

Schools advocate

Laine seeks to address education, property taxes in year one

By **CRAIG GREEN**

Rep. Carolyn Laine (DFL-Columbia Heights) believes in family and the power of education.



Rep. Carolyn Laine

Taking on her new responsibility at the House, after serving 10 years on the Columbia Heights Board of Education, Laine wants to work with fellow legislators to find ways to help the education system in Minnesota.

Laine, who holds degrees in education and psychology, believes in the importance of early childhood education. "I've studied how the brain develops, and I know that the early years are the foundation of a child's education," she said.

She believes that with adequate resources and attention, the educational development of

young people in Minnesota can be addressed more effectively. "If [a child] has stress in their life, they live in poverty, have inadequate housing and no health care, their development is affected."

Laine, who serves on the Columbia Heights Charter Commission, decided to run for office after former Rep. Barbara Goodwin announced that she would not seek another term. With encouragement and support from her five children — Jennifer, Jesse, Teresa, Sarah and Anniki — she entered the race.

The level of property taxes her constituents are asked to pay is something she wants to address. "There needs to be an equitable form of taxation. We encourage people to buy homes, and then we tax them at unreasonable rates."

Laine will have a direct voice on these issues, serving on the House E-12 Education Committee, the House Early Childhood Learning Finance Division, the House

DISTRICT 50A

2002 population: 36,916

Largest city: Fridley

Counties: Anoka and Ramsey

Top concerns: Education, property taxes and health care

Housing Policy and Finance and Public Health Finance Division and the House Labor and Consumer Protection Division. She also serves on the Minnesota Heritage Finance Division.

Sitting in her new office, decorated with the help of one of her daughters, Laine knows she has an opportunity to speak and stand up for many others.

"I grew up on the Iron Range, and I'm focused on supporting working families and their struggles. There are businesses and corporations that need to remember that they have human beings with families working for them. You don't stand on the back of anyone and pretend they're not there."