



District  
Rural



2,300



60%



89%



58%

## GILA RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

YUMA, AZ



Ms. Erin Pierce



### COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Ms. Erin Pierce's instructional strategy is grounded in her belief that actively engaging students in the learning process can get students interested and invested in their education. Inside her classroom, students sit in groups, learn together and discuss course material amongst themselves, a practice which familiarizes them with working together as they try to solve problems as a team. Collaboration is a focal point of Ms. Pierce's classroom, and she structures her classroom around a home-grown environment where students guide each other in teams. Whether through group problem-solving activities or peer support mechanisms, Ms. Pierce empowers students to navigate academic challenges collectively. Ms. Pierce knows that working in teams extends beyond the high school classroom, so her students learn to work effectively in teams before entering more rigorous spaces.

Ms. Pierce showcases a deep commitment to her students, whose varied backgrounds differentiate individualized learning styles from one student to the next. Understanding that learning does not always fit neatly into an hour class schedule, she extends her availability to offer tutoring sessions before and after school. Whether it's providing early morning study sessions for students with packed schedules or organizing late afternoon review sessions for students whose parents work late, Ms. Pierce ensures that every student has access to the academic support they need to thrive.

Ms. Pierce's teaching philosophy revolves around her dedication to curriculum innovation and forward-thinking learning strategies. Inspired by her husband, a chemistry professor at Arizona Western College, she bridges the gap between high school and college-level instruction by comparing her chemistry lessons to those at the local college. Collaboration, experimentation and application guide Ms. Pierce's teaching style to facilitate a deeper understanding of chemical concepts while engaging critical thinking skills necessary for success beyond graduation.





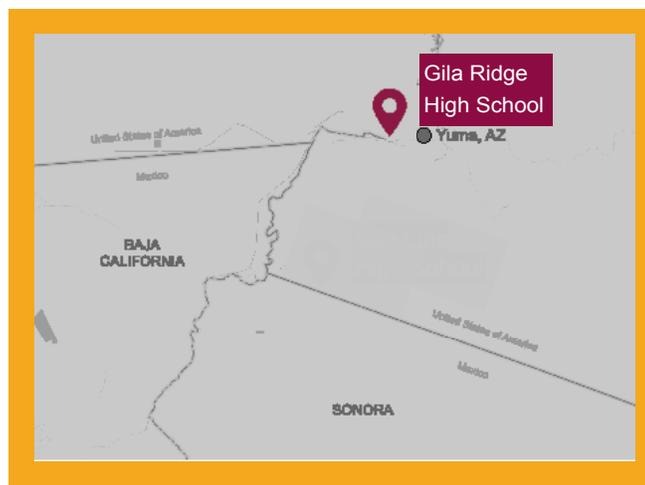
**“Practice makes progress. It doesn’t always make perfect, but it gets you closer to it. And that’s our end goal.”**

- Ms. Erin Pierce, chemistry teacher at Gila Ridge High School

### COMMUNITY ROLE MODEL

Ms. Pierce’s impact extends beyond the classroom, making her an important educator and mentor in the Gila Ridge High School community. She is embedded in the heart of the community and its school, spending her free time supporting student leadership initiatives, attending sporting events and offering assistance to students, particularly those from migrant backgrounds.

As an advocate for student success, Ms. Pierce understands that success depends, in part, on the diverse backgrounds of her students. Whether by providing academic guidance, lending a listening ear or offering words of encouragement, she has multiple strategies based on mutual trust and respect to expand successful educational experience for all students. Her commitment to teaching and academic excellence undergirds her dedication to make sure that every student can thrive, both inside and outside the classroom. 🌍



Gila Ridge High School is located in Yuma, AZ, a town near the US-Mexico border. GRHS is one of seven high schools in the Yuma Union High School District, serving a large population of students. Most students who attend GRHS are Hispanic, and many come from migrant backgrounds. The school’s unique community context creates a vibrant atmosphere with a diverse student body.

GRHS’s goal is to support students to be college, career and community ready upon graduation. The school aims to create a collaborative academic community, and teachers like Ms. Pierce support Gila Ridge by connecting directly with her students.