Steve Israel (D–Long Island) joined with government officials, local leaders and students for a Wyandanch community forum. Community leaders gave presentations on key issues like economic development and youth services before participating in a question and answer session. The goal of the event was to determine the needs and priorities for the Wyandanch community and how each level of government can respond effectively.

“I’m grateful that so many community leaders and elected officials came together today to initiate a dialogue on the future of Wyandanch,” said Rep. Israel. “This community has struggled, and now we need to harnesses its strength to overcome the obstacles to improvement. By engaging community leaders and residents and providing them with a prominent role in the policy process, we can generate an effective and comprehensive program for Wyandanch.”

“I am excited about the opportunity to work with the Wyandanch community to develop a plan to address the pressing issues of the community,” said Suffolk County Legislator Dwayne Gregory. “This process will be a model for other communities across New York State to use to develop their community priorities.”

Wyandanch graduates between 46-55 percent of high school students, while the average Suffolk County graduation rate was 90 percent. Only 32 percent of fourth graders pass the English exam, and only 53 percent of fourth graders pass the math exam, the lowest rates in Suffolk County.

This summer the community suffered from a spate of violence that included four high-profile shootings. To help combat issues of violence – as well as drug use – the Department of Justice recently granted the “Weed and Seed” anti-gang program in Wyandanch \$149,992. A number of community action groups such as Save Our Children, have arisen to help address community needs.

In the 2008 budget, Rep. Israel secured \$243,000 for the Institute for Student Achievement in Wyandanch. He also successfully fought against President Bush’s \$1.2 billion cut to education programs. In prior years, Rep. Israel secured funds for the Wyandanch public sewer system, the Institute for Minority Teacher Development and Training in Wyandanch, Long Island Educational Resources Inc. programs, and traffic signal and sidewalk improvements in Wyandanch. Rep. Israel serves on the House Appropriations Committee.