

BUILDING THE LAUNCHPAD: **INDUSTRY'S CRITICAL ROLE IN EARLY CAREER DISCOVERY**

How Might We Adapt a Model Similar to Earn to Learn to Integrate More Industry Partnerships into Career Exploration Initiatives That Begin in Middle School?

Presented by the Southern Arizona Workforce Leadership Academy Fellows



CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF ARIZONA

2025 SOUTHERN ARIZONA
WORKFORCE LEADERSHIP
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**ERICA
YNGVE**

Sonoran Stitch / AZ
Stitch Lab
Pima County

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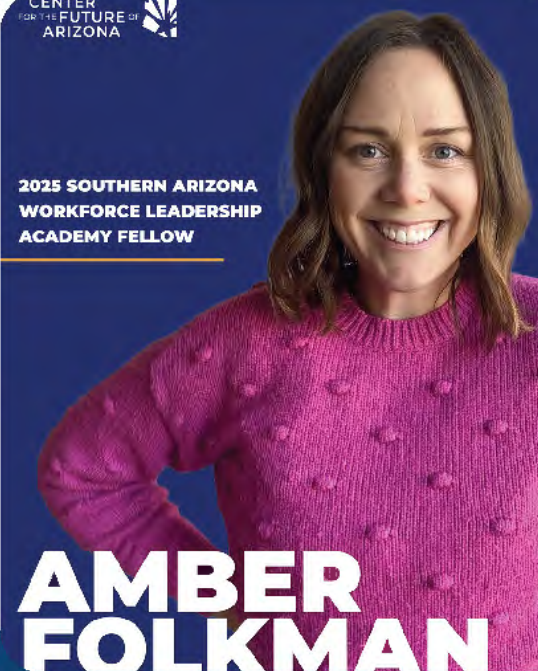


**ADAM
BEGODY**

Earn to Learn
Arizona

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**MARIANA
MARTINEZ
REYNOSO**

Yuma Union High
School District #70
Yuma County

Meet Team Mission Control

WHY MIDDLE SCHOOL MATTERS



BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

- Early identity & Confidence
- Increased Engagement & Graduation Rates
- Equity & Access



BENEFITS FOR INDUSTRY

- Future-Ready Workforce
- Addresses Labor Shortages
- Promotes Diversity & Innovation
- Strengthens Partnerships

THE PROBLEM:

BARRIERS TO INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

INDUSTRY

- Time & Resources
- Unclear ROI
- School System Confusion

EDUCATION

- Curriculum Limits
- Staff Capacity
- Scheduling Issues





[Watch video on YouTube](#)

