Paul Pelletier, winner of a Helicopter Foundation International Maintenance Technician Certificate Scholarship, has always had a passion for all things technical, especially aviation.

Born and raised in Connecticut, Pelletier spent 17 years as a vocational technical educator. From 2007 to 2012, he worked in an urban school district, where he was recognized for his contributions and promoted to a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) resource teacher position to help other teachers succeed in the classroom.

Aviation has always been a hobby of Pelletier’s — he earned his private pilot’s license in 1993 and his rotorcraft pilot’s license in 1998. With the support of his wife of 23 years, Pelletier decided to pursue a career in aviation, specifically rotorcraft.

He enrolled at CT Aero Tech School for Aviation Maintenance Technicians, the oldest A&P school in the United States, to become a helicopter mechanic. He is currently two-thirds through his studies and plans to graduate in June 2018.

To gain experience while pursuing his A&P, Pelletier is working at Hartford Jet Center, a local fixed-based operator and Part 135 operation at Hartford-Brainard Airport (KHFD) in Hartford, Connecticut. In addition to performing maintenance under the supervision of a licensed A&P, Pelletier works in fuel farm management and customer service. He has received the National Business Aviation Association Fuel Line Service and Professional Line Service certifications. In addition, he attended the Rolls-Royce Model 250 factory school, as well as Flight Safety’s training on the Pratt & Whitney PT6T Twin-Pac.

Always looking to learn more, Pelletier is planning to attend Robinson airframe training in the spring. “I would like the Bell 206 or AB 135 airframe training. I now qualify to apply for the Bill Sanderson Aviation Maintenance Technician Scholarships and am working on the application.”

When asked about his future plans, Pelletier says his goal is to “find a job where I am maintaining and flying a helicopter for an operation. I also think doing field maintenance, like for a K-Max for example, would be interesting.”

Throughout his teaching career, Pelletier told his students to follow their passion. He has now taken his own advice and is turning his hobby into his next career. 

Allison McKay is vice president of Helicopter Foundation International.