

Take Stock in Children

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

2026-2027



LAKE & SUMTER COUNTIES





HAPPY 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

Welcome back! We are so excited to open our Annual Take Stock in Children Scholarship Application window and continue our service to the students of all Lake & Sumter County Public Schools.

We are excited to kick off the application window and looking forward to seeing all of the qualified students of Lake & Sumter County School District apply! If you have any questions you can reach out to us anytime!



TAKE STOCK IN CHILDREN



is a state mandated program.
We get all of the requirements
directly from FLDOE.

TSIC STAFF



MANDY COOKE

Mentor Services Coordinator &
College Readiness Coach for
SSHS, VCHS, & WMHS
CookeA@Lake.K12.FL.US



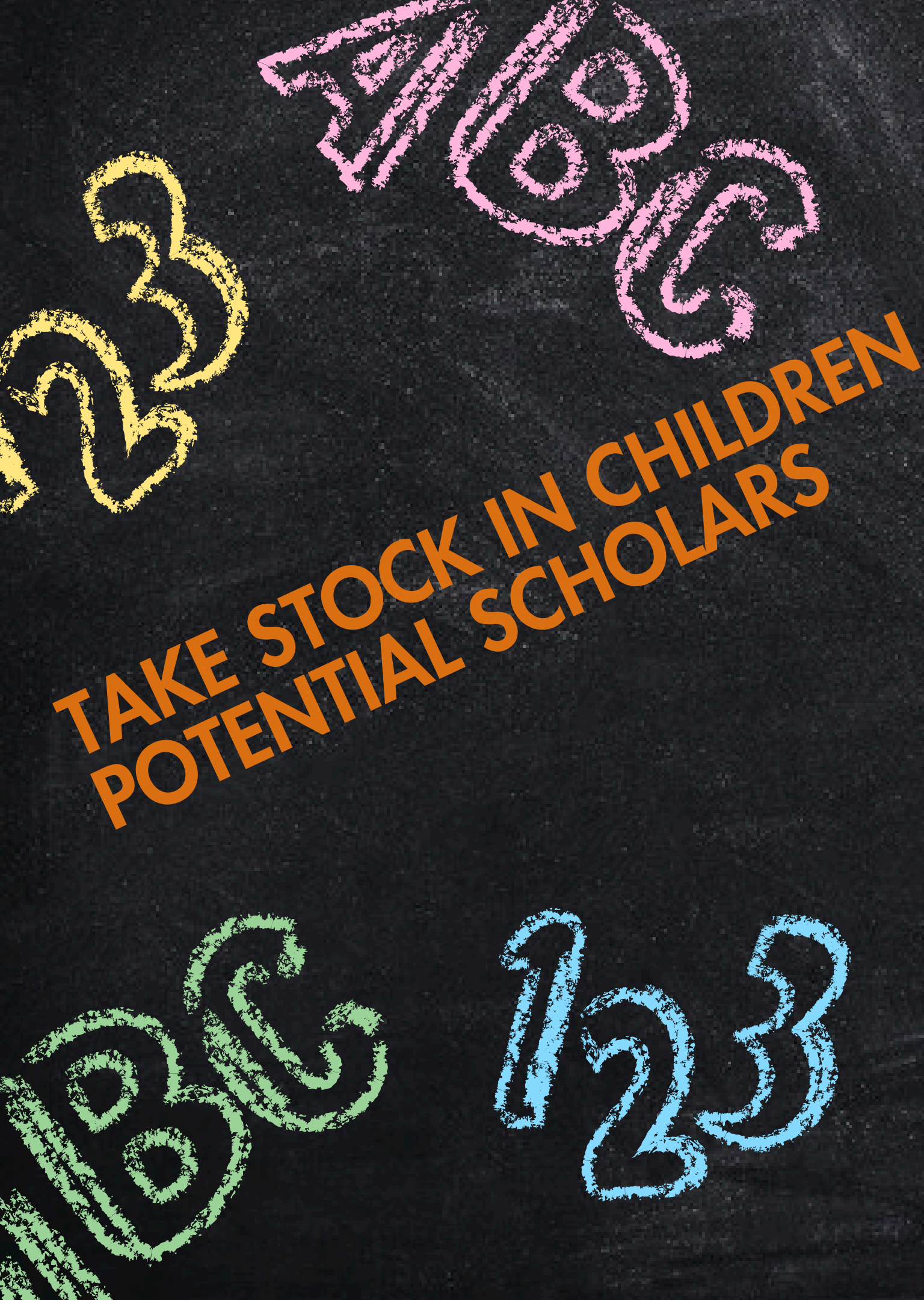
ELIZABETH JOHNSON

Executive Director
Education Foundation of Lake
County
JohnsonE10@Lake.K12.FL.US



JENNIFER JULIAN

Student Services Coordinator
& College Readiness Coach
for ERHS, EHS, LMHS, LHS,
MDHS, THS, SLHS, & UHS
JulianJ@Lake.K12.FL.US



Students in 8th& 9th grade who hope to be accepted into the program must complete the online digital application here:

[TSIC Student Application](#)

This includes ensuring that all required documentation is attached to the application when submitted.

