

Innovative Benefits Ideas

As part of NBOA's Mission-Anchored Compensation Strategies research, we collected the following ideas for innovative benefits. These are benefits beyond the traditional benefits of health insurance, dental insurance and retirement plans. This is not an exhaustive list but can serve as inspiration. In addition to the ideas below, research any programs offered in your city, county or state that may be available to your employees, such as transit benefits. Because each independent school is unique, not every idea may be applicable to every school. Be sure to keep in mind your school's context, mission and values when exploring new ideas. Also be aware of the tax or legal implications of certain benefits.

Health and Wellness

- Paid parental leave (e.g., six weeks, eight weeks)
- Ability to accrue sick leave days
- On-campus biometric screenings, nutritional counseling
- Fertility and family forming benefits (e.g., IVF benefits, pregnancy and postpartum support)
- Free lunch
- Wellness events (e.g., walking challenge, mindfulness event, yoga classes)
- Telemedicine benefit
- Self-insured short-term disability funded at 100% salary

Quality of Life

- Employee Assistance Program (third-party provider employees can contact for individual, confidential assistance in areas such as counseling, legal issues, nutritional issues, etc.)
- Expanded tuition remission (e.g., for faculty and staff, reciprocal tuition remission with feeder schools)

- Concierge style service for new employees moving to a new area (e.g., provide lists of local doctors/restaurants/services, partnerships with and referrals to real estate agents/mortgage brokers)
- Free financial advising by a neutral third party (e.g., retirement planning, financial planning)
- Free legal services (e.g., will preparation, power of attorney)
- Flexible scheduling (e.g., work-from-home bank of days to use throughout the school year, online teaching days once a month, prep and planning time at home)
- Unused paid time off bonuses
- Housing support for non-housed faculty and staff (e.g., stipend for housing costs, moving costs provided up to a limit, relocation reimbursement, first month's rent or security deposit)
- Crisis grant program (e.g., third-party administered program employees can apply for to cover expenses related to an emergency such as a house fire or death in the family)
- Sabbatical program
- Transportation benefits (e.g., fuel stipend, commuter benefits to take public transit partially funded by county, toll stipend, parking stipend)
- Discounted or free aftercare for employee children
- Discount on school-run summer camp programs
- Pet insurance
- Bereavement policy/benefit
- Interest-free loans for large purchases, such as a computer

Career

- Professional development without required justification
- Academic leadership stipends
- Sign-on or retention bonuses
- Endowment funds set aside for professional development
- Spot bonuses for contributions
- Higher education reimbursement for additional degrees or certifications
- Student loan assistance (e.g., access to student loan advisory service that assists employees with loan consolidation, loan forgiveness or finding better interest rates; student loan repayment)
- Meaningful annual investment in employee-initiated professional development, unused funds can be rolled over to the following year
- Mentor program

- Partnerships with local colleges or mission-aligned programs (e.g., Montessori training center) to offer ongoing professional development and educational opportunities
- Summer grants for teaching teams to work over the summer on innovative projects or programs

Fun

- Benefits that align with the school's unique location (e.g., ski pass, golf club membership)
- Travel grants
- Discounts at local merchants (e.g., stores, amusement parks, gyms, cultural institutions)
- Party planning committee to plan events and celebrations throughout the year
- Holiday bonuses funded by fundraising activities (e.g., PTA fundraiser)
- Employee clubs or affinity groups (e.g., dining out club, walking club)
- Occasional get-togethers (e.g., monthly coffee and donuts before school, quarterly happy hour). Consider including employees of neighboring independent schools for mixer events.
- Annual cash award, funded by endowment, to a randomly selected employee for a fun experience or purchase that would otherwise not be financially feasible