

## **Saudi plan to decentralize examinations welcomed**

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The Ministry of Education is planning to decentralize high school exams, reported the Arabic language daily Okaz on Sunday.

The plan follows the move to implement a new school system similar to that of the university from the next academic year. Students will therefore start to have a Grade Point Average (GPA) from their first year in high school.

Waleed Tawfeeq, general director of the PR department at the Ministry of Education in Riyadh, said this system will be implemented in all schools.

"We are trying to eliminate the ministry's exams in the last year of high school. This way students will be ready to face the university system and they will be graded the same way," added Tawfeeq.

He also noted a study done by the ministry on teachers' evaluations and continuous exams throughout the year, instead of just two tests.

"By doing this, the ministry will not be involved in the final exams during the last year in high school," Tawfeeq said.

The new exam system will be experimented next year. It will help in reducing the number of students who fail their final exams in high school because of the high standards.

Riyadh's education administration had no idea if the notion will be admitted or not. "Unless we get a formal paper from the Ministry of Education itself, nothing is sure," said an official from the PR office in Riyadh.

Maysa Adel, a high school English teacher in Jeddah, said the decision has its advantages for both teachers and students.

"Teachers will be able to teach the curriculum in their own style without interference from the ministry, while students will stop being afraid of failing the ministry's final exam," she said.

Ahmed Abdulaziz, a final year high school student from the Al-Aqsa private school in Jeddah, said, "High school exams are near and I'm really exhausted from studying. The ministry's final exam is a nightmare and I just want to finish and graduate."

Parents are delighted about the proposal since they won't have to suffer with their children when it's time for exams. "It's easier this way," said Amal Hakim, a mother of four students.