After completing the application all students who qualify and get selected will complete an interview and then be reviewed to be accepted* into the program. Once accepted, the students will have the ability to earn a 60 credit hour tuition scholarship.

*NOT ALL THAT APPLY AND INTERVIEW GET ACCEPTED



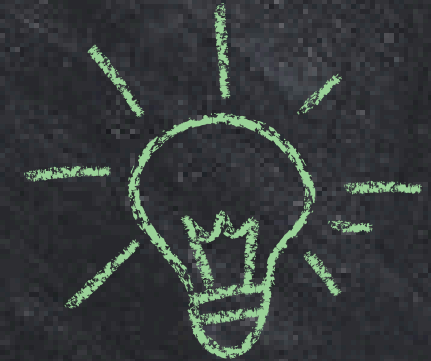
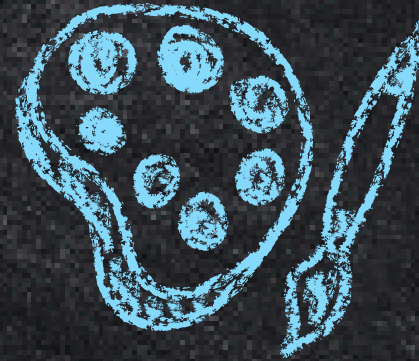
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

School coordinators/counselors work with our staff to ensure all records are up to date; including behavior notices, discipline issues, grades, and attendance changes.

School Counselors can help give advice on the application process!

Counselors, please help the application process for your school. Share the link and check in with students who are applying to make sure they have all the required information.

HOW DOES THE APPLICATION PROCESS WORK?



Students must complete the digital application.

The online application is hosted by the official Take Stock in Children of Florida website platform HOPEforce.

Once students complete the application, we process it to be sure they have all of the required information. If they are missing documentation, we will notify them so they have an opportunity to turn all required documents in unless it is past the deadline.

We take the completed applications and submit them to a panel for blind scoring. Students who score within the threshold will be invited to an interview on Zoom held in the guidance office at their school.

We make our final decision based on interview scores along with scores from the panel. All decisions are made by the entire team and will be a group decision.

2026-2027 APPLICATION TIMELINE



Applications
Open
August 1, 2026

Applications are only
open to current 8th &
9th grade students

Applications Close
11:59PM
October 31, 2026



WHAT TO EXPECT

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS



In order for an application to be complete the students must submit ALL of the following WITH their application:

- A copy of most recent 1040 Income Tax Return. The student **MUST** be listed as a dependent on this to verify financial eligibility.
- The student's most recent report card showing all absences, final grades and any behavior reports.
- All required documents must be uploaded directly into the application.
- There will be a section that says to upload specific items during specific parts of the application process

APPLICATION PROCESS



- Please remember you **MUST** be in 8th or 9th grade to apply.
- Also, this is for low-income students, otherwise students won't qualify and we don't want to waste your time.
- Please check the Income Eligibility chart to see if you qualify. (next slide)
- Email TSIC@LAKE.K12.FL.US with any questions, concerns about an application's completeness or how to apply while the application window is open.

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

2026-27 APPLICATION CYCLE



Take Stock in Children (TSIC) requires that every student's financial situation be examined closely at the time the student's application is evaluated. All applicants should provide their completed 2025 IRS Tax Form 1040 as verification of income showing total income. The tax return provided must include the student as a dependent. Eligibility is determined by calculating the total number of dependents and household size, as well as the Total Family Income (Line 9).

All students must qualify under at least one of the options outlined below:

- 1 - Free and Reduced Lunch program / USDA Income Eligibility
- 2 - HUD Documentation / HUD Income Eligibility
- 3 - Medicaid Recipient Documentation
- 4 - SNAP or TANF Recipient Documentation
- 5 - Other - see below.

In the event that the student's parents/guardian DOES NOT file Federal income taxes, the following documents CAN BE USED to verify income eligibility for the TSIC program:

- TANF Letter from the State of Florida
- Proof that the student is in Foster Care
- Signed document on school district letterhead, from the district's Homeless Liaison, verifying that the student is homeless

Failure to provide the supporting financial eligibility documentation will result in your student's application being deemed as ineligible.

