

Commission
on Legislative
Democracy



Commission sur
la démocratie
législative

A REGIONAL MIXED MEMBER PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION ELECTORAL SYSTEM FOR NEW BRUNSWICK

The following summarizes a regional mixed member proportional (MMP) representation electoral system being considered by the Commission on Legislative Democracy.

What are Mixed Member Proportional Systems?

A mixed member PR system includes members elected both from single member constituencies and from party lists. It combines – or mixes – the proportional results of a list PR system with the local representation of a single member riding system. Under MMP, voters cast two votes: one for the local candidate of their choice and one for the party of their choice.

What Model is Being Considered by the Commission?

The Commission is considering a *regional* mixed member proportional system which groups ridings together and elects list PR members from each region. The Commission is considering two different models: one with list members elected from about four regions and another with list members elected from about nine regions. The characteristics of the MMP systems under consideration are described more fully in *Options* and summarized in the table below:

A Regional Mixed Member Proportional Representation Voting System for NB

- Combines single member riding MLAs (as we have now) with list PR MLAs.
- Approximately 2/3 of seats in the legislature are single member ridings; 1/3 of seats are list PR. Legislature remains approximately the same as now with 55 seats.
- List PR candidates are elected from regional groups of ridings around the province.
- Voters get two votes: one for the local candidate of their choice and one for the party of their choice.
- Candidates run on either single member riding ballot or list PR ballot.
- A minimum 5% popular vote threshold would be established for parties to be eligible to win PR seats in the legislature

How Would it Work?

The following is an example of how seats are allocated in a regional, mixed member proportional electoral system. In this example, we assume four regions around the province.

This example is for a region with **nine constituency members** and **four list members** (note that regions can vary in size and thus the number of members from each region can differ). The numbers used below are completely hypothetical and are meant only to illustrate the workings of the system. The example uses the D'Hondt electoral formula for purposes of seat allocation. This means that the party with the highest average vote after each stage of counting wins a seat. Its vote is then divided by the number of seats it has won, plus one. The process continues until all seats have been allocated.

Example:

Party	A	B	C	D	E
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Constituency Seats	7		2		
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Voters have two ballots, the first of which is for the single member constituency elections. These members are elected on a plurality basis from the 9 single member constituencies. In this example, party A wins 7 constituency seats and Party C wins 2.

Party Vote	45.6	24.8	14.5	12.1	3.4
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This is the percentage of the vote received by each party on the second, 'party' ballot.

Step One	/8	/1	/3	/1	X (not meeting threshold)
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The first step in the allocation of the list seats is to divide each party's vote share by the number of constituency seats won, plus one. Party A won seven seats so we divide their vote share by 8 (7+1). Party C won two seats so we divide their vote share by 3 (2+1). Parties B and D didn't win any constituency seats so their vote share is divided by one.

Step Two	5.7	24.8	4.8	12.1	B wins
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Party B has the highest 'average' (24.8) so they win the first list seat

Step Three	5.7	12.4	4.8	12.1	B wins
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We divide party B's vote share again (this time by 2) and award the 2nd seat to the party with the highest average – again party B

Step Four 5.7 8.3 4.8 **12.1** **D wins**

We again divide party B's vote share (this time by 3) and award the 3rd seat to the party with the highest average – party D.

Step Five 5.7 **8.3** 4.8 6.0 **B wins**

We divide party D's vote share (this time by 2) and award the 4th list seat to the party with the highest average – party B

Total Seats:

- With 45.6 % of the party vote, party A won 7 of the 13 seats in this region (all from single member constituencies).
- Party B received 24.8% of the party vote and no constituency seats. B won 3 of the list seats.
- Party C won 14.5% of the party vote and 2 constituency seats. C wins no list seats.
- Party D won 12.1% of the party vote and no constituency seats. D won one of the list seats.
- With 3.4 per cent of the party vote, party E does not win any seats.

Proportional Vote & Proportional Seats

Under this example, you can see that the final number of seats awarded to each party corresponds approximately to the rounded percentage of votes received by each party.

Party A – 46% of 13 seats = 6. They won 7 constituency seats.

Party B – 25% of 13 seats = 3 seats. They won 3 list PR seats.

Party C – 15% of 13 seats = 2 seats. They won 2 constituency seats.

Party D – 12% of 13 seats = 1 seat. They won 1 list PR seat.

Party E – 3% of 13 seats = 0 seats. They did not win any list PR or constituency

seats.