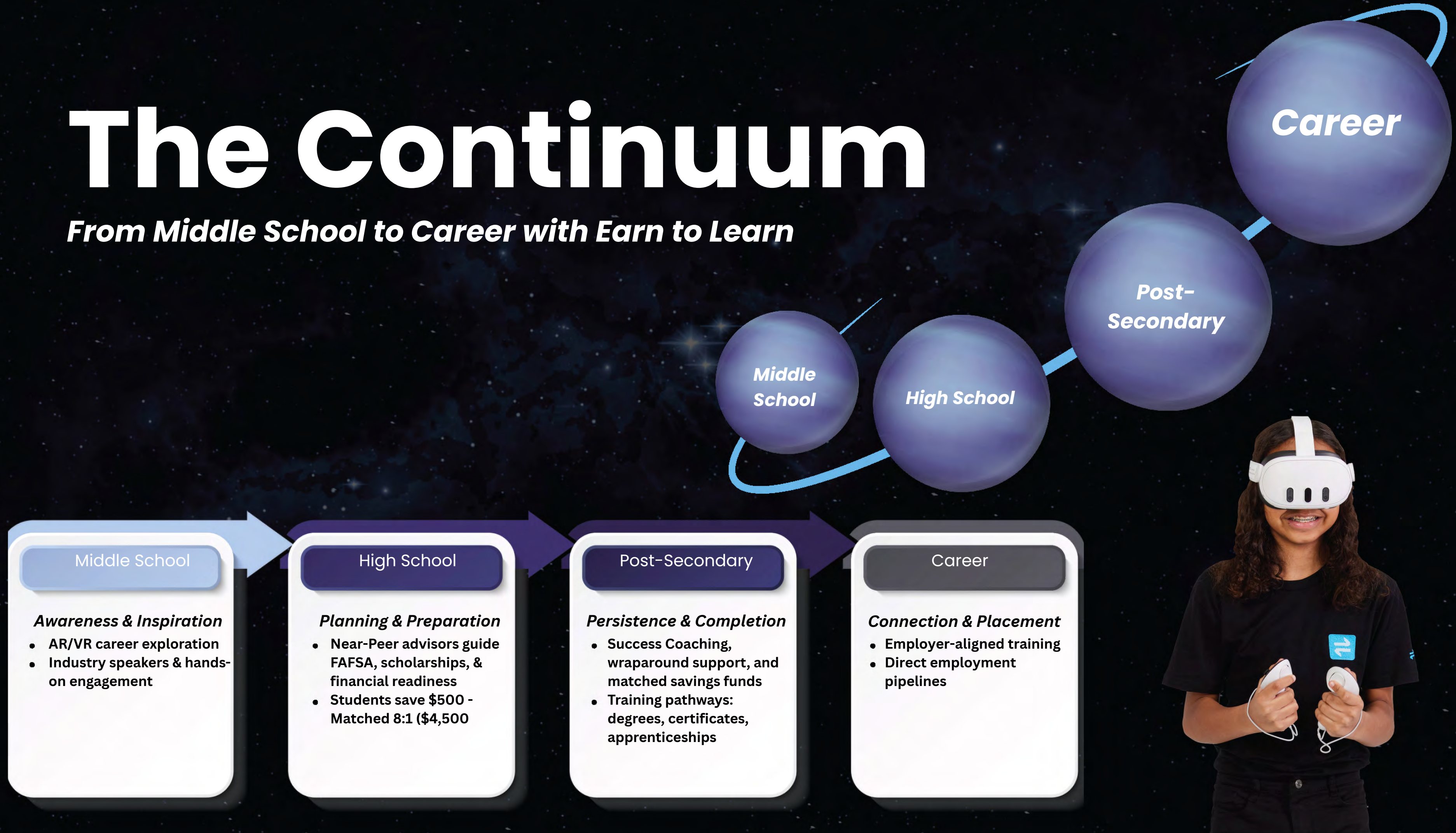
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The Continuum

From Middle School to Career with Earn to Learn



Case Study: APS Lineworker Program

A Proven Launch: How APS, Yavapai College, & Earn to Learn Created a Pipeline



- **Challenge:** APS faced annual shortages of qualified lineworkers.
- **Solution:** Partnered with Yavapai College & Earn to Learn.
- **Model:** APS funds equipment and training slots; Yavapai provides instruction; ETL offers 8:1 matched savings and wraparound support.
- **Impact:** 100% graduation in first cohort; direct placement into high-wage energy careers.