INCOME ELIGIBILITY

Household Size	USDA Annual Income	HUD	
		Lake	Sumter
1	\$29,526	\$40,250	\$36,450
2	\$40,034	\$46,000	\$41,650
3	\$50,542	\$51,750	\$46,850
4	\$61,050	\$57,450	\$52,050
5	\$71,558	\$62,050	\$56,250
6	\$82,066	\$66,650	\$60,400
7	\$92,574	\$71,250	\$64,550
8	\$103,082	\$75,850	\$68,750
For each additional family member, add	\$10,508	N/A	N/A

APPLICATION HELP

Section A: This part is about YOU, the STUDENT.

- PLEASE make sure you use your own email, not your school one (TSIC emails are often blocked to school emails) You may create an email just for TSIC that doesn't get jammed full of spam.
- PLEASE upload your most recent Report Card.

Section B: This section is about your parent(s)/guardian(s) and their information. Be sure to answer all parts of the questions about people living in the household and outside the house.

Section C: This part refers to your parent(s)/guardian(s) and their employment and the household income.

Section D: This part refers to the income eligibility guidelines (see previous slide). The biggest part is making sure the student is listed as a dependent on the 1040 Tax Form from the most recent year.

Section E: Student Statement
When completing the essay portion, please be thorough and sell your story to us.
This is a part that students struggle with the most, and we want to know as much as we can to know why YOU deserve this or are in need of the scholarship.

Section F: Parent Statement

- Please be honest and select all that apply on the eligibility factors.
- Many times, more factors come out during the interviews, but we would like to know all the factors when sending the application off for ranking.
- Parents, when writing your portion here, please sell your story to us, tell us thoroughly WHY your child deserves this. Be honest if there are other factors that we should know about.

FAQS

The whole county receives free lunch, what type of documentation is needed to verify income eligibility utilizing the Free/Reduced Lunch Standard?

- Tax Return Form 1040 should be utilized to determine if a student applicant financially qualifies for the TSIC program.
- The student applicant must be claimed as a dependent on the tax return provided to verify income eligibility.
- The total number of dependents listed on the tax return provided should be used to verify income eligibility. The tax form 1040 should be the most recent year submitted

What to do if the parents do not file taxes?

What documents can be used to verify a student's eligibility in this situation

Proof of Government Services

Income eligibility can be verified by providing the following government aid organizations that the student/family is receiving.

- HUD*
- Medicaid*
- SNAP*
- TANF*

*Documentation must include the student name and the date should align with the enrollment date.

Proof of Special Circumstances

- Official documentation that the student is in Foster Care.
- Signed documentation on school district letterhead, from the school district's Homeless Liaison, verifying in writing that the student is homeless and qualifies for free/reduced lunch.

**WE WILL NOT
ACCEPT THE
FOLLOWING AS
PROOF OF
ELIGIBILITY**

- W-2 or Social Security statement **ALONE!** We must be able to verify all household income. Therefore, it must be accompanied with a completed Form 1040 Tax Return from the most current tax year.
- Letters stating one or more family members is on Disability. It does not show all household income.
- Statement of non-filing taxes. This does not indicate household income.
- Screenshots from FOCUS alone showing grades, absences, etc.!



WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE APPLICATION DEADLINE?



Applications close at 11:59 pm on October 31, 2026.

No Exceptions.

1

ALL applications are vetted before going to the selection committee.

2

ALL applications are scored blind and ranked based on a rubric provided by the state.

3

School counselors will be notified of all students selected for interviewing.

4

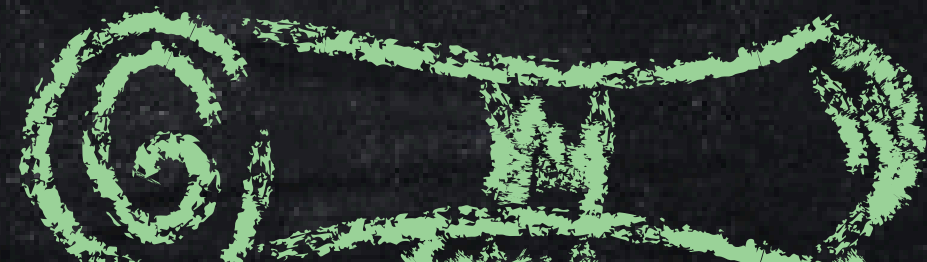
The interviews will be conducted at the school by the Take Stock local affiliate team from the Education Foundation of Lake County.



