Keshena, Wisconsin arts educator and WEAC member Benjamin Grignon has drawn up the ultimate blueprint for instilling cultural pride in Indigenous youth.

Through his work at Keshena’s Menominee Indian High School, Benjamin uses the arts to reflect the community’s legacy. The town is the center of the Menominee people, and Benjamin takes the responsibility to guide youth down the path of being guardians of their own history very seriously, and passionately.

Grignon passes down tradition with his “Ancestry Through Art” philosophy, creating lessons that combine folklore and family, with art projects that are infused with an emphasis on language, geography, anthropology, governmental history, environmental science, and music. An avid rock fan, Ben rocks out in the classroom to help young people end their school day on a major key.

Knowing the state of Wisconsin is the ancestral land of the Menominee and Algonquian people, Grignon is enlightening, uplifting, and empowering his young charges, who gain awareness of the importance of their region, and its contribution to the fabric of America. These are true life lessons that arm them with the confidence to excel beyond the classroom, and achieve future dreams in America’s boardrooms.

Ben Grignon is known statewide as an expert on teaching traditional crafts to not only students, but other educators, so that they might expand their classroom sensitivities, and spread the message to other cultures and communities. He shares personal photographs and memorabilia from his own family history, showing their presence and valued contributions to the region.

His work serves to eradicate harmful stereotypes about Indigenous peoples, helping them to be perceived as fully whole, three-dimensional individuals, with the same hopes, dreams, and intelligence as the rest of the human family.

Because of Benjamin’s mandate to teach “the whole child”, emotionally, intellectually and culturally, future generations can carry on the traditions of their people with dignity.