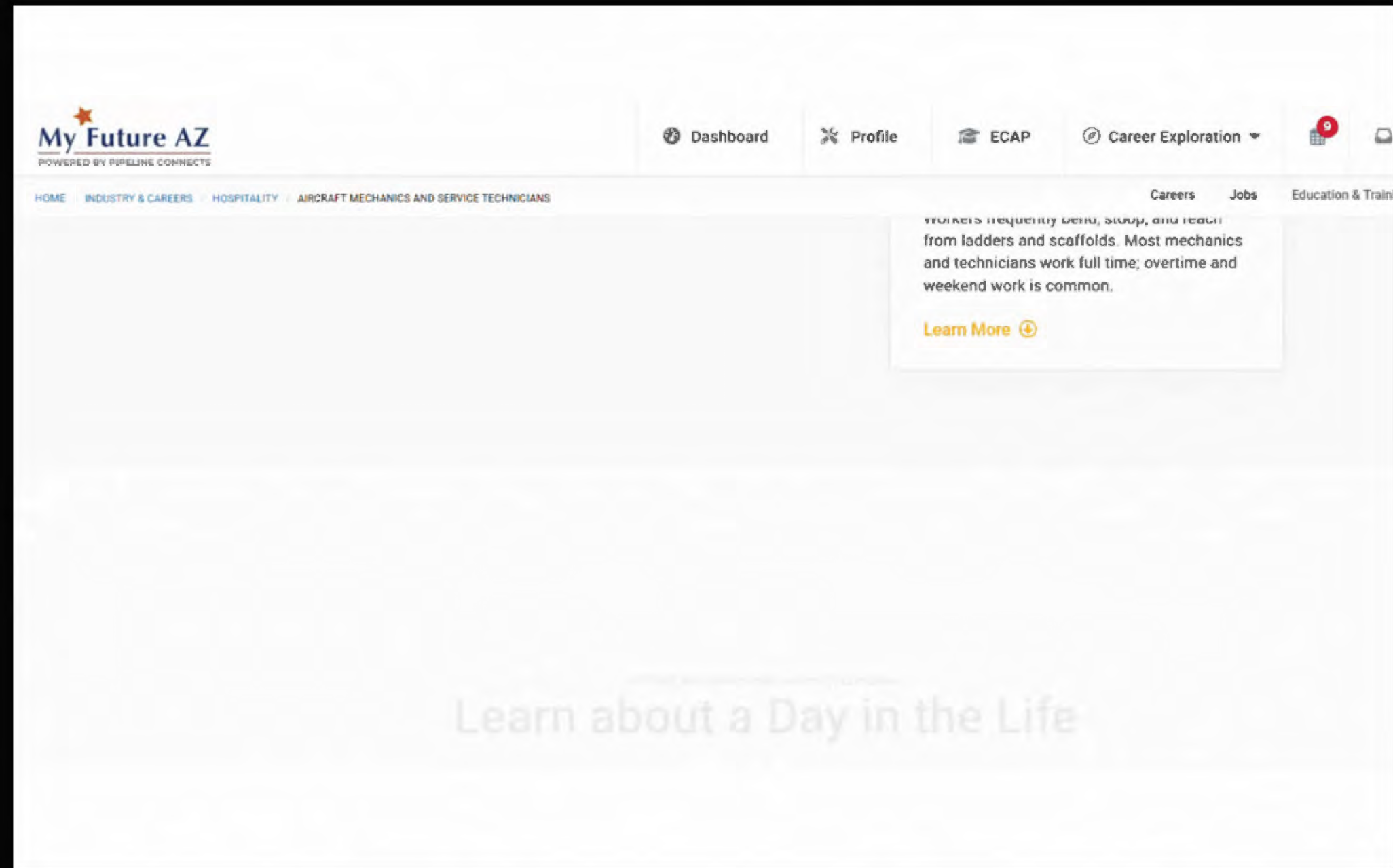
THE SOLUTION: **EXPANDING INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP**

78%

*Employers are eager to
engage; they just need a clear
path and effective model.*



Access and Awareness: A Day In The Life



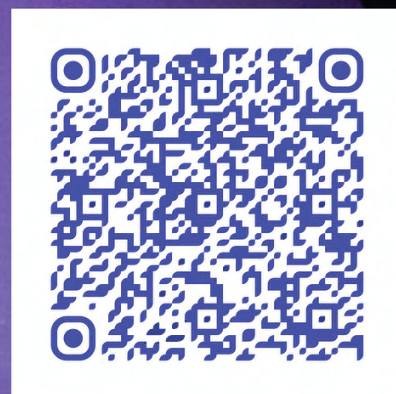
CALL TO ACTION:



