

GriffinEd

Raising academic achievement through fun educational music.

a 501c3 educational nonprofit, ID#45-5513411

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Open Call for Songs

Summary

Griffin Education Solutions, a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to raising academic achievement in kindergarten through eighth grade (ages 5-14 years) through fun educational music, is looking for original songs that teach kids the stuff they need to know. If you or anyone you know has written a good song about science, math, or anything else in the K-8th curriculum and would like to see their work used for teaching (and make a little money in the process), please read on.

About GriffinEd

Griffin Education Solutions (usually called GriffinEd) is a small 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to raising student achievement in science, math, history, and other subjects through fun educational music. If you've seen the old Schoolhouse Rock videos from the 1970's and '80's, you'll have an idea of what we aim to do. We offer live shows and songwriting workshops at schools and other places of learning; but GriffinEd's main offering is our online library of educational songs, searchable by grade level and subject to help kids master the content and vocabulary they will need for success in school. Students who work with our music for five minutes a day have been shown to perform significantly better on assessments of academic vocabulary and content knowledge of the topics we address. Because most schools in the U.S. have little or no funding for what we do, our online library is free. GriffinEd is supported mostly by tax-deductible donations and grants, with some additional revenue coming from CD sales and paid gigs. All of GriffinEd's recorded songs are available for streaming, along with printable lyrics and detailed notes on how our music supports instruction, at our website:

www.GriffinEd.org

What We Want

You don't necessarily have to do ALL of the following in any one song, but here is what we are looking for.

1. 1) Make it fun. This is hard to measure of course, but as a guideline please ask yourself if your song would get a good response from your adult friends as well as from kids.
2. 2) Sticky is good. When people complain they can't get a song out of their heads, that's REALLY good.
3. 3) Please do not ever condescend to the kids. Most music for young people stinks because the musicians either phone it in or think children can't handle "real" music. Remember when you were a kid and some adults spoke to you as if childhood were a form of brain damage? Yeah, don't do that. It is okay if some of the vocabulary in your song goes over the kids' heads the first time, because if it's a good song they'll get to hear it more than once. Kids work very hard at school, and they deserve our very best work in return.
4. 4) What to write about? GriffinEd's primary focus is on the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) because we believe that's where the need is greatest right now, but anything in the K-8th curriculum is fair game. This includes history (modern, ancient, national, state, or local), civics, biography, health, literature (got a good Narnia song?), etc. Songs that teach important skills that are usually not covered by the prescribed curriculum such as financial literacy, cooking, laundry, or first aid are also welcome. We are prepared to be flexible on target age and topic for a really good song.
5. 5) Original tunes or tunes in the public domain are preferred. Songs written "to the tune of" something under copyright will also be considered.
6. 6) Not too long, please. If your song is too long (and if you're wondering about this, it probably is) then maybe you can pare it down to be more clear and concise, as well as increase the chances for getting a song used for other projects (more on that anon). As a general thing, 3 minutes or less is preferred unless you are writing about something truly epic.

Payment to Writers

GriffinEd pays royalties to our writers: US \$.10 (ten cents) per unit on anything we can copy and sell (CD's etc.) and 10% of any online revenue we gain from using your song or poem. You will retain ownership of your work. GriffinEd does not sell much because most people get music on our web site for free; so rather than send you a tiny royalty payment each quarter, we will pay you an advance of **\$150 for a song or \$75 for a poem** if and when we choose your submission

for a project. This is an advance on any future royalties we might owe you, with the understanding that GriffinEd may never earn enough from the use of your work to warrant another such payment. So please don't plan your career around this, okay? **How To Submit a Song to GriffinEd**

1. Send to tim@GriffinEd.org your lyrics, chords, and (if possible) an MP3 of your song. If sheet music is your thing, that's fine too but not really necessary. It needn't be a great recording either, as long as we can hear the tune reasonably clearly.
2. You should receive an email from us, thanking you for submitting your work. If you don't receive an acknowledgment within two weeks or so, our knucklehead director may have missed it so don't be shy about contacting Tim@GriffinEd.org to follow up.
3. Now comes the hard part: please be patient! We usually have multiple irons in the fire at any time: grant proposals to write, shows to plan, board members to pacify, residencies at local schools, other recording projects, etc. This means it may be a good while before we can sit down and really go through your music. We might contact you with questions. We might play your song for some kids to get their opinions. If your song is not chosen at this time, that doesn't necessarily mean it's rejected; it may be that we just don't have a use for it right now but then in a year or two we may find ourselves wishing for a song about so-and-so and then we go through the files of old submissions. For this reason, please keep us informed if your contact info changes.
4. If and when your work is chosen for a GriffinEd project, we will send you a short contract with some options so you can decide what kind of permissions to grant us. Then we pay you.

Other Stuff You Should Know

1. There is no deadline; this is a long-term project.
2. You still own your song; we are only paying for the non-exclusive use of it. This means if we (hypothetically) get a call from Beyoncé about wanting to do your song, we will refer her to you; after that she's your problem.
3. In most cases, we will be making our own recording of your song with performers chosen by our production team. They may choose the writer to perform, but please do not be hurt if they choose someone else. If you have a truly professional-quality recording of your song we might negotiate for use of your recording, but this is unlikely.
4. We may need to make some minor edits to your song. This might involve tweaking the lyrics a bit for clarity or brevity; key or chord changes to accommodate an arrangement for our band; and so on. We won't make any major changes without your permission.

5. Whether or not you ever wind up collaborating with GriffinEd, we urge all writers to make some provision in their estate plan (you've got one, right?) for their music, or at least some written instructions to your loved ones; please do not let your work fade into obscurity after you're gone because nobody knows whom to ask for permission to do something with it.
6. Above all, please don't treat this as some high-pressure assignment; this is supposed to be fun! There is no deadline, so just write music you enjoy and share it with your friends in the usual way. If we can make one or more of your songs work as an instructional tool for kids and make you a little money in the process, that's icing on the cake.

Please feel free to contact Tim with questions, comments, etc; also, please share this information with anyone who might be interested!

Very sincerely,

-Tim Griffin

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