TSIC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Once students are accepted into the program

- 
- 
- Maintain a C or better in every class & minimum of 2.5 unweighted GPA
 - Maintain good attendance (no more than 4 unexcused absences per quarter)
 - Meet with their mentor 2 times per month for a total of AT LEAST 15 sessions
 - Complete College Readiness Meetings (twice a year for 9th & 10th graders, four times a year for 11th & 12th graders)
 - Attend any mandatory events/workshops
 - Maintain good behavior (no referrals), and stay drug & crime free



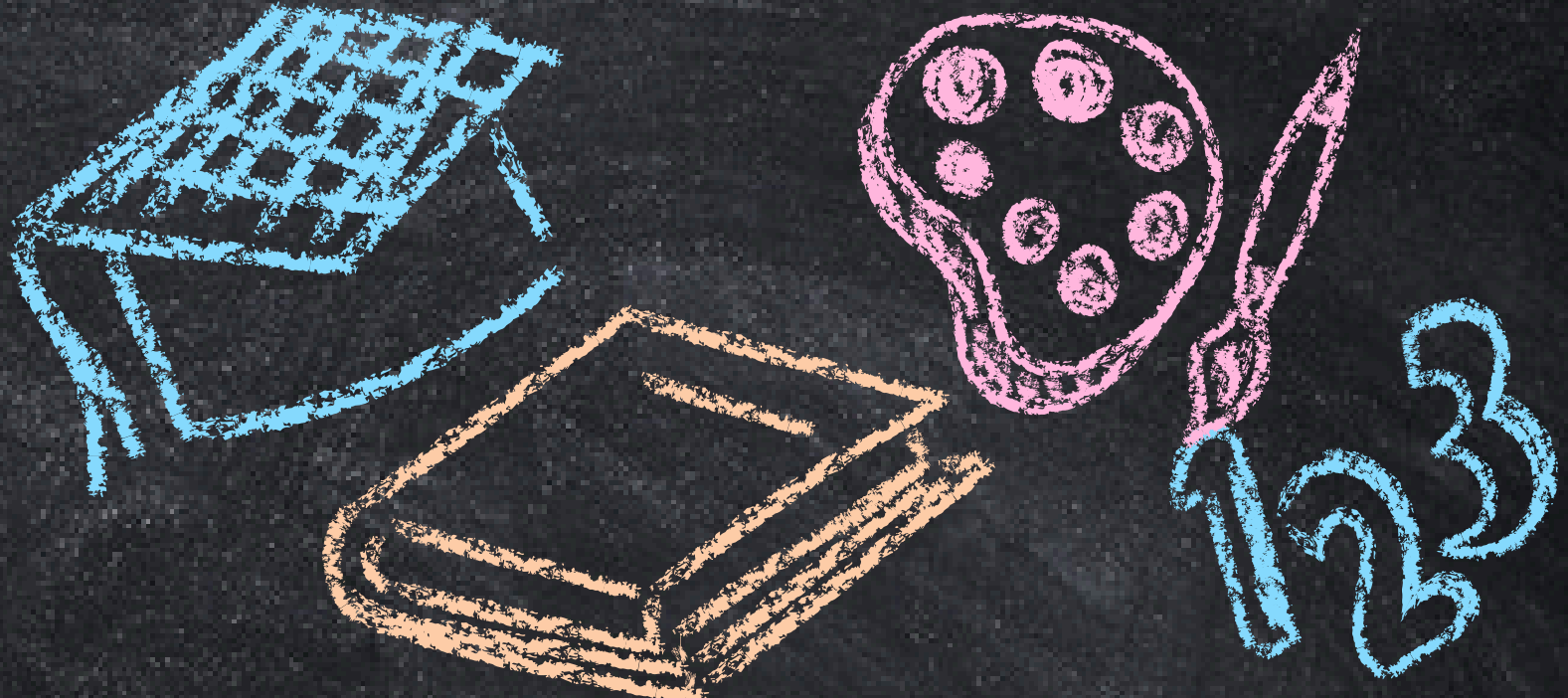


IMPORTANT INFO

This is a STUDENT scholarship, therefore the STUDENT should be creating the account and filling out the application in THEIR name.

There are sections that the parent/guardian will need to fill out, but contact regarding documents will go to the STUDENT email.

PLEASE BE SURE TO INCLUDE THIS!



APPLY NOW!

[Take Stock in Children Application](#)



CONTACT US

Remember we are here to help and support you in any way! Please reach out to us anytime you have any questions or need us for anything!



MANDY COOKE

Mentor Services Coordinator &
College Readiness Coach for
SSHS, VCHS, & WMHS
CookeA@Lake.K12.FL.US



TSIC@Lake.K12.FL.US
352-787-6576



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