



*Our mission is to develop children who are confident and creative learners. We provide a rigorous curriculum and a supportive school environment that promotes high achievement, encourages personal growth, and meets the unique needs of each child.*

---

## **Board of Education Meeting | January 15, 2026 | Opening Statement**

Skokie School District 68 is committed to fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and safe learning environment for every student, family, and staff member, regardless of race, national origin, immigration status, religion, gender, or any other protected characteristic. This commitment was reaffirmed at the Board of Education meeting on November 20, 2025, when the Board adopted a proclamation affirming its dedication to belonging.

The District is aware of both concerns and statements of advocacy raised by community members and staff regarding the display of a flag representing Palestine in a classroom at Old Orchard Junior High School. As with all matters of this nature, the District's priority is to ensure that classroom environments remain age-appropriate, student-centered, inclusive, and aligned with Board of Education policies.

The flag display resulted from a teacher-directed, community-building classroom activity conducted earlier in the school year. As part of an identity-focused project, students created and displayed small flags representing aspects of their identities. The teacher also posted a flag representing their own identity.

As the activity has concluded and is no longer instructionally relevant, the teacher's flag has been removed, and the student-created flags have been scheduled for removal. (No disciplinary action is associated with this matter).

As educators, one way we communicate belonging and support is through the thoughtful design and use of classroom displays. As a public school district, classrooms are shared instructional spaces, and the materials displayed in them play an important role in supporting teaching, learning, and a sense of community.

To provide clarity and support for staff, Skokie School District 68 is introducing a **Committee for Guidance on Displays in the Learning Environment**. This committee will develop clear, practical guidance to help ensure that classroom displays are age-appropriate, educationally meaningful, and aligned with the District's commitment to serving all students. This Committee is not intended to censor nor suppress identity, but rather to foster inclusivity and provide guidance for staff as we continue to foster a community of belonging.

The committee will be composed of teachers and administrators and will be led by the Educational Services Department. The group will work collaboratively this year, outside of the instructional day, to develop guidance that distinguishes among school-sponsored speech, personal expression, and student expression, while also promoting inclusive, welcoming, and visually effective learning environments.

We appreciate the community and staff members who share their perspectives and look forward to continued collaboration as one learning community working together for our students.

*This statement was presented at the January 15, 2026 Board of Education meeting and distributed via email/ParentSquare to parents/guardians, staff, and available community contacts on January 16, 2026.*