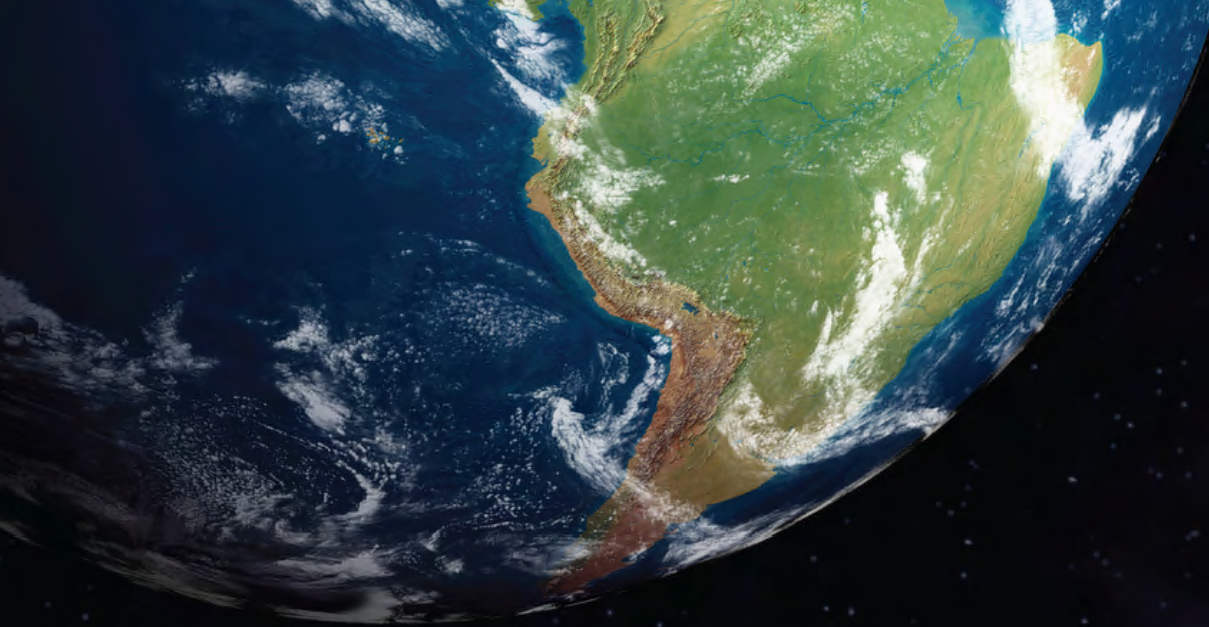
SHARE THE E2L STORY



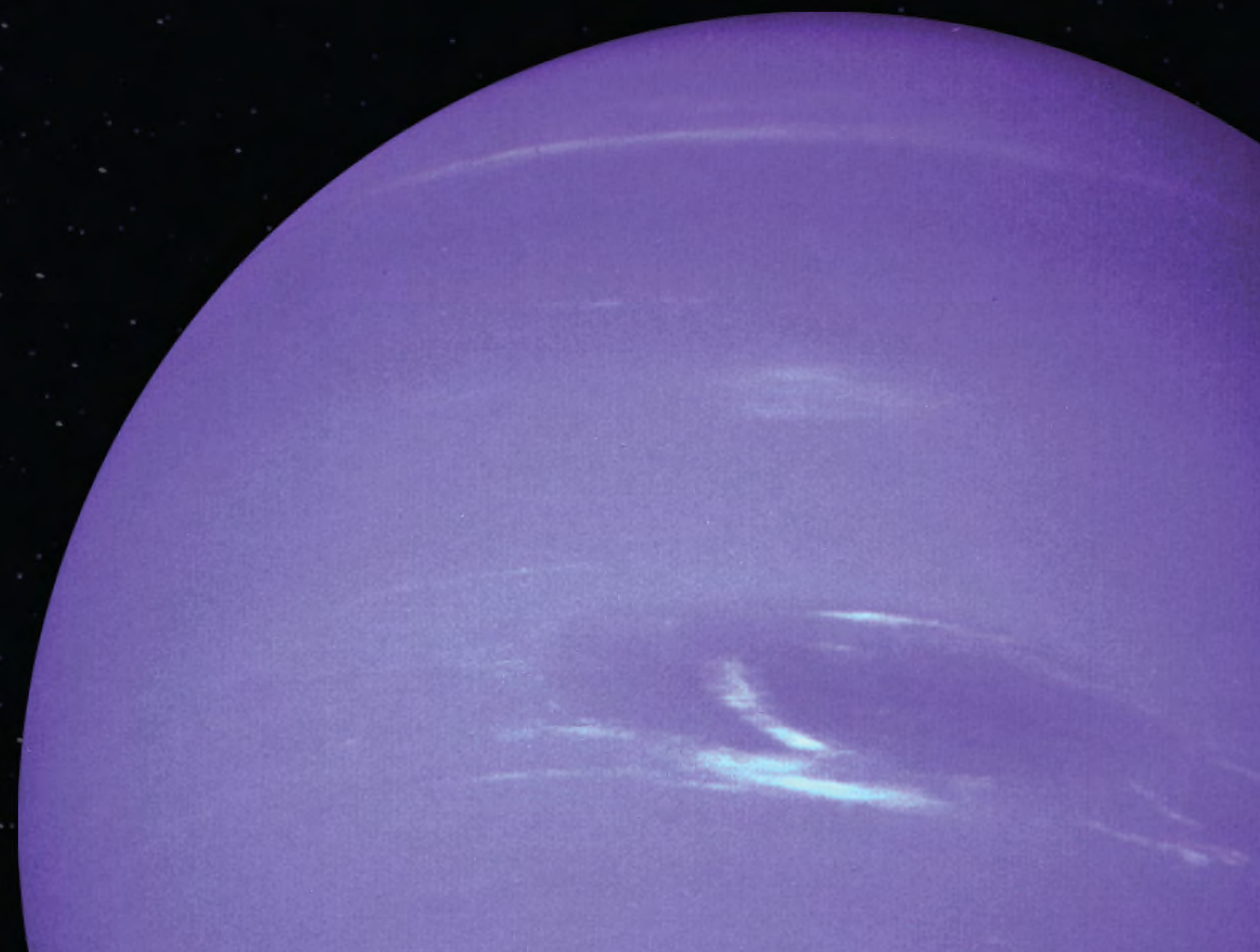
**COMPLETE THE INDUSTRY
PARTNER FORM**



EXPLORE RESOURCES



THANK YOU QUESTIONS



RESOURCES

Career Exploration & Curriculum

- [Center for the Future of Arizona - Possible Futures Curriculum \(Grades 6-10\)](#)
- [Junior Achievement of Arizona \(JAAZ\)](#)
- [Arizona Mining Association - Education Resources](#)

Education Planning & ECAP

- [Arizona Department of Education - ECAP](#)
- [My Future AZ](#)

Work-Based Learning

- [Arizona Department of Education - Work-Based Learning](#)
- [Yuma Union High School District - CTE & Work-Based Learning](#)

Post-Secondary & Training

- [Pima Community College](#)
- [Arizona Stitch Lab](#)

Early Education Support

- [Child Care & Education Attainment - Office of Strategic Initiatives](#)

RESEARCH

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do industry partners currently engage with middle school career exploration, and what factors influence their willingness to participate in work-based learning initiatives?

METHODOLOGY

- Google Form survey distributed to industry partners (n=13)
- Geographic focus: Southern Arizona
- Sectors represented: Government, manufacturing, economic development, chambers of commerce
- Measured: Current engagement levels, desired engagement, barriers, and motivators

KEY FINDINGS

Current vs. Desired Engagement

- 62% report minimal-to-no current engagement (rated 1-2 on 5-point scale)
- 69% desire moderate-to-high engagement (rated 4-5 on 5-point scale)
- Finding: Significant readiness-to-action gap exists—partners express willingness but lack mechanisms to participate

Systemic Barriers Identified

- 77% cite lack of clear processes to participate (n=10)
- 62% report trusted intermediary organizations needed (n=8)
- 54% need to see demonstrated student impact (n=7)
- Additional barriers: liability concerns, scheduling conflicts, unclear expectations

IMPLICATIONS

Industry partners demonstrate high willingness to engage in career exploration but face structural barriers rather than motivational ones. The ecosystem lacks coordinating infrastructure to facilitate industry-education partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION

Utilize intermediary systems (Earn2Learn, My Future AZ) to bridge willing industry partners with